

# Understanding the Intersectional Forms of Discrimination Impacting Persons with Disabilities

|                    |                    |                   |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>RACE</b>        | <b>CLASS</b>       | <b>DISABILITY</b> | <b>NATIONALITY</b> | <b>AGE</b>         |
| <b>SEXUALITY</b>   | <b>ORIENTATION</b> |                   | <b>GENDER</b>      | <b>ORIENTATION</b> |
| <b>MH STATUS</b>   | <b>RELIGION</b>    |                   | <b>DISABILITY</b>  | <b>INDIGENEITY</b> |
| <b>RACE</b>        | <b>CLASS</b>       |                   | <b>NATIONALITY</b> | <b>AGE</b>         |
| <b>SEXUALITY</b>   | <b>ORIENTATION</b> |                   | <b>GENDER</b>      | <b>ORIENTATION</b> |
| <b>DISABILITY</b>  | <b>DISABILITY</b>  | <b>DISABILITY</b> | <b>DISABILITY</b>  | <b>DISABILITY</b>  |
| <b>AGE</b>         | <b>RELIGION</b>    |                   | <b>GENDER</b>      | <b>INDIGENEITY</b> |
| <b>CITIZENSHIP</b> | <b>AGE</b>         |                   | <b>MH STATUS</b>   | <b>CASTE</b>       |
| <b>RACE</b>        | <b>CLASS</b>       |                   | <b>NATIONALITY</b> | <b>IQ</b>          |
| <b>SEXUALITY</b>   | <b>ORIENTATION</b> |                   | <b>DISABILITY</b>  | <b>ORIENTATION</b> |
| <b>AGE</b>         | <b>DISABILITY</b>  |                   | <b>RELIGION</b>    | <b>INDIGENEITY</b> |

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**Prepared and Submitted by:**



*CANADIAN CENTRE ON DISABILITY STUDIES*

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 The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a stylized serif font with a small flag icon above the letter 'a'.

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# Understanding the Intersectional Forms of Discrimination Impacting Persons with Disabilities

## I: Introduction

The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) is pleased to present this report together with our lead partner, the DisAbled Women's Network of Canada (DAWN Canada), and other partner organizations, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust (Egale); the National Network for Mental Health (NNMH); and the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS). This report stems from a short-term (five month) community-based action research project that aims to provide a preliminary assessment of the state of previous research and literature; as well as other policies, programs, services and activities that are intended to address the intersectional forms of discrimination impacting persons with disabilities in Canada. In contrast to historical hierarchical approaches to contextualizing disability issues, we have sought to ground our work in relationality, attending to issues of power differentials, and deploying a social justice framework that seeks to expose inequities.

The goal of this report is to promote understanding of the intersectional forms of discrimination impacting persons with disabilities in Canada. The report will focus on cross-disability issues that address the complexities of diverse human social positions across the lifespan inclusive of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, mental health and ability. This report begins with an overview of the present project, followed by a brief description of our research methodology. Our findings begin with a review of the literature to define and contextualize the concept of intersectionality. Here, we will trace the historical developments of intersectionality from its roots in black feminism. We outline some of the major intersections, gaps, and emerging themes in relation to disability as it has been taken up in the literature and previous research, as well as in policy and practice. Following this, we provide some reflections on the literature with a response by DAWN Canada. DAWN's response highlights some of the Francophone literature and an example of intersectionality in terms of gender, disability and race.

With consideration of the literature presented, we provide some practical applications of intersectionality from the perspective of community partners and other key informants from across Canada. Here, we affirm the skills and knowledge that community partners, practitioners, grassroots organizers, activists and researchers bring, as adopters of intersectionality, so that together we can work to addressing long standing social, economic and political barriers to inclusion, equity and accessibility. We conclude by highlighting a few key issues facing persons with disabilities from diverse social locations in Canada, as well as some reflections on the project process and suggestions for practice, policy and research. In addition, this report includes a detailed bibliography and list of online resources from identified community organizations, projects and programs that have applied intersectionality.

## Overview of the Project

In mid-fall, 2017 CCDS developed a proposal in response to a funding call of the Social Development Projects for People with Disabilities (SDPP-D) with our partners DAWN Canada, Egale, NNMH, and BCANDS. The proposal was developed in response to recommendations and concerns outlined in the Concluding Observations adopted by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) following Canada's appearance before the CRPD in April 2017. Specifically, the CRPD expressed concern under Articles 5 and 6 (Equality and non-discrimination, and women with disabilities, respectively) about "The intersecting nature of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities; Indigenous persons with disabilities; and migrant persons with disabilities who face heightened risks of gender-based violence, poverty, marginalization, and barriers in access to mental health care services." The CRPD recommended that the State party of Canada address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination through policies, programs and services. The present project aimed to identify the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination facing diverse people with disabilities and provide initial recommendations for consideration in practice, policy and future research.

With an interest in collaboration and increasing knowledge about intersectionality and disability, CCDS posed the four following objectives:

1. Build relationships and work collaboratively across the five partner organizations;
2. Increase knowledge and understanding of the intersectional forms of discrimination and inequalities that impact persons with disabilities; and, identify best evidence/approaches for addressing these;
3. Share learnings of this project with the project sponsors and relevant stakeholders who could use the information to inform their work regarding key issues, and ultimately, improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities; and,
4. Encourage reflexivity and continual consultation to ensure that we are using the best evidence and methodologies for knowledge development. The CCDS team has committed to evaluation activities including gathering feedback on the partnership facilitation process. The CCDS team members involved in this project also attended to power relations and privilege through reflexive journaling.

From November 2017 to March 2018, we have worked collaboratively through a series of working group meetings to develop a shared understanding of intersectionality and its application to disability issues in Canada. CCDS conducted a community ethics review to ensure that the project was conducted in an ethically responsible manner. This review was conducted by an internal research ethics committee comprised of expert members of the Board of CCDS. This ethics review process ensures all of our primary research is conducted in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement for Research Involving Humans.

