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Disability, Diversity, and Intersectionality: Creating a Welcoming and Supportive CIL for Diverse Populations

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Presenters:

Kim Gibson

Stanley Holbrook

Lee Schulz

IL-NET is a project of Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) in partnership with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), and Utah State University Center for Persons with Disabilities (USU-CPD)

Contact Information

- Kim Gibson- kgibson@disabilitylink.org
- Lee Schulz – lschulz4@icloud.com
- Stanley Holbrook – sholbrook4@verizon.net

Visit the ILRU Disability, Diversity, and Intersectionality in CILs website at CIL-diversity.org to find the nine CIL case studies and other information gathered from this project.

Disability, Diversity and Intersectionality (DDI) Project



Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) in collaboration with Public Research and Evaluation Services (PRES)

- Conducted a three-phase research study entitled, Disability, Diversity, and Intersectionality (DDI) project.
- To determine how CILs are designing and improving services, programs, and outreach for racially/ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups.

DDI Project: Definitions Used

- **Diversity**: Differences in culture, ethnic or racial classification, self-identification, tribal or clan affiliation, nationality, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, education, religion, spirituality, physical and intellectual abilities, personal appearance and other factors that distinguish one group or individual from another.
(Adapted from Goode & Jackson, 2009)
- **Intersectionality**: The multiple social group memberships and identities that expose an individual to different types of discrimination and disadvantage.
(Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed, 2016)

Sites Selected for Case Studies



- **Access Living** (Chicago, Illinois) – Marca Bristo
- **Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York** (Manhattan, New York) – Susan Dooha
- **Central Coast Center for Independent Living** (Salinas, California) – Elsa Quezada
- **Central Iowa Center for Independent Living** (Des Moines, Iowa) – Reyma McDeid
- **Community Resources for Independent Living** (Hayward, California) – Ron Halog
- **disABILITY Link** (Atlanta, Georgia) – Kim Gibson
- **Illinois/Iowa Independent Living Center** (Illinois/Iowa: Rock Island, Illinois) – Liz Sherwin
- **IndependenceFirst** (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) – Lee Schulz
- **Metropolitan Center for Independent Living** (St. Paul, Minnesota) – Jesse Bethke Gomez

What You Will Learn Today

- What cultural and linguistic diversity means.
- What can be done in the physical environment of a CIL to convey a welcoming atmosphere to racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse populations.
- How to get buy-in from your staff and board, and support them in their proficiency.
- Unique considerations.
- Adaptions that can be done to your CIL.
- Tips and strategies.

Kim's Journey to Disability, Diversity & Intersectionality



- Personally invested in creating a diverse CIL due to experiences.
- Served as Executive Director (ED) in a wide variety of CILs.
- Looked at CIL staffing and consumer population by taking an inventory.
- Committed to the value of individuals.

Lee's Journey to Disability, Diversity & Intersectionality



- Wanted the CIL to attend to current customers related to diversity: Jewish Russian Immigrants, African Americans, Spanish-speaking, and Native American customers. This included persons of all disabilities and genders.
- Milwaukee is widely known as a very segregated city so the CIL needed to attend to that issue both in its location and how to be welcoming to all.

Basic Considerations – Independence *First*



- The budget needed to contain extra costs to include but not be limited to:
 - Providing materials in multiple languages.
 - Cost of language and sign language interpreters (in this CIL's case about \$150,000 a year).
 - ATT LanguageLine (<https://www.languageline.com>).
 - The extra cost of recruiting and hiring bi-lingual staff.
 - Dollars for staff to attend training and events related to diversity.

Basic Considerations – Independence *First*, cont'd.



- Often it is cost effective to train other non-profits on accessibility & disability issues if they already serve a distinct ethnic or cultural population.
 - For example, Independence *First* collaborated and worked with the United Community Center (which served the Spanish-speaking population) to make their services accessible to individuals having a disability.

