Independent Living Research Utilization

We create opportunities for independence for people with disabilities through research, education, and consultation

www.ilru.org
Liberation to Leadership: The Role of CILs in Transforming Communities

Welcome and Participant Introductions

September 15, 2015
Berkeley, CA

 Presenters:
Tim Fuchs
Darrell Jones
Paula McElwee
Introductions

• Introduce yourselves to each other at your table:
  ✓ Your name
  ✓ Where you work
  ✓ State you represent
  ✓ Job title/role
  ✓ What you hope to learn from the training

• Choose someone at your table to summarize the reasons for coming and identify the states.

• That person will be asked to report out to the larger group.
Liberation to Leadership:  
The Role of CILs in Transforming Communities  

*Overview of Training Program and Objectives*

September 15, 2015  
Berkeley, CA  

*Facilitator:*  
Paula McElwee
By the end of this training you will learn. . .

• How to create or expand a CIL framework for supporting disability liberation.
• How to broaden the scope of the IL definition of inclusion, and why it’s important.
• Ways to facilitate leadership development through opportunities for authentic leadership.
• Successful approaches for facilitating consumers’ movement from liberation to leadership.
You may be learning some new terms....

- Disability justice—not the same thing as disability rights. Justice is more action oriented than rights. It means that ALL people are accepted and that rights are equally shared, distributed, and applied.

- Intersectionality—a mouth-full word which means bringing the issues of ALL people together, recognizing that any group’s struggle for acceptance is the same as our own.

- Disability liberation—breaking free from the internal & external oppression that often goes with the territory of having a disability.
Liberation to Leadership: The Role of CILs in Transforming Communities

Oppression & Intersectionality Between “Isms”

September 15, 2015
Berkeley, CA

Presenters:
Stacey Milbern
Dolores Tejada
Take Care of Yourself

• We will be discussing **HEAVY** topics these next few days. It is common for feelings to arise.

• Please remember to take care of yourself.

• You will see a lot of cat photos – this is Stacey’s practice of self care. 😊
Be Mindful of Your Neighbor

- Often times, people want emotional support and do not ask for it. *(Who knows this better than people with disabilities?)*

- You can seek out support! You don’t have to be a super hero.

- If you seek support, please do so consensually. Often times, people “unload” without asking. In this kind of environment, that can add to the intensity.
Check In with Yourself

• If you can, check in with yourself. It is important. For example:
  • Why am I feeling so ______? What is that about? Maybe I feel _______. Is that feeling what my colleague is saying? If not, maybe that’s “my own stuff.” Let me go decompress.
  • Wow. This is so sad. There is so much oppression in this world. I am really, really sad and don’t know what the point of all our work is when the world is so messed up.
  • It’s natural to have feelings. In anti-oppression work, it’s better to acknowledge that than ignore.
Be Aware of Power Dynamics in Room

• Step forward, step back
  • If you are someone who doesn’t speak much, challenge yourself to do so. Your voice has value!
  • If you are someone who processes thoughts by speaking a lot, please challenge yourself to step back a bit. We trust that you share our value of everyone having time to talk.

• Please don’t challenge people’s experiences of oppression.

• Please practice active, compassionate listening.
What is oppression?

When is a time that you witnessed oppression actively or inactively taking place?
Guidelines for Pair Discussion

Practice Active Listening techniques

• Use your body and mind to be as present as possible for your partner’s storytelling
  • If your mind wanders, do your best to come back.
  • If you start to have feelings in response, do your best to hold them.
• Use your body to listen.
• Refrain from giving feedback. End by simply expressing gratitude.
What is Oppression?

**Oppression:** The favoring of one group at the expense of another
Oppression Outputs As...

- INTERNAL
  - Shame
  - Low expectations
  - It’s WORK to build one’s sense of self!

- INTERPERSONAL
  - Telling someone they can’t do something
  - Paternalism

- SYSTEMIC
  - Lack of access
  - Inadequate education
  - Segregation

Let’s brainstorm more together.... Out of respect, keep examples to communities you are a member of.
Definition

Power + Prejudice = -ism
Reminder

- Often times, conversations focus on internal or interpersonal experience instead of systemic.
- Why can this be problematic?
- Do you have an example where someone (e.g. person, media, etc.) avoided discussing something systemic?
Intersectionality

Theory = issues are all connected and interdependent. In social justice, this means that promoting a single issue politic will **not** lead to liberation...it will only help the group that benefits from that single issue.