## II: Methodology

At CCDS, our work is guided by and furthers the social justice intent of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and other international social justice frameworks. We are dedicated to the use of high-quality evidence in disability, inclusive of broader sector, policies, programs, and practices. Our research activities include persons with disabilities in constructive and meaningful ways by using methods that include intersectionality, reflexivity, innovation, and excellence. Reflexivity means that we attend systematically to the context and process of knowledge construction by facilitating the time and space to listen, share and co-create. We believe that high quality evidence does not speak for itself. It must be socialized—this means support of on-going conversations related to content, context, culture, and capacity on disability issues. Our reflexive approach also means that we attend to the effects we have, as researchers, at every step of the research process. Thus, we have attempted to be clear about our values and thoughts as these are represented in our work. We value all individuals for their knowledge and unique contributions and embrace and facilitate inclusion and intersectionality. We understand that intersectionality is an emerging research, policy and practice paradigm which seeks to reveal the complex interactions among multiple social categories (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2009).

### Individual Interviews

Pre-and post-project interviews (i.e., check-in and check-out conversations) were conducted with one senior leader from each organization for a total of five interviewees. These were conducted by phone, Skype or in person for approximately 30 minutes to one hour with informed consent. The purpose of these conversations was to gather partners' expectations and reflect on the project process. Additional interviews with seven key informants were also conducted by phone, Skype or in person for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour with informed consent. Key informants included researchers, practitioners, and activists working on issues related to disability and diversity with respect to gender, ethnicity, sexuality, indigeneity, mental health, etc. All interviews were intended to help us learn about partners' and informants' experiences, thoughts and ideas in relation to intersectionality and disability in Canada. All interviewees helped us to find the various intersectional issues that impact persons with disabilities in Canada and identify approaches or strategies to address these issues. Information gathered during interviews with project partners and key informants also informed the scoping literature review to identify and explore various theories and empirical evidence on the intersectional forms of discrimination that impacts persons with disabilities in Canada.

### Literature Review

This scoping review provides a preliminary assessment of the potential size and scope of available scholarly peer-reviewed literature as well as reports, handbooks, guides, and other resources found on the internet (i.e., grey literature) on the topic of intersectionality and disability. The review identifies the nature and extent of evidence to lay the foundation for ongoing future research. The review attempts to be methodical, transparent and replicable to inform partners, policymakers, funders and other stakeholders as to whether further research is

needed.<sup>1</sup> The literature review search strategy was designed to identify the key challenges, barriers and opportunities facing diverse people with disabilities. It was also designed to identify evidence to support the study and application of intersectionality. A Boolean search strategy was used to combine search terms to produce relevant results. Search keywords, target articles, journals and/or other sources of relevant literature were determined based on conversations within the research team and project partners. In addition, we mined reference lists from articles, reports, guidebooks and other resources included in the literature review to identify new resources. We also searched websites of partner organizations and others as identified by interviewees to identify other related resources. The search included historical and contemporary sources written from 1851 to present. The geographic scope included literature primarily from Canada, the USA and Western Europe.

## Environmental Scan

The purpose of the scan was to identify laws, policies, programs, services, supports, and other online resources currently in existence that address the intersections between disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental health, race and Indigeneity. Our scan focused primarily on identifying resources from Canada and extended outward to other geographic areas when other relevant programs were identified through the literature review or during interviews. In addition, we mined reference lists from articles, reports, guidebooks and other resources included in the literature review. We also searched websites of relevant organizations and programs to identify other related programs, services and resources. The environmental scan provides a general overview and preliminary description of the various research and action initiatives that aim to address the intersectional forms of discrimination that impacts persons with disabilities in Canada. These initiatives are compiled into one document to depict the current landscape of activities of work in relation to intersectionality and disability. The scan includes academic, community-based or governmental programs, projects or services; as well as relevant municipal, provincial and/or national policies and legislation

## Meeting Notes

The research team took detailed meeting notes at each of our project working group meetings to monitor our project process and contribute to our shared understanding of intersectionality. These notes were shared back with project partners to ensure key issues and comments were captured and interpreted correctly.

## Analysis

Interview and meeting notes were analysed using thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) in the data. Our methodology utilized a researcher-driven 'value of information' approach to assessing resources from the literature review and scan (Adams et al., 2016; Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey, & Walshe, 2005). Using this approach, individual resources were included if the information provided was considered

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about our literature review search strategy please contact: [ccds@disabilitystudies.ca](mailto:ccds@disabilitystudies.ca).

relevant to the research objectives. Findings from these resources were summarized to provide an overview of the intersectional forms of discrimination the impact persons with disabilities in Canada. Findings were also summarized to provide an overview of the current landscape of activities of work in relation to intersectionality and disability. We also reviewed and assessed areas in which resources are absent or limited, and/or any limitations with existing evidence from the literature and environmental scan. For the present study, disability is defined in accordance with the CRPD. However, because it is a historically and culturally contingent and contested social category, disability can be surprisingly difficult to define. The CRPD states: "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others." The terms "disabled people" and "people with disabilities" are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation, with an understanding of the semantic issues involved in the use of both terms. Some activists prefer 'people first' language, and therefore prefer the term 'people with disabilities.' The CRPD uses "persons with disabilities." Other activists argue that they are proud to be disabled, and that therefore they prefer the term 'disabled people.'

## Limitations

This study was conducted as a scoping review to provide a preliminary assessment of the potential size and scope of available literature and resources to address the intersectional forms of discrimination that impact persons with disabilities in Canada. Scoping reviews aim to identify the nature and extent of evidence and usually involve ongoing research. This means that the present study is not intended to be a comprehensive or systematic review of all relevant literature or programs, services and other resources on intersectionality and disability. The present study is intended to provide a starting point for the development of practice, policy and research by pointing to areas for further consideration and exploration. This study also attempts to be methodical and transparent to inform stakeholders as to whether further research is needed.

### III: Findings

#### Overview of the Literature

Although intersectionality is a relatively new concept in academia, it has been used in grassroots organizing since the late 1960's. This report draws upon these histories and aims to further the discussion by providing a brief overview of the historical and contemporary aspects of the subject of intersectionality and disability. Touching on some of the fundamental contributions from scholarly and grey literature, in this report we argue that the rich, yet complex history of intersectionality may enhance an understanding of the discrimination that persons with disabilities encounter in Canada. In the pages to follow, we begin with the theoretical and historical elements of intersectionality, before outlining some of the various ways in which intersectionality might be understood. What follows is a discussion of how intersectionality has been viewed through the lens of disability activism and scholarship. Moving on, we briefly examine how various social locations intersect with disability to create unique experiences of discrimination. We then broaden the discussion by outlining ways in which intersectionality may be implemented through practical actions in efforts to address the discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities. This review covers a broad range of topics and issues and is intended to be a preliminary scoping literature review for initiating discussions about enhancing understandings of intersectionality as a tool for addressing cross-disability issues.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Image Reference: <https://www.invisibledisabilityproject.org/disruptthesilence/disability-tile>.