Basic Considerations – disABILITY LINK



Diverse Groups	Community	Consumers	Staff	Board
Caucasian	10.8% – 63.5%	22%	35.7%	33%
African-American	23% to 71%	70%	52%	4.4%

disABILITY LINK looked at the stats of consumers and compared them to staff and board at all levels. Also looked at different diversity issues including sexual orientation, age, religion, etc.

Basic Considerations – disABILITY LINK



Importance of buy-in from management / staff

- Empowered staff to reach out and bring ideas. This Resulted in developing groups focused on LGBTQIAP, musical groups, non-denominational groups, Respect Institute, Hearing Voices, mental health, refugee groups and outreach.

Budget considerations

- Utilize volunteers. disABILITY LINK has not had to take into account any increase in budget simply because it became part of the core of what we do.

Advocacy with entities that don't provide disability services

- “Us Protecting Us” a collaboration with a variety of social justice organizations, including Black Lives Matter.

Physical Environment – Independence *First*



- Creating a physical environment open to all.
- Fully accessible to all disabilities—pathways clear.
- Racially neutral geographic location of facility.
- Pictures and posters to demonstrate and welcome diversity.
- Different levels of participation including small group areas and large with safe spaces identified.

Facility and All Materials Accessible to All – Independence *First*



- Upon relocating the CIL's offices, got the city to put in a stoplight at the bus stop for customers with all disabilities to safely cross the street.
- Written materials printed in the four primary languages spoken in the city and available in large print and Braille.
- Placed a message board in the reception /welcoming area.
- Policy that a microphone be used at all events and sign language interpreters provided. Installed an audio loop system in conference room.

disABILITY LINK Welcoming Environment



- Voice message at door welcoming to office.
- Gender neutral bathrooms (labeled as such).
- Messages at front door/window such as “Black Lives Matter,” “Women’s Rights are Human Rights,” “Love is Love” (welcoming and inclusive message even before opening the door!)
- Pictures, posters, photos, flags, art, messages displayed that reflect all types of diversity including race, income, religion, age, sexual preferences to convey a message that help all people feel at home. Also women’s rights, worker’s rights, Native American rights, veteran’s rights, immigrant rights, electoral rights, LGBTQIA+++ rights, civil rights, religious/spiritual freedom, environmental rights.

Environment from the Door to the Staff to the Office

- Door greeter welcoming individuals.
- Training of staff.
- Signage on door.
- Reached out to local authority to place a cross light for individuals.
- Message board with iPod for anything posted for individuals to hear
- Large print available.
- All areas are kept accessible including desks.
- Computers for public use have adjustable tables and programs for accessibility such as Jaws.
- Scent-free materials used.
- Greeter at desk to invite people in and assist to different locations.
- Often staffed with volunteers or interns.

Create an Atmosphere that Creates a Feeling of Value of All – disABILITY LINK



Learning Experiences

- Programs set for different groups to learn such as Tech Tuesday for all. Tech Wednesday focuses on the deaf population.
- Providing materials in different format.
- Zoom technology allows for captioning.
- Use of microphone at all events.

Engagement with the consumer, staff, board and community

- Asking all what is their interest.
- Peer support classes often led by board members—Hearing Voices Network led by board member, Respect Institute.

Equipment and Materials – Independence*First*

- All program materials provided in multiple languages of local population.
- When possible, employ staff who are literate in multiple languages, especially in reception area.
- Contract with ATT LanguageLine or comparable instantaneous language interpreter resource.

Equipment and Materials – disABILITY LINK



- Using visuals to convey the messages.
- Using different communications devices
 - UbiDuo communications software
 - Provides communication equality between people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing. On demand interpreters for different languages.
 - Kept at front desk for anyone to sign out and use. Most useful to have on hand right from the start.

Questions & Discussion

Special Considerations – Independence*First*



- Every Center has unique populations and cultures.
- Fully assess your area via research, census numbers, and surveys.
- Consider sponsoring and publicizing cultural and ethnic celebrations.
 - Encourage staff, board and customers to attend on your sponsorship. Join the Spanish, African American and other possible Chamber of Commerce Associations.
 - Maintain a resource area in the reception area of materials from other organizations representing the various ethnic organizations.

Special Considerations – disABILITY LINK



- Are we representing the groups that are in our service area?
- Regular self-assessments
 - Pre and post surveys
 - Online feedback forms
 - Outcome surveys
- Listening to the staff and consumers.
- Being pro-active rather than reactive.
- Adjusting to what works and making changes.

- Staff participate in 40+ boards, committees, special events to ensure disability issues are included in all aspects of our community.
- Participate or support civil right activities and legislation.
 - Staff are encouraged to participate in events such as a march held concerning illegal immigration and deportation. Staff are very involved in open housing legislation and enforcement.

Community Engagement – Independence *First*, cont'd.



- Open facilities and resources to community groups, associations and peer groups.
 - We host quarterly meetings of the Mental Health Association, Lupus and Spinal Cord Injury Peer groups, People First. Routinely sponsor candidate forums prior to each election.
- Maintain subscriptions to cultural papers and have them in waiting areas.

Participation in social justice events

- MLK Parade
- Pride Parade

Collaborations with different groups

- Black Lives Matter
- NAACP
- Latino, Korean, Muslim, Jewish, etc.
- LGBTQIAP

Reaching out to meet the needs of rural populations

- Community outreach and participation using health fairs, support groups, VR, Senior Centers, Churches, international days, etc.
- Use of partnerships for meeting spaces.

Technology for Rural Outreach – disABILITY LINK



- Zoom technology –
 - Video conferencing that can be accessed on any phone/computer. Does not necessarily have to have video.
 - Use for all classes – Sign-in sheet lists that it is being used and we state this at the beginning of all classes.
 - Allows for individuals to participate and feel part of the group.
 - Has captioning ability.

Technology for Rural Outreach – disABILITY LINK, cont'd.



- Other Technology –
 - Use of Access interpreting that allows for on-demand interpreting as well as scheduled interpreting.
 - All staff trained and can be accessed on computer, phone, iPad.
 - Use of LanguageLine for a variety of languages.
<https://www.language.com/interpreting/phone>
 - Use of peer supporters.

Hiring, Recruiting, and Supporting Staff and Board – disABILITY LINK



- Hiring of staff reflective of the community.
- Recruitment of board reflective of community.
- Community assessment.
- Requires changing policies to reflect diversity.
- Supporting staff and board through training.
 - Weekly trainings held.
 - Peer support for all new employees – (curriculum addresses issues of diversity in peer support).
 - Board training required before being considered to be on the board.

Supporting Staff and Board Commitment to DDI – disABILITY LINK



- Cultural diversity training provided:
 - In our peer support trainings.
 - In staff meetings.
 - Workshop presentations.
 - Outreach into the communities.
- Creating partnerships and passion from staff.
- Having staff taking ownership of programs.
 - Staff are empowered to bring ideas and then develop the classes within that perspective. Workshop proposals sheets are completed.

Supporting Staff and Board Commitment to DDI – disABILITY LINK, cont'd.



- Creating a culture within a culture.
- Taking inventory of where you are and where you want to be:
 - Developing a Strategic Plan.
 - Looking at our annual reports and comparing to our population.
- Encouraging staff to bring forth ideas and address individual needs and goals they are passionate about.
- Commitment to support consumers from unique perspectives.
- Collaborating and using peer supporters to reach out to different groups.

Supporting Staff and Board Commitment to DDI – Independence *First*



- Conducting routine staff presentations about their unique culture and ethnicity.
- Recruiting Board members of various culture and ethnic backgrounds.

Questions & Discussion

Preview of Upcoming Disability, Diversity & Intersectionality Events



- APRIL Conference – October 5, 2018
 - Pre-Conference DDI Workshop – 9:00am – 4:15pm
- Data Mining and Community Mapping webinar – TBD

Final Questions and Evaluation Survey

Any final questions?

Directly following the webinar, you will see a short evaluation survey to complete on your screen. We appreciate your feedback!

https://usu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3JyOcW1asWZ
[JFVr](#)

CIL-NET Attribution

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