



Disability Bias for Emergency Management Planning Professionals: Why It Matters and What You Can Do to Reduce It

— www.disasterstrategies.org —

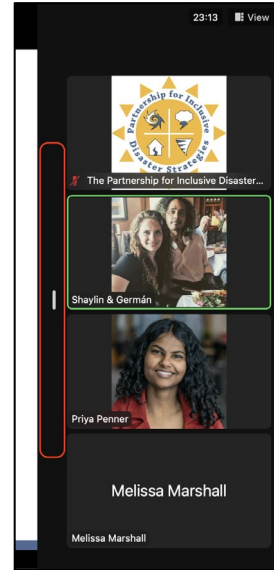
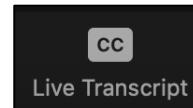
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Sign Language Interpreters:

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CART captions:

Click the button at the bottom of the screen labeled “CC” to start captions.



Accessibility for this Presentation

To Participate:

- To ask or respond to questions: use the “raise your hand” button, type in chat, or unmute and talk at appropriate times
- For technical assistance or to alert us to an issue, type in chat/raise hand
 - Ex. “slow down please”
- If the chat is not accessible to you, please submit your questions to priya@disasterstrategies.org.



Accessibility for this Presentation

Friendly reminders:

- Please identify yourself before speaking
 - Ex. "This is Jessie, and..."
- Please avoid speaking while others are speaking
- Please keep yourself on mute when not talking
- Please keep your camera off unless you are talking
- Please avoid using acronyms



Who We Are

The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies is the only U.S. disability-led organization with a focused mission of equity for people with disabilities and people with access and functional needs throughout all planning, programs, services and procedures before, during and after disasters and emergencies.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to our sponsor, the Connecticut State Independent Living Council (CT SILC)!



Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Planning Committee:

- Gretchen Knauff, Office of Disability Services, City of New Haven
- Molly Cole, CT State Independent Living Council
- Rick Famigletti, Center for Disability Rights
- Rich Luby, Independence Northwest
- Eileen Healy, Independence Northwest
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- Carmen Correa-Rios, Center for Disability Rights
- Brynn Hickey, Disabilities Network of Eastern CT



Ground Rules

- Maintain confidentiality
- Ask questions
- Have fun!!!

Do you have ground rules you'd like to suggest?



Today's Objectives

For you to be able to:

- Recognize implicit and unconscious disability bias and ableism in emergency management
- Interrupt disability bias during planning and response
- Use most appropriate disability etiquette during planning and response

What are your individual goals?



Today's Audience

- Emergency Management directors
- Disability Community stakeholders
- Nursing facilities management
- Service providers
- Municipal officers
- Preparedness coordinators
- Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)
- Health directors
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members
- Fire departments
- Others!



This Presentation is an Overview

This presentation is an overview of legal obligations
many specifics have not been included here.



Disability Bias Activities

Word Association

What do you think of when I say, “disabled person in a disaster?”



Word Association

What do you think of when I say the following, “Deaf person in a disaster?”



Word Association

What do you think of when I say the following, “person with an intellectual disability in a disaster?”



Word Association

What do you think of when I say the following, “person with a mental health condition in a disaster?”



Word Association

What do you think of when I say the following, “autistic person in a disaster?”



Word Association

Why do you think you gave these responses?



Group Discussion

- Share a time when you were comfortable with a person with a disability.
- Share a time when you were less than comfortable or did not know what to do.
- Bonus if related to emergency management.

What made the difference?



Us and Them

“Us” and “Them” is a way of categorizing people who are perceived as different.

Have you ever felt a person with a disability was more like one of “them” than one of “us?”



Are They More Like Us or Them?



US

THEM



Are They More Like Us or Them?



US

THEM



Are They More Like Us or Them?



US

THEM



Are They More Like Us or Them?



US

THEM



What changed?

Questions?

Key Terms and Principles

Key Terms and Principles: Disability

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act, disabled people are individuals with a:

- Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or **more major life activities**
- Record of having such impairment
- Regarded as having an impairment



Key Terms and Principles: Non-apparent Disability

“Over 42 million Americans have a severe disability, and 96% of them are unseen.”



Key Terms and Principles: Non-apparent Disability

Examples of non-apparent physical and mental conditions include:

-
-
-
-
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Lupus
- Crohn's disease
- Fibromyalgia



Key Terms and Principles: Access and Functional Needs (AFN)

People with access and functional needs includes individuals who need assistance due to any condition (temporary or permanent) that limits their ability to act.

To have access and functional needs does not require that the individual have any kind of diagnosis or specific evaluation.



Key Terms and Principles: Access and Functional Needs (AFN)

Individuals with access and functional needs may include, but are not limited to:

- Individuals with disabilities
 - Temporary and chronic health conditions
- Older adults
- Children
- Pregnant people



Key Terms and Principles: Access and Functional Needs (AFN)

Individuals with access and functional needs may include, but are not limited to:

- Populations having limited:
 - English proficiency
 - Access to transportation
 - Access to financial resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the emergency



Key Terms and Principles: Access and Functional Needs (AFN)

Individuals with access and functional needs may include, but are not limited to:

- People who are marginalized, stigmatized or excluded
- People experiencing homelessness



Key Terms and Principles: Bias

Bias is prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

- Often bias is unconscious or implicit



Key Terms and Principles: Unconscious and Implicit Bias

Unconscious or implicit bias is prejudice of which the holder of the bias is not aware.