## *Section I: Definitions and Dimensions of Intersectionality: What It Means in Contexts of Policy, Practice, and Theory*

In this section, we define and explain how intersectionality is useful as an analytical framework for understanding the various forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities. We begin with a list of five definitional assumptions to lay the groundwork of understanding.

**Assumption #1: Intersectional analysis seeks to understand how lived experiences relate to both the microlevel and macrolevel experiences of discrimination.** Intersectionality seeks to understand how various social locations, such as disability, geographic location, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, age, and mental health status intersect at various points of the individual level and reflect multiple interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at a societal level (Bowleg, 2012). In this way, intersectionality acknowledges the various complex experiences encountered at an individual level but importantly, attempts to explain how those experiences may be contextualized within the interlocking macro-systems of mentalism, sexism, heterosexism, and racism, [ableism]<sup>3</sup> (Ibid, p. 1268). Thus, intersectionality accounts for how personal experiences interlock with societal structures<sup>3</sup> that oppress certain demographics based on hierarchical frameworks adopted and maintained by modernist society (Crenshaw, 2015; 2016; Gopaldas, 2013; Hirschmann 2012; Shimmin et al., 2017). Because of its focus on lived experiences, intersectionality is more than an exploration of diversity or a celebration of multiculturalism. Rather, it calls us to consider how subjective and relational experiences of those located in diverse disability communities connect to the matrix of domination they are subjected to (Collins, 1990).

**Assumption #2: Intersectionality is goal orientated and has social justice intent.** An important element of intersectionality is the consideration given to how various forms of discrimination (ableism, racism, sexism, transphobia, etc.) work together to create a complex web of discrimination (Collins, 2015). The goal of intersectionality is therefore to address the inequities perpetuated by these relations and explore ways in which they may be contested. In this way, intersectionality is concerned with the pragmatics of social change because it's goals are rooted in imagining a world "in which everyone, regardless of who they are or where they live, can live violence-free, [have] access to safe housing, have their [perspectives] heard, and enjoy freedom from discrimination" (Simpson, 2009, p. 6). Whether applied within the context of research, practice, and policy work, examining the complex interactions among multiple social categories through an intersectional lens challenges "systems and processes of domination and oppression [that] simultaneously produce experiences of discrimination and privilege" (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2009, p. 7). Further, as Collins (1990) demonstrates, although the

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<sup>3</sup> As Hardie (2009) describes, the micro and macro levels of experience are reflected in what she calls the "Wounded-Healer Paradigm" (p. 246). Self-awareness and critical thought are described through this paradigm and in the broader context of what Hardie refers to as *Reflexive Critical Humanism* as "one way to facilitate the complex interactions" of power relations that exist in practice, policy, and research (p. 10).

theoretical aspects of intersectionality are essential to understand it as a political tool of insurgency, intersectionality encourages us to move beyond theory by emphasizing the application of amalgamating “abstract thought with concrete action” (p. 29). Through praxis,<sup>4</sup> intersectionality seeks to create a more egalitarian society by exposing systems that fail to protect historically marginalized populations, and who often do not account for the diversity of those in disability communities (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; 2015; Hankivsky, 2012; Saldanha, 2010; Saxe, 2017; Puar, 2012; Tomlinson, 2013).

**Assumption #3: Intersectionality conceptualizes identity as multiple and various over time and space.** Because intersectional analysis holds that “the notion that social categories are not independent [or] unidimensional,” it is helpful to recognize that through an intersectional framework, identities are multiple, interdependent, and mutually constitutive (Bowleg, 2012, p. 1268). For instance, only accounting for one’s social location of gender may not accurately account for the marginalization one experiences. Rather, intersectionality encourages us to contextualize the privileges and discrimination one experiences within an oscillating web that coincides with various other social identities, such as gender (Breslin, et al., 2017; Hamidullah & Riccucci, 2017; Shaw, et al., 2012; Saldanha, 2010; Shimmin et al., 2017.). Thus, intersectionality refrains from thinking of discrimination and privilege as a hierarchy, or the “simple addition of one term [or social location] to another, but rather how differences define and reinforce one another” (Adams, 2013, p. 6). The principles of intersectionality are also associated with historic and current grassroots organizing, which draw upon the works of Judy Chamberlin (1978), Paulo Friere (1973), Saul Alinsky (1973), and Pat Capponi (1992). Emphasized in these works is the importance of consciousness raising, self-awareness, valuing lived experiences, and perhaps most importantly, thinking critically about history so that lessons may be learned from past mistakes (Hardie, 2009). In Crenshaw’s view, intersectionality proposes that discrimination and privilege are experienced relationally. Importantly, because of the anti-hierarchical framework, intersectionality occurs unpredictably, which creates possibilities for mutually transformative recognition (Ibid).

Intersectionality also promotes spaces and opportunities for renegotiation and resistance to power (Shimmin, et al., 2017) The visual aid, [Figure #1] demonstrates how intersectionality asks us to think about how at any point of time, several variables impact our experiences of privilege and discrimination.<sup>5</sup>