> **There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.**

> - Audre Lorde
Examples of Intersectional Oppression

- Ableism, racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism – all the “isms” – work hand in hand with each other. They are not separate.
- Example: Slavery. African Americans considered “mentally inferior.” As a result, believed not capable to have self determination. Racism and ableism exploited people.
  - Sidenote: Harriet Tubman had disabilities, so town people avoided her. She would pretend like she was having an episode, and that was how she was able to scope out escape routes.
Examples of Intersectional Oppression, cont’d.

• Eugenics* – those most subject to it were low income people, “hysterical” women, and people of color. Justification was based on perceived and real disabilities

• “Choice” activism – it’s a privilege to focus on right to abortion when so many people (e.g. people with disabilities) don’t have a choice to keep children

*“The social movement claiming to improve genetic features of human populations through selective breeding and sterilization, based on the idea that it is possible to distinguish between superior and inferior elements of society....” (Wikipedia)
Told you this was heavy!

Everyone okay?
Deep breaths!
Example of Single Issue Responses

- Second wave feminists focused their efforts on the right to work. The movement did not seem relevant to women of color who did not have the luxury to stay home. In fact, women of color took care of white feminist's children for low wages so they could go to work... That's not liberation is it?

- And of course women with disabilities were not able to access work so it wasn’t liberation for the disability community either.
Example of Single Issue Responses, cont’d.

- Disability community often points out how people with disabilities are infantilized and not seen as sexual beings. This message often falls flat for many.

- Why? Analysis does not include:
  - Bodies of people of color with disabilities are hypersexualized. Hypersexualization = excuses for violence and lack of self determination
  - Lack of bodily autonomy, especially in medical context
  - When you don’t have a right to your body, not being seen as sexual seems like a privileged complaint.
• Disability community’s advocacy re: segregated classrooms for students with disabilities
• Only recently started acknowledging that students experiencing this are primarily students of color
• Now the work can be bigger, deeper, richer....
Example of Intersectional Responses

- Disability community’s work that prioritizes leadership of youth of color (DAN-Y in Hayward), includes foster youth (DYP), and builds multi-movement leadership
- LGBT community’s work around disability access
- Fat positive community’s inclusiveness of mobility devices
Group Discussion

Discuss examples of an intersectional response to a problem at your table.

For the debrief:
- Pick one positive example
- Pick one example that is an opportunity for growth

Reminder: an intersectional response is different than a coalition response
Lunch

eat everything

Pusheen.Tumblr
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Lunch Activity

September 15, 2015
Berkeley, CA

Facilitator:
Paula McElwee
Table Discussion Topic

- Name one or two turning points in your life that moved you towards being an activist.
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Embracing Disability Justice

September 15, 2015
Berkeley, CA

Presenters:
Stacey Milbern
Dolores Tejada
Recap

• We’ve discussed intersectionality and the limitations of single issue politics
• Next:
  • What is a “justice” framework?
  • Limits of nonprofits and a need for movement building bigger
  • How we can incorporate this in our work
Some scholars say….

- Federal funding for nonprofits was created to temper populist movements
  - Met basic needs communities were organizing around
  - Movement leaders changed focus to creating nonprofits
    - Competition instead of collaboration
    - De-radicalizing

- How do we see this in disability history?
ALL BODIES ARE UNIQUE AND ESSENTIAL.
ALL BODIES ARE WHOLE. ALL BODIES HAVE STRENGTHS AND NEEDS THAT MUST BE MET.
WE ARE POWERFUL NOT DESPITE THE COMPLEXITIES OF OUR BODIES, BUT BECAUSE OF THEM.
WE MOVE TOGETHER, WITH NO BODY LEFT BEHIND.
THIS IS DISABILITY JUSTICE.
## Disability Justice, cont’d.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Focus: access to what dominant group has**  
- Involves policy, litigation  
- Key players are attorneys, policymakers, advocates | **Focus: meeting basic needs to survive**  
- Involves nonprofits  
- Key players are service providers. Does not always include leadership of those receiving services | **Focus: community organizing to shift power**  
- Involves: people most impacted by marginalization |
| Reproductive rights (women’s right to choose) | Reproductive services (keeping clinics open and safe) | Reproductive justice (organizing against modern day sterilization) |
| Disability rights (passage of ADA, Olmstead implementation, policy to keep benefits and work) | Consumer-directed services; day programs; fighting against budget cuts | Still a framework, not yet a movement… in development. |
## Disability Justice, cont’d. 2