- It communicates that the person the bias is directed toward is less valuable than others
- People toward whom unintentional bias is directed may or may not be consciously aware of its existence and its effects



Key Terms and Principles: Implicit Bias

Implicit bias can manifest in concrete ways...



Key Terms and Principles: Ableism

Ableism (noun)

able·ism | \ 'ā-bə-,li-zəm \

Definition of *ableism*: discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities'

- Merriam –Webster

Oppression based on physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, sensory, or other ability or perceived ability.

- Melissa Marshall



Key Terms and Principles: Intersectionality

Intersectionality is:

- A framework to analyze the interlocking effects people with multiple marginalized identities experience
- Created by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1970's
- Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and other multiply marginalized people with disabilities experience disproportionate bias, ableism, and discrimination



Key Terms and Principles: Microaggressions

What are **microaggressions**?

“Microaggressions are the everyday slight, put down, indignity, or invalidation unintentionally directed toward a marginalized group.”

– Dr. Derald Sue, Professor of Psychology
and Education



Key Terms and Principles: Microaggressions

Examples of disability microaggressions:

- Pulling back slightly when a mental health condition is disclosed
- Touching someone's durable medical equipment/assistive technology without their permission



Key Terms and Principles: Microaggressions

Examples of disability microaggressions:

- Assuming a disabled person can't complete their own paperwork
- Inaccessible shelters or Disaster Resource Centers (DRCs)
- Patronizing tones



Key Terms and Principles: Microaggressions

Microaggression Equation:

Microaggression + Microaggression + Microaggression =

- Alienation
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Lower productivity
- Discrimination



Key Terms and Principles: Institutional Bias

Institutional bias is the unconscious or conscious belief that people with disabilities belong, or are better off, in institutions including nursing facilities.

It is reflected in policies that steer disabled people to institutions.

Ageism is often, but not always, a factor.

Ableism is always a factor.



Why is it Important to Include Disabled People in Planning?

Did You Know?

**People with
disabilities are
26% of the
population.**

People with disabilities are 2-4 times more likely to be injured or die in disasters.

Did You Know?

“The Right to be Rescued”



Using an intersectional framework...

After a natural disaster, white people accumulate more wealth while residents of color accumulate less wealth.

**Multiply-
marginalized
people with
disabilities are
disproportionately
impacted to a
greater degree by
disasters.**

**Using an
intersectional
framework...**

Did You Know?

**People with
disabilities are
underrepresented
in disaster
planning.**

**Disaster
planning
includes:**

**Preparation,
mitigation,
response,
recovery, and
reconstruction in
emergency
management and
public health
emergencies.**

Why Inclusive Planning is Necessary

People with disabilities are experts in:

- Our own experiences
- How to best meet our needs

Disability-led solutions are:

- Inclusive
- Effective
- Often cheaper

It's the law.



**Nothing about us
without us!**

BREAK!

5 minutes

Consequences of Disability Bias in Emergency Management

Consequences of Disability Bias in Emergency Management Planning

Consequences for the individual:

- Service animal losing their training
- People who are Deaf not evacuating because they did not get equally effective notice
- Failure to receive accommodations
- Illness, including COVID-19



Consequences of Disability Bias in Emergency Management Planning

Consequences for the individual:

- Unnecessary hospitalization
- Separation from family
- Institutionalization
- Death



Consequences of Disability Bias in Emergency Management Planning

Consequences for the state and local government:

- Failure to provide accommodations
- Failure to understand obligations
- Violation of law
- Miscommunication
- Not benefiting from the expertise that people with disabilities bring to the table



What examples can you add?

“I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much”

We included a recorded lecture given by disabled activist, Stella Young. The following text is the audio description of the video.

The video is of Stella Young giving a presentation on a large stage in front of a crowd. Stella Young is a white woman who uses a power wheelchair and has short strawberry blonde hair and a nose ring.



“I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much”

Stella refers to three images on screen; the images are as follows:

First image: An underwater image of a young white male, who is missing the majority of his left leg, in a pool. Next to his image is a quote attributed to Scott Hamilton that reads “the only disability in life is a bad attitude.”



“I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much”

Stella refers to three images on screen; the images are as follows:

Second image: A young white child in an athletic manual chair holds a basketball on a basketball court. The text next to the image reads “your excuse is invalid.”

Third image: A white child with Downs Syndrome holding an object while participating in a relay race on a soccer field. The text reads “before you quit, try!”



**“I'm not your inspiration, thank you
very much”**



Reducing Disability Bias

Use Respectful Language

Refer to people with disabilities or disabled people

Avoid language that presupposes the negative

- Victim of...
- Suffering from...