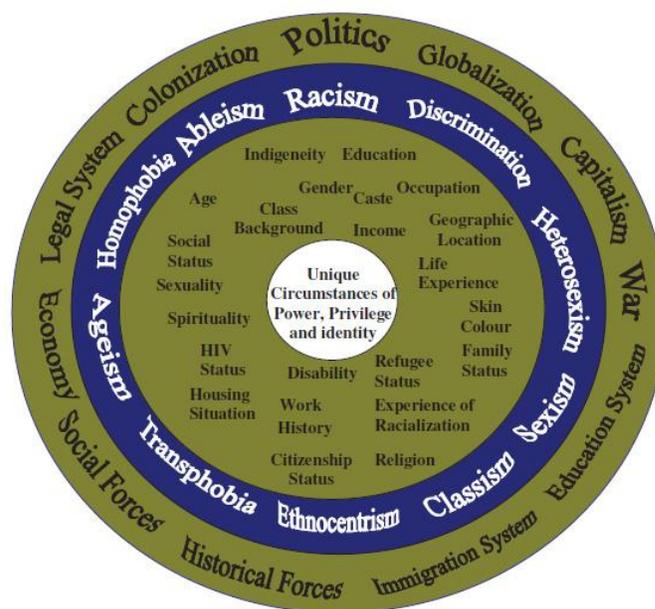


Figure #1: Adopted from "Intersectionality 101" (Hankivsky, 2014)

<sup>4</sup> In this report, *praxis* refers to amalgamating theory with practice to make change in the lives of persons with disabilities (Berger & Radeloff, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Image reference: “Intersectionality Wheel” adapted from <http://docplayer.net/4773103-Intersectionality-101-olena-hankivsky-phd.html>

**Assumption #4: The concept of intersectionality has multiple meanings and is an evolving concept.** As will be discussed in more detail in SECTION II, the concept of intersectionality was formulated and highlighted by black feminist scholars (GopalDas, 2013). Yet, since its inception, the applicability and definition of intersectionality has been evolving. The concept has been used to analyze power differentials amongst a multitude of demographic categories that have become naturalized in society (Ibid, p. 91). In fact, intersectionality can be used to understand how certain bodies are privileged/discriminated according to their “age, attractiveness, body type, caste, citizenship, education, ethnicity, height and weight assessments, immigration status, income, marital status, mental health status, nationality, occupation, physical ability, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc.” (Ibid, p. 91). The fluid conceptualization and meaning of intersectionality can make it difficult to define (Bowleg, 2012; Hirschmann, 2012). On the other hand, intersectionality calls us to think about the macro-level implications of “multiple axes of identity” and how the often-siloed initiatives of advocacy, policy, and academia relate to one another through transdisciplinary and trans-categorical analysis<sup>6</sup> (GopalDas, 2013, p. 91).

**Assumption #5: Intersectionality is about analyzing structures of power, whilst recognizing that we all have multiple social identities.** Intersectionality involves critically conceptualizing the relationship between identity and power (Crenshaw, 2015). Because intersectionality seeks to understand the complexities of social identities, the political intent of intersectional analysis is to make visible identities who have been historically oppressed and marginalized, including but not exclusive to women, racialized, LGBTQ2+, people experiencing low-income, and persons with disabilities (Bowleg, 2012). Therefore, intersectionality accounts for the fact that being white, male, heterosexual, and non-disabled is a multiple group identity as any other variety of locations (Caldwell, 2010). Because intersectionality seeks to understand how the power nexus produces both privilege and discrimination status, it is useful for locating persons at the intersections who are often made invisible or experience a disproportionate level of oppression and/or privilege (Cirstocea & Giraud, 2015; Simpson, 2009). In western society, such as Canada, the privilege is shaped, to a large degree by one’s social standing, which is often tied to participation in the labour market. This benchmark may be considered to be the white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, middle-class, able-bodied individual (Campbell, 2015; Dudley, 2006; GopalDas, 2013). Therefore, one’s experience of discrimination may equate to the sum of:  $a + b + c + (ab) + (ac) + (abc)$ . If one’s disability, gender, and class are being taken into consideration to account for their oppression, the equation would be similar to this:  $\text{disability} + \text{gender} + \text{class} + (\text{disability} \times \text{gender}) + (\text{disability} \times \text{class}) + (\text{gender} \times \text{class}) + (\text{disability} \times \text{gender} \times \text{class})$  (MacDonald, 2017, p. 142). According to an intersectional framework our locations and identities are not static, but socially and relationally constructed, making them susceptible to fluctuate across the lifespan (Dolphijn, 2013; GopalDas, 2013; Puar, 2012).

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<sup>6</sup> *Transdisciplinary* and *trans-categorical* are defined in this report as recognising the interconnectivity of issues and responding by working across disciplines, silos, fields, and activist movements to improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

The five assumptions outlined above demonstrate that intersectionality is a complex and multifaceted framework, yet essential for purposes of political mobilization. One way to grapple with the complexity of intersectionality is to return an analogy of the event of a traffic accident, which was posed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, the legal scholar who is responsible for coining the term.

In her seminal 1989 text *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, Crenshaw explains intersectionality in the following way:

Consider an analogy of traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them... [b]ut it is not always easy to reconstruct an accident: Sometimes the skid marks and the injuries simply indicate that they occurred simultaneously, frustrating efforts to determine which driver caused the harm. In these cases the tendency seems to be that no driver is held responsible, no treatment is administered, and the involved parties simply get back in their cars and zoom away (p. 149).

Crenshaw's traffic analogy suggests that the social system can cause vulnerability for those who arrive at its intersections from multiple directions and locations. Rather than protect people as it purports to do, the system presents risks. Following the traffic analogy, the ambulances and Emergency Medical Services personnel who are intended to aid victims, are unable to effectively help because they are unable decipher the systems risks (Dudley, 2006; Tomlinson, 2013).

Crenshaw's work, which is heavily cited in the literature on intersectionality, demonstrated that at the intersection of the both the gender equality project and the anti-racist project there were points of exclusion, and thus perspectives that were never discussed. As we will outline in the next section, Crenshaw will describe three ways in which intersectionality may be further understood, which has been taken up by social scientists and practitioners since (Aylward, 2010; McCall, 2005; Walby et al., 2012).



Figure #2: Adopted from "Intersectionality 101" (Hankivsky, 2014)

Crenshaw (1997) examined the way that intersectionality can be applied at an individual, systemic, and cultural levels. To further an understanding of intersectionality, it is helpful to examine the various ways that intersectionality has been conceptualized as structural, political, and representational.