<table>
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<td><strong>Focus: meeting basic needs to survive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus: community organizing to end institutional bias</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Gay Marriage Equality  
Anti-discrimination workplace laws | Gender inclusive shelters  
Youth programs  
Access to healthcare | Homeless youth taking over space  
Creating communities of care / chosen families |
| Civil rights for people of color  
Voting access  
Anti-discrimination laws | Nonprofits (food banks, homeless shelters, domestic violence)  
Corporate Diversity programs  
Training programs | Black Lives Matter  
Panthers Liberation schools  
Church organizing |
| Campaigns to make corporations more environmentally responsible | Establishing recycling programs | Low-income neighborhoods fighting against pollution and plant chemicals |
### Disability Justice, cont’d.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working women (addressing pay gap, gender discrimination, ________)</td>
<td>Access to childcare, women’s leadership programs, and ________</td>
<td>Women of color (“third wave” of feminism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors (retirement benefits, staying in community, combatting elder abuse)</td>
<td>Access to senior centers, meals on wheels, transportation to doctors appointments</td>
<td>Valuing seniors as elders and caring for them, interdependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants’ access to citizenship</td>
<td>Training programs, benefits, jobs, education</td>
<td>Activism against ICE raids, deportation, looking at how we ignore indigenous histories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Empowerment

• Build skills, techniques and capacity of individual and group to enable moving towards goals

• How is empowerment a direct push back to ableism, racism, sexism?

• How is it not?
Is all empowerment the same?

- Consumer direction allows for individual to name where they have strengths and where they want support.
- Empowerment also breaks down into personal, interpersonal, systemic.
- Must be individual and collective.
- Do CILs address each of these?
- Who do CILs and nonprofit organizations leave out?
Leadership

• Traditionally, leadership = charismatic individual on stage. Those who do behind the scenes work (e.g. often women) invisibilized.

• Let’s let disability, race, and gender unravel how society thinks about leadership...

Discuss:

• Use of anger (and how anger is racialized, tone is policed)
• Ability and needs that don’t fit in box
• Age...Don’t need to have years’ experience to have wisdom
Access to empowerment

• How does funding affect our movement?

• CAPACITY: In services—who can be served?, program types, how many people can be served?

• Who have CILs left out because of the way they’re structured?

• Naming difference of disability rights vs. disability justice
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One CIL’s Approach to Introducing Disability
Liberation Theory

September 15, 2015
Berkeley, CA

Presenter:
Amina Donna Kruck
Who We Really Are…

- Good
- Lovable
- Valuable
- Creative
- Intelligent
- Cooperative
- Attractive
- Strong
- Powerful

*Disability is a natural part of life*
What is Oppression?
What’s it got to do with me?

- Economic/political system where vast majority of people work to produce wealth for a small minority who own and control the wealth. $$$$$$$$$$
  - It causes disability
  - It stereotypes people with disabilities as less or non-productive, and by its own terms dis-values and further dis-ables us
How Oppression Works

• Every oppression relies on the **psychological trick** of separating one group from another by virtue of some real or imagined difference – then using the difference for an **excuse for mistreatment**.

• There is no “normal;” everyone is different physically and mentally.
Causes and Results of Oppression

- Negative Stereotyping
- Discrimination
- Segregation
- Institutionalization
- Inadequate Incomes
- Economic Exploitation
- Environmental Barriers to Mobility
- Control of our Lives by Others

*Internalized Oppression - we have the power to buy it or not!*
The Natural Healing Process

You can’t do this liberation work without feelings

- Words and attitudes hurt.
- Thoughts and feeling go together.
- Hurts bring up feelings (sadness, anger, fear)
- You can be hurt and have feelings and not show it.
- Expressing feelings is not the hurt – it is the healing from the hurt.
Hurt vs. Chronic Pattern

**What’s a hurt?**
A physical hurt:
- fresh injury
- stubbed toe
- assaulted
* An emotional hurt:
  - oppression
  - called names
  - disappointment
  - grief
  - told lies
  - betrayal

**What’s a chronic pattern?**
Feeling: stupid, incompetent, un-lovable, powerless.
* “I’m bad”
* “I’m worthless”
* Prejudices: all “x” are “y”
* Addictions
* Phobias
* Not knowing how good we really are!
Natural Healing Process, cont’d.