Avoid language that groups people

- The mentally ill
- The disabled
- The AFNs



Language

Avoid “endearing” terms:

- Honey
- Sweetie
- Dear

Avoid infantilizing terms:

- Mamma
- Baby



Strategies for Mitigating Disability Bias

Strategies include:

- Acknowledging your conscious and implicit bias
- Acknowledging your privilege
- Rectifying bias when you can
- Asking people with disabilities



Interrupting Disability Bias In Emergency Planning

Remember:

- We all have biases
- Bias is not the person's fault
- Never seek to embarrass anyone



Interrupting Disability Bias In Emergency Planning

Tactics include:

- Deflect a biased comment
- Educate without being without being overbearing
- Talk about your experiences with people with disabilities



Interrupting Disability Bias In Emergency Planning

Tactics include:

- If someone is unfamiliar with the Disability Community, introduce them to disabled leaders
- Do not shame someone for saying the wrong thing; create a safe space
- Hold people accountable



Interrupting Disability Bias In Emergency Planning

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

I don't know how to find disabled people, so I can't invite them.

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

I don't know how to find disabled people of color, so I can't invite them.

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

I have an advanced degree, no offense, but what can someone with an intellectual disability teach me that I don't already know?

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

People with disabilities should just worry about their own personal preparedness.

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

Don't state agencies like DDS and DMHAS handle all of the emergency planning for people with disabilities?

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

Don't people with disabilities have enough to worry about?

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

Shouldn't families be planning for people with disabilities?

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

What is so bad about a disabled person temporarily going to a nursing home if a shelter is inaccessible?

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Statements

I am hesitant to involve people with actual disabilities in an exercise. It might be dangerous for them and there might be liability issues.

Ask yourself:

- Does it reveal bias or lack of information?
- Are people being excluded?
- What can you do to interrupt any bias or action based on lack of information?



Disability-Inclusive Planning

Exercises Are the Key to Planning

Plans must be implemented through exercises, such as:

- Table top (TTX)
 - Discussion-based
- Full scale

Effective exercises must go beyond fire drills and take an all-hazards approach.



Exercises

Exercises should:

- Be conducted through local and state emergency management
- Be conducted regularly
- Include disability-led organizations and disabled people throughout the process

Hospitals, nursing facilities, and other facilities are required to conduct exercises.



Be Inclusive in Exercises and Other Planning Activities

Why include people with disabilities?

- Exercises are not effective unless they include people with disabilities.
- Whole community resilience is not possible without resilience of people with disabilities.



Involve People with Disabilities

People with a wide variety of disabilities, including disabled people with multiple marginalized identities, should be included in all aspects of planning and implementation.

- Without this there will not be equity.
- Good news! The State Independent Living Council, Centers for Independent Living, and other disability-related stakeholders can identify people with a wide variety of disabilities across the state.



Involve People with Disabilities

Create a culture where it easier to include people with disabilities in planning.

Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that require that:

- Physical meetings are always in accessible spaces on a bus route if your area has public transit
- Sign language interpreters and captioning is provided as necessary



Involve People with Disabilities

Develop SOPs that require that:

- Material inviting people to and disseminated during and after meetings is accessible to people who do not read print
- All materials publicizing and distributed at meetings has a statement of the SOPs above



Disability-Inclusive Exercise Tips

- Disabled people should be involved as planners, players, observers, and all other roles in exercises.
- Never have someone without a disability simulate having a disability.
- Never have someone with a disability simulate having a disability that they do not actually have.



Planning Accessible Meetings

Use a checklist!

- Example: [Association of University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\): Planning Accessible Meetings Guide Updated](#)



Planning Accessible Meetings

Create a budget for:

- Transportation, including wheelchair accessible vehicles
- Sign language interpreters
 - Legally required



Planning Accessible Meetings

Create a budget for:

- Spoken language interpreters
 - Not required under disability rights law
- CART captions
 - Artificial intelligence (AI) captions are not equally effective
- Other access needs



Planning In-Person Meetings

Venue:

- Never assume any space is accessible
- Confirm with someone knowledgeable in access requirements that the venue meets ADA requirements



Planning In-Person Meetings

Transportation:

- Host event on a bus route near a transportation hub
- Budget for transportation, if necessary
- Use ride share as needed, but keep in mind they are often not wheelchair accessible
- Use accessible taxis, if available



Planning Virtual Meetings

Use a platform that is most accessible, such as Zoom.

Make sure:

- ASL interpreters are spotlighted at the start of event so everyone can see them
- CART captioners are given access in Zoom to type captions
 - Secure an external link for people to access CART captions in a separate window, if possible



Planning In-Person and Virtual Meetings

Make sure you have:

- ASL interpreters
- CART captions
- Other spoken languages, as necessary



Questions?

Resources

Community Disability Resources:

- Centers for Independent Living
 - Find more information at [CT SILC](#)
- [Advocacy Unlimited](#)
- [Disability Rights Connecticut](#)



Resources

General resources:

- [“The urgency of intersectionality” by Kimberlé Crenshaw](#)
 - Has closed captions but does not have audio description or ASL interpretation
- [Disability Justice Principles by Sins Invalid](#)



Next Week

Legal Obligations of Emergency Management Planning Professionals Before, During and After Disasters

Wednesday, June 22nd at 9am-11am ET

(same zoom link)





Thank you!

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