1. *Structural intersectionality* analyzes how systematic barriers discriminate persons who live at the intersection of multiple social locations. Here, the focus is on how compounding oppressions or life circumstances, such as disability, overlaps with other social factors, such as a lack of housing, underemployment, lack of childcare, undereducation, etc.
2. *Political intersectionality* analyzes structures beyond individual experience and is concerned with the intersections of political agendas and projects (Walby et al., 2012). Crenshaw (1997) notes, political systems, advocacy initiatives, and public policies are often designed to privilege certain groups of people while oppressing others. For instance, if disability rights movements are not accessible nor welcoming to racialized populations, and anti-racist movements do not include persons with disabilities, both initiatives inadvertently weaken their positions and therefore forfeit political mobilization to their oppressors (see also, Adams, 2013; Aylward, 2010; Barnartt & Altman, 2013; Claire 2015; Hirschmann 2012; Puar, 2012; Wilson, 2004).
3. *Representational intersectionality* analyzes the way that certain social identities are stereotypically exploited in popular media through negative portrayals (Crenshaw, 1997). Persons with disabilities at various intersections are often dichotomized as either objects of pity, degradation, or tokenized as heroes by miraculously overcoming their disability by returning themselves to a so-called normative state (see also, Hughes, 2009; Longmore, 2003). Through symbolic violence, these negative and over-simplistic narratives oftentimes go unnoticed and accepted by the public, and importantly, by the very people that the images discriminate against.

| Structural  | Political   | Representational   |
|---|---|--|
| Severity of systematic discrimination is exacerbated by the multitude of social locations | Political systems and public policies neglect to account for the complexities of social locations | Media portrayals that perpetuate stereotypes are often accepted by the group that they are misrepresenting |

Thus, there are various conceptualizations of intersectionality that can relate to understanding disability. The intention here was not to advocate for a specific type of intersectionality, but to demonstrate that intersectionality will apply to different analyses depending on one's purpose, demographics, intent, and scope. Upon examining the core components of intersectionality and some of the foundational aspects of the concept, we now turn to a brief discussion of the historical roots of intersectionality.

## *Section II: Historical Development of Intersectionality: Tracing the Intersections*

This section focuses on the historical development of intersectionality for the needs of activists, and scholars. Many of these developments can be attributed to black feminist scholars who examined the intertwined and interrelated experiences of black women in 1980's USA (Choo & Ferree, 2010). The concept of intersectionality existed in a variety of ways, long before the term *intersectionality* was called by name (Walby et al., 2012). For example:

- In 1851, former slave Sojourner Truth stood before a crowd at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio and delivered her famous speech "Ain't I a Woman?". This event is now regarded as one of the earliest recorded accounts of the intersectionality perspective (Bowleg, 2012), Truth spoke about how her gender as a woman, and her race as a coloured woman, compounded and added to her experience of oppression (Bowleg, 2012; Simpson, 2009; Truth, 1851).
- In the mid 1800's, a sociologist from North Carolina who was born a slave, Anna Julia Cooper, articulated the concept that black women have a distinct standpoint and perspective because of the double oppression they face (Feagin et al., 2013). Cooper was amongst the first to analyze data on the social situations that affected both black Americans and women. She was a critic of how the "aggressively racist white media...distorted representations of African American history" and neglected to report their impoverished conditions (Ibid, p. 72).
- In the early 1900's, sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois was perhaps the first major theorist to emphasize the link between racial and class exploitation (Feagin et al., 2013). Du Bois argued that institutional racism and modern capitalism were inextricably linked, claiming that "white workers accepted lower than necessary money wages in return for a 'public and psychological wage of whiteness'" (Ibid, p. 69). The subservience of white workers thus allowed white elites to maintain the dominant racial hierarchy because they allowed white workers miniscule privileges over racialized persons, such as the admission to certain public areas and functions that were off limits to people of color (Ibid, p. 69).<sup>7</sup>



Figure#3: From left to right, Julia Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Sojourner Truth

<sup>7</sup> Image references from left to right: <http://sociologicalimagination.org/archives/10635/4;>  
<https://www.biography.com/people/web-du-bois-9279924;>  
[https://www.biography.com/people/sojourner-truth-9511284.](https://www.biography.com/people/sojourner-truth-9511284)

Although the term intersectionality is an invention of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the power and privilege that is associated with social locations has doubtlessly existed for much longer (Tomlinson, 2013). Several authors have pointed to the practices of indigenous peoples from around the world who have emphasized the interconnectivity and the inseparability of one's holistic being (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional) from health, both at an individual and community level (e.g., Durst & Bluehardt, 2004; Simpson, 2017).



Figure #4: Kimberlé Crenshaw

The contemporary conceptualization of intersectionality has developed as a reaction to second wave feminism in 1970's and 80's USA (Bilge & Roy, 2010; Dudley, 2006; Pilcher, 2004). The feminist movement was profoundly impactful in its ability to consolidate and mobilize women's groups who sought the political right to reproductive freedom, safe and legal abortion, access to employment, and equal pay for equal work. Importantly, although second-wave feminism challenged the hierarchies that perpetuated inequities imposed by patriarchy and capitalism, it was predominantly "a suburban white women's movement [and therefore alienated] women of color—Black, Latina, Native American and Asian women" (Dudley, 2006, p. 38). This was the

historical context that allowed Crenshaw to coin the term 'intersectionality.' The concept of intersectionality sought to properly articulate the complex relationship between the social locations of gender, ethnicity, class, race, sexual orientation, disability, and class (Bowleg, 2012; Crenshaw 1989; 1991; 2015; Simpson, 2009). More specifically, Crenshaw coined the term *intersectionality* to specifically examine "how black women were oppressed [during] unjust court trials [and were] over-represented [as victims in] situations of rape and domestic violence" (Saxe, 2017, p. 154). Intersectionality was conceptualized as a political response, a term that Crenshaw invented to equip feminists and anti-racist activists with a linguistic and theoretical tool that could simplify the oppressions they were experiencing by the penal system and make it easier to discuss and understand (Crenshaw, 2015).<sup>8</sup> To trace the origins of intersectionality requires an example that Crenshaw (1989) outlines in her influential article, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics". As Crenshaw articulates, in 1976, Emma DeGraffenreid, a black, working-class mother from St. Louis, Missouri filed a law suit against the corporation General Motors because she felt they had employment policies that discriminated at the intersection of race and gender. At General Motors there were two avenues for employment—one was working in the factory, which was predominantly a job for males, and the other was working in the office, which was predominantly a job for white people. White men

<sup>8</sup> Image reference: <https://medium.com/@radfemfatale/intersectionality-is-not-a-safety-pin-f018e63f5500>

were therefore permitted to work in both the factory and the office, while white women were permitted to work in the office. Conversely, black men were permitted only to work in the factory, and black women could not work in the factory because they were not men, nor could they work in the office because they were not white. Realizing the double discrimination prompted DeGraffenreid to take legal action against General Motors, but because the judicial system was not set up to address the intersectional discrimination of black women, the claim was dismissed. It was ruled that because General Motors employed women and black people, they were not guilty of discriminatory employment procedures (Crenshaw, 1989; 2015).

Crenshaw's example anchors the root of intersectionality to discrimination of the legal system in the United States, yet as the concept became more and more popular, its broad applicability came to represent a political reaction to the systemic violence that racialized women were experiencing in broader society—an issue that current the feminist movement could not address. What's more, the violence that ensued due to the 'double jeopardy' in the court room called the attention of scholars and activists outside of the courtroom and called attention to oppressions that came in various forms of structural, political, and representational intersections (Adams, 2013; Crenshaw, 1997). The term that originated from consideration of the conjunction of race and gender for black women, was not simply about race, class, or gender—it came to be an analytical tool that addressed the complexities of how privilege and discrimination are shaped by various social identities.

Intersectionality has challenged the historical contextualization of power as innately hierarchical. Instead of seeing oppressions through the lens of second wave feminism, the new concept of intersectionality stressed that the intersection of race and gender was not just negative, but multiplicatively so (Barnartt & Altman, 2013). The experiences of a black woman are thus not merely the experiences of someone who is either a woman or a black person—rather, the social and political structures are designed to attend to the needs of singular identities, which omit experiences of multiple identities. This could easily have been seen, for example, in American income statistics at the time: On average, men earned more than women, and whites earned more than black people. Therefore, black women earned the less than both white women and black men. In order to explain why this occurred, and still does, one would need to examine factors which included occupational segregation, racism, sexism, socialization, hiring patterns, social networks, and prejudice (Ibid, p. 5). Rather than the hierarchal "Oppression Olympics" arguing who was oppressed more, intersectionality argued that discrimination must be understood as a result of multiple social locations, which vary according to time, location, and context (Berdal & Moore, 2006; Choo & Ferree, 2010; Hirschmann, 2012; Walby, et al., 2012).

Although intersectionality in its current form is a relatively recent development, the principles of intersectionality have been used to inform grassroots organizing and leadership in the cross-disability movement in Canada since the mid 1970's (Church, 1991; Deegan, 1991; Hardie, 2001; 2009; Zinman, Budd, & Harp, 1987). In fact, the principles associated with intersectionality have also informed grassroots cross-disability meetings, workshops, and seminars (Hardie, 2009; Morrow & Hardie, 2014). For instance, efforts were made to ensure the shared principles were embedded in the development of the National Network for Mental Health

(1991), the national mental health strategy in Canada (2012) and The Psychosocial Rehabilitation Practitioners competencies (2013).

Before and after the invention of the term intersectionality, activists and theorists have adapted intersectionality in their work, which include the important works of black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000), Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* (1997), bell hooks's *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (2000), Angela Davis's *Women, Race and Class* (1983), and the black feminist lesbian organization from Massachusetts, The Combahee River Collective's "A Black Feminist Statement" (1978). Intersectionality has since gained traction across the realm of social science research in the years since its inception (Dudley, 2006; Puar, 2012; Saldanha, 2010) and thanks to the work of scholars such as Olena Hankivsky and Marina Morrow (2010; 2012; 2014; also see Hankivsky & Cormier, 2009; 2010; Hankivsky & Christoffersen, 2008), uptake in Canada and Europe has grown substantially since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Intersectionality has become a political tool for system change, grassroots organizing, advocacy, movement building, and developing policy (Hankivsky, 2014; Morrow & Malcoe, 2017). The topic of intersectionality has also been the subject of several special issues of academic journals, edited books, and conferences commemorating Crenshaw's contribution, as well as lively new discussions about feminist theorizing that has generated a resurgence of interest in the topic of intersectionality (Puar, 2012). One of the latest developments of intersectionality is within the realm of disability issues.

### *Section III: The Intersections of Disability: A Web of Discrimination*

#### *Overview: A Symbiotic and Complicated History and Present*

Despite its broad applicability, analyses of how disability intersects with other social locations is a relatively new subject area of intersectional analysis. To demonstrate its novelty, during a large American sociological meeting in the mid 2000's, a disability activist approached Patricia Hill Collins, one of the pioneers of intersectionality analyses, and asked her why disability was rarely discussed in the literature on intersectionality. This question illuminated the uncharted territory of intersectionality and disability which gave rise to the 2013 text, *Race, Class, and Gender*, an anthology edited by Margaret Andersen and Collins. In this text, the inclusion of *disability* is listed as one of the relevant variables of social identities (Barnartt, 2013).

The relatively lack of consideration of disability may be due, in part, to the complexity of defining the term disability. Disability scholars and activists have contextualized disability in a variety of ways, which has fluctuated according to historical, cultural, political, and social contexts (Barnes & Mercer, 2008; Oliver, 1991; Titchkosky, 2001). Indeed, the experience of disability varies according to the cultural milieu, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, geographical location, sexual orientation, or gender (Moshe & Magna, 2014; Tremain, 2005, 2015). In this way, the notion of a category of disability is debatable—problematic to some as an oversimplification of identity, and meaningful to others for purposes of political activity, belonging, and cultural recognition (Hirschmann, 2012).

The complexities of defining the concept of disability are therefore important to understanding how intersectionality can assist us with understanding the social, economic, and political discrimination that persons with disabilities experience. For instance, persons with disabilities have historically experienced “infantilization, dehumanization...paternalism, and the prevailing assumption that their lives are tragic and that it should be normal them [to seek a cure]” (Saxe, 2017, p. 165). Further, the social identity of disability is experienced by “people of all classes, races, ethnicities, and religions, [genders], straight and gay” (Hirschmann, 2017, p. 397) which calls for an intersectional analysis. (Garland Thomson, 1997; Hughes, 2009; Saxe, 2017; Siebers, 2008). Problematically however, a lack intersectional analyses in the cross-disability movement has resulted in a lack of peer-reviewed scholarship reflecting the diversity of the disability community, and thus, activists have had to rely on oral history and grey literature to preserve their histories. By addressing these historical frictions, attempting to understanding the complexity of the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, we are called to comprehend disability within the context of its cultural shaping, whilst acknowledging how lived subjective experiences expose inequities.

One of the implications of the complexities of the cross-disability community has been the initial analyses of disability that focused on the needs of “people with physical disabilities, the iconic figure of which is the wheelchair user” (Adams, 2012, p. 6). The prioritization of physical bodies and access to physical space in disability analyses have neglected to address the complexities of identity, such as the lived experience of chronic illness, mental health, or other nonconforming or oscillating embodiments (Kafer, 2013; Kittay, 2011; Saxe, 2017; Shakespeare, 2000; Wendell, 1996). In addition, disability scholarship and in particular, peer-reviewed literature has been

dominated by the perception of white males, from a heterosexual cis-gendered, and middle-class perspective (Goldberg, 2015; Wendell, 1996). Conversely, in activist circles, much of the work was completed by women, and completed with limited or no funding at all.

Intersectionality calls the disability sector to further explore how disability interacts with other social locations which are conceptually and politically structured, and to examine who is included and excluded in the narrative perspectives and opportunities for political action (Adams, 2013). If the goal of intersectionality as a framework is to advance disability issues by creating a critical mass that works to realize system change, then a way moving forward is to create allies by challenging the marginalization of particular groups that have been excluded from mainstream discourse, such as persons with mental health issues and developmental disabilities (Moshe & Magna, 2014).

Intersectionality is an anti-oppressive framework<sup>9</sup> that seeks to further the complexity of identity, by examining how multiple relationships and identities intersect with political potential (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). Disability studies and activism<sup>10</sup> has sought to understand disability as a complex form of identity. In 1982, disability studies pioneer and Society for Disability Studies founder Irving Zola wrote about the parallels between disability as a social issue and the racialization of black Americans in John Howard Griffin's 1961 text *Black Like Me* (Adams, 2012; Zola 1982). In this way, disability has been contextualized within the broader framework of sociopolitical issues that affect marginalized populations located at the intersection of poverty, race, class, and gender issues (Adams, 2012; Hirschman, 2012). Like intersectionality, disability is an evolving concept<sup>11</sup> situated in the broader study of normalcy and identity, it has the advantage of drawing upon other interdisciplinary frameworks to make political change (Adams, 2012; Garland Thomson, 1997; Mitchell & Snyder, 2001; Thomas, 1999; Wendell, 1996).

Although work on disability issues through an intersectional lens may help us to understand the complex social, economic, and political oppressions that persons with disabilities encounter, the relative new body of disability scholarship, and the history of siloed activism and policy poses issues that are in need of attention. It might be helpful for us to recall the origins of intersectionality. Intersectionality grew as an analytical tool for addressing issues that were missing in mainstream activism movements, such as second-wave feminism. Indeed, the perspectives of racialized women were not taken into consideration, which had detrimental

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<sup>9</sup> In this report we define *anti-oppressive framework* as a way of conducting practice, policy, and research that draws upon personal, institutional, cultural, and economic issues and works towards emancipatory change (Hines, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that although disability scholarship maintains a strong commitment to social justice, grassroots activism has historically worked to inform disability issues within the broader sector to effect system change and create resources and supports congruent with health and well-being.

<sup>11</sup> According to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2008), “[p]ersons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

consequences for many demographics, including racialized women. Similarly, it is up to disability activists, scholars, policy makers, practitioners, and services providers to highlight intersectionality as a means to create new opportunities for political leverage, human rights movements such as the black feminist movements did in the United States.

In the following section, we explore how several social identities, such as gender identity, race, sexual orientation, mental health, and indigeneity intersect with disability. We provide a brief overview of each, outlining their histories, tensions, and similarities. The summary presented here is not intended to focus on differences between people with disabilities, but to acknowledge a diversity of issues. We are attempting to recognize commonalities while respecting difference and diversity. This is not to draw on a discourse of identity politics which reflects a tendency for people to form exclusive alliances according to their social or cultural background, impairment type, etc. Nor do we wish to facilitate a focus on individualization. Rather, we are working to recognize the heterogeneity within and among communities of people with disabilities. We are also identifying some of the major strands of intersectional work that is just beginning to emerge in the field of disability and intersectionality.

### *Disability and Feminism*

The study of disability as a sociocultural phenomenon began in nearly the same way feminism did in the 1980's (Garland Thomson, 2002). Feminism and by extension, women and gender studies sought to reconceptualise the concept of *woman* by debunking traditionalist ideas of what gender had become in modern society. The study of disability under the rubric of identity studies has had similar goals of creating equitable societies for all people by critiquing discriminatory societal systems. Moreover, both the study of disability and gender critique “the politics of appearance, the medicalization of the body, the privilege of normalcy” (Garland Thomson, 2001, p. 2), and engage in critical discourse about sexuality, power differentials, social constructionism, and egalitarianism (Garland Thomson, 1997; 2002; Hirschmann, 2012; Hughes, 1997; Price, 2011; Samuels, 2003). The concepts of disability and gender as social constructs and markers of identity have much in common. For instance, both concepts pervade every “aspect of culture”—from our “structuring institutions, social identities, cultural practices, political positions, historical communities, and the shared human experience of embodiment” (Garland Thomson, 2002, p. 4).<sup>12</sup>

Although the study of disability issues and gender have had congruent prerogatives and histories, many of the models, theories, and arguments that have been made by disability studies practitioners have demonstrated a naïveté to the struggles that feminists have fought for and conversely—much of feminist discourse remains negligible to the perspectives posed by

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that work has been done on the intersection of gender and disability outside of the academy. In the mid-1990's, federal funding was allocated to addressing cross-disability issues at the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health, which included five chapters across Canada. Although policy and research work varied across the country, all chapters completed work on disability, gender, and healthcare. More information can be found at <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/node/39794>.

disability scholarship (Garland Thomson, 2002). Problematically, when discussing such issues related to embodiment such as “reproductive technology, the place of bodily differences, the particularities of oppression, the ethics of care, [and] the construction of the subject,” feminist scholars often make no mention of disability or alternatively, include perspectives of disability as an afterthought (Barile, 2005; Barnes & Mercer, 2003; Garland Thomson, 2002). One reason this tension might exist is because “some feminists exclude disabled women from study for fear that they will reinforce stereotypes of women as dependent” (Hirschmann, 2012, p. 398). Although women with disabilities have often felt excluded from the feminist movement because of these tensions (Goldberg, 2015; Morris, 1993; Price, 2011), cross-disability community organizations in Canada, such as the Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health, have worked at the intersection of gender and disability for many years, co-creating solutions to address human rights and influencing policy, research, and practice with the intention of making changes in the lives of women with disabilities (Yoshida et al., 2009).

Despite the tensions, ignoring the intersection between gender and disability is deeply problematic when considering the experiences of discrimination that women with disabilities experience. For instance, DAWN Canada notes, “[i]n a society which devalues and often punishes difference of any kind, women with disabilities face many barriers. If we are Indigenous women, LGBTQ, older women, women of colour or immigrant women, we encounter even more discrimination and more barriers.

Did you know that:<sup>13</sup>

- At least 53% of all people with disabilities in Canada are women;
- The unemployment rate among women with disabilities is up to 75%;
- 58% of women with disabilities live on less than \$10,000 per year. Of those, 23% live on less than \$5,000 per year;
- Accessible cribs, accessible and affordable childcare and other services for mothers with disabilities are virtually non-existent;
- A drunken and/or abusive father is often considered a better parent than a mother who has a disability;
- Women and children with disabilities are twice as likely to be victims of violence than non-disabled women, women and children with multiple disabilities experience even higher rates of violence;
- Across Canada, few rape crisis centres and transition houses are accessible to women with all kinds of disabilities

Gender and disability are not mutually exclusive but intersect in complex ways. Historically and currently, female bodies, just as disabled bodies, trans bodies, and racialized bodies have often been contextualized as incomplete, dependent, vulnerable, and deficient (Garland Thomson, 1997; Hirschmann, 2012). Far from just discriminatory labeling, nonconforming bodies have been subjected to “infanticide, selective abortion, eugenic programs, hate crimes, mercy killing,

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<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.dawncanada.net/about/about/>

assisted suicide coercive rehabilitation, domestic violence, genocide, normalizing surgical procedures and neglect.” (Garland Thomson, 2002, p. 9). Intersectionality addresses these discriminatory practices and images presented in everyday society and in research.

The intersection of disability and gender calls us to adjust our conceptual frameworks of both concepts and strengthen our understanding of how multiple systems that discriminate against both women and persons with disabilities intertwine, redefine, and mutually constitute each other (Garland Thomson, 2002). Jenny Morris (1993) expresses concern that feminism fails to integrate disability into its theory, methodology, research and politics, but also believes that feminist theory and methodology can meaningfully contribute to disability research. She notes, “Disabled people’s personal experience of prejudice must be made political and space must be created for the ‘absent subject’ in the way that feminist research has done for nondisabled women” (p. 64). Fine and Asch (1988) point out that women with disabilities generally do not deal with the same oppressions as non-disabled women because they may not be seen as *women* in society. They do not necessarily experience the same social expectations such as marriage, subordinate paid work, child bearing or housekeeping. More recently, Schriempf (2001) argues that it is not enough to just add the biological foundations of sex and impairment to conclude that women with disabilities are oppressed due to gender and disability. She suggests that women with disabilities “embody a complex of interwoven situations” (p. 67) based on gender, disability, class/caste, sexuality, race, abuse, etc. Carol Thomas (1999) relates her definition of disability “in the same way that the concept of patriarchy refers to the relationship of male ascendancy over women, so the concept of disability refers to the relationship of ascendancy of the non-impaired over the impaired. Disability, like patriarchy is a form of social oppression” (p. 301). Both gender studies, disability studies, and other broader critical discourses operate in social justice and humanitarian ways, where the goal is not to become ‘just like men,’ or to ‘become able-bodied’—it is rather in place to critique the normative structures that discriminate at the intersection of gender and disability and oppose the constitution and stability of what is taken for granted as the normalized body (Hirschmann, 2012).

### *Disability, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation*

In the growing body of literature on issues related to LGBTQ2+ people and communities, scholars have noted that conflating gender identity and sexual orientation is problematic because identification does not imply orientation or vice versa (Caldwell 2010; Morgan, 2013). The relative novelty and evolving nature of LGBTQ2+ studies are demonstrative of the literature on feminism and disability, which places emphasis on sexuality, yet remains grounded in heteronormative and cissexist framing. In this way, some authors have argued that this grounding has ignored experiences of disabled people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and asexual (Martino, 2017). However, there is a growing body of scholarly work at the intersection of queerness, transness, and disability (Puar, 2012). Previous literature has consistently pointed out that queer<sup>14</sup> disabled people often experience isolation, marginalization, and oppression

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<sup>14</sup> The term *queer* is used in this report “... as a symbol of pride and affirmation of difference and diversity, or as a means of challenging rigid identity categories” (Egale Human Rights Trust, p. 11).

because of their disability and sexual orientation (Bennett & Coyle, 2001; Bucik, et al., 2017; Harley, et al., 2002; Lemos & Crane, 2012; Martino, 2017).

Similar to the existing research on gender and race, the study of the intersection between disability and queerness have indicated a strong resistance of assimilation or acceptance of queer disabled bodies into the normative structure that produces discrimination, but rather seek to change the societal understandings of disability and queerness—arguing that society needs radical change (Martino, 2017). Ironically, unlike the histories of disability, race and gender, although there has been an interest in the sexual lives of persons with disabilities, in some ways, activists and scholars have been reluctant to incorporate LGBTQ2+ into their analysis—almost as if it is “going too far” and should not be an intersection attended to (Ibid, p. 3) Yet, ignoring the sexual lives and orientations of persons with disabilities has led to the exclusion of “queer disabled people”—as they have been an invisible and undervalued group in both queer and disability circle” (Ibid, p. 3). For instance, there are several experiences of discrimination that persons who are at the intersection of LGBTQ2+ and disability encounter.

One of the most prominent examples of how sexual orientation and gender identity can intersect with disability are the experiences of persons who have intellectual disabilities. Many persons who live