THE NATURAL HEALING PROCESS

- Rigid Thinking
- Distress
- Discharge
- Fresh Thinking
- Hurts
- Emotional
- Physical

Contradiction to hurt
* Attention -
* Respect - value
* Closeness - safe touch
* Benign reality - what’s really true
* Self Appreciation
How Hurts Affect Information Storage
The Natural Healing Process, cont’d. 2

Healing requires

- **The discharge of feelings** linked to the hurt/word/attitude/experience.
- **Taking action** that is outside the oppression/stereotype.
- **Each other.** We can’t do it alone. We need each other’s help! Need a cheering squad!
Negative Stereotypes

• Group Brainstorming – Get Wild!
Ouch!
Results of Disability Oppression

- Striving for the mythical ideal of “normal” = Ableism
  - Discrimination of and prejudice toward people with disabilities.
- Discrimination
- Devaluation of differences
- Environmental Barriers to Mobility
- Segregation
- Institutionalization
Earliest Memory Exercise

• Break up into pairs
• Choose an “A” and a “B” person
• Take turns listening and talking
• Listeners – look at your speaker like they are a what?
Results of Oppression, cont’d.

• Economic Exploitation – sheltered workshops, low pay for care givers

• Inadequate incomes – Poverty!
  • In 2013, the poverty rate of individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in the community was 28.7 percent, while the poverty rate of individuals without disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in the community was 13.6 percent.

—Annual Disability Statistics Compendium
Results of Oppression, cont’d. 2

Unemployment hasn’t budged even 25 years after the passage of the ADA

- **Labor Force Participation**
  - People with Disabilities: 19.8%
  - People without Disabilities: 69.0%

- **Unemployment Rate**
  - People with Disabilities: 10.4%
  - People without Disabilities: 5.4%

Progress !?!?!
Results of Oppression, cont’d. 3

Control of our Lives by Others

- Less likely to vote
- Less likely to run for office
- More organizations for people with disabilities than of people with disabilities –
- Lack of political awareness

Stresses on our families who are also stigmatized
## Independent Living Vs. Rehabilitation or Medical Paradigms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REHABILITATION PARADIGM - PROBLEM</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT LIVING PARADIGM - PROBLEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical or mental impairment; lack of vocational skill</td>
<td>Dependence upon professionals and others; public attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the individual</td>
<td>In the environment; in the medical / rehabilitation model and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional intervention; treatment</td>
<td>Barrier removal; advocacy; self-help; consumer control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>INDEPENDENT LIVING PARADIGM</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual with a disability is a &quot;patient&quot; or &quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>Individual with a disability is a &quot;consumer&quot; of services or simply a &quot;citizen&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional is the expert</td>
<td>&quot;Consumer“ is the expert Need true partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum self-care; gainful employment</td>
<td>Independence through control over acceptable options for daily living in an integrated, community-based setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Control of our Lives by Others

By Scott Chambers

“We’ll replace your spinal cord with your vocal cords. You will walk, but you’ll be talking out your ass.”
The Devil is in the Details: Internalized Oppression

- Owning negative stereotypes as truth
  - For ourselves
  - For others with disabilities
- We need our internalized oppression interrupted!
- Encouragement to act outside the oppression – Be Bold!
Ouch!
Creative Responses
Results of Disability Oppression

- Isolation and feeling left out
  - We don’t show up!
- Diverseness among ourselves
- Denial of our disabilities and others
- Blaming the disability for everything that is wrong
- Compulsive cheerfulness
- Compulsive misery
Compulsive Misery

THE VICTIM CHANNEL

THE WEATHER TODAY WILL BE REALLY UNFAIR.
Results of Oppression, cont’d.

- Feeling unattractive – unlovable
- Feeling we have no right to exist (the “B” word)
- Lack of social skills
  - Youth and employment – IEPs
- Isolation from our allies
Integration not Assimilation!

• We want to participate in society on our own terms – doing so will change society! – Examples please!
Liberation is an Action Word!

- Work on internalized oppression, taking full pride in your body and speech patterns.
- Work on your need for assistance, and take pride in being exactly perfect.
- Reach for close relationships with other disabled people, across all categories.
Liberation is an Action Word! cont’d.

• Being listened to respectfully
  • Tell your story without shaming or blaming
• Being able to have feelings about the hurts
• Get to know other people in your identified community but don’t huddle!
• Closeness – respectful physical and emotional
Contradiction to the Oppression!
Liberation is a Group Activity!

- Awareness – Being able to ID oppression-driven thinking and behavior.
- Lift as we climb.
- Knowing the truth about who we are.
  - SHOUT OUT!
- Knowing your legal rights and speaking up about them.
- Train allies and hold out high expectations for them. Teach them how to counsel us.
Vote
Liberation is a Group Activity! cont’d.

- Strategic planning – Plotting your path to freedom. *Where is the internalized oppression holding you back from the life you want and deserve?*
- Show up – you matter!
- Get involved in things that matter to YOU!
- *Don’t do it alone - get company!*
New– We are our own Best Allies

• We need to know each other beyond the stereotypes that keep people with different disabilities apart and that create hierarchies in which one disability is considered better than another.

• We need to appreciate the views and wisdom that come from the complex intersection of our various constituencies based on race, geography, sex, age, gender identity, and so on.

• No one but us can directly understand the experience, struggles, and delights of living with a disability.

• We need to insure that every life is seen as valuable and worthy.
Strategies for Winning Allies

- Speak from your own experience without comparing your oppression to theirs.

- **Assume that:**
  - You are the expert on your own experience and that you have information that other people need to hear.
  - Your experience is also an experience of victories; be sure to share these as well as the stories of how things are hard.
Allies: Assume that…

• ...you and all people who are differently-abled deserve allies.
• ...your liberation issues are justifiably of concern to all people. If it isn’t their issue yet... it will be.
• ...people in other groups are your natural allies.
• ...all people outside your group want to be allies for you and that it is in their interest for them to do so.
Strategies for Winning Allies, cont’d.

• Assume that it is only other people’s oppression and internalized oppression that prevents them (temporarily) from being effective allies to you at all times. (Especially family and friends)

• Assume that your allies are doing the best they can at the present time, given their own oppression and internalized oppression. **Assume that they can and will do better.**
Strategies for Winning Allies, cont’d. 2

- **Expect perfection from your allies;** expect them to be able to deal with the “difficult issues” in your struggle.

- **Assume that allies make mistakes.** Be prepared to be disappointed (only feelings!), and continue to expect the best from them.

- Assume that you have a perfect right to assist your allies to become more effective for you. Assume that you can choose to do this at any time. **Take full pride in your ability to do this.**
What We Need from our Allies

- Explore their own feelings about their bodies, feeling different in any way, experiences with illness and others with disabilities.
- Discharge on what you were told about "them" and the assumptions you may have about people with disabilities.
- Work on early memories of need and help.
- Challenge your caretaking patterns and any pull to make things accessible without asking what is needed.
Suggestions for Allies

• Take risks and try things as you get to know and support a person with a disability.

• Do not assume that you understand the lives and needs of people with disabilities.

• Relaxed light listening. Remember feelings are not the hurt but the healing of the hurt.

• Interrupt our internalized oppression
  • Remind us when we self-depricate that this is the oppression talking, not who we really are.
What We Need from our Allies, cont’d.

• Support our goals, ideas and dreams
• Touching with permission, awareness and support
• Have high expectations for us
• Speak up about discrimination, injustice, inequality and inaccessibility
• Interrupt stereotypes, disrespectful language and behavior

We Need to be Allies for Each Other!
References

Many of these suggestions come from Re-Evaluation Counseling Toward a Policy on Disability

Liberation to Leadership: The Role of CILs in Transforming Communities

Day 1 Wrap Up

September 15, 2015
Berkeley, CA

Facilitator:
Paula McElwee
CIL-NET Attribution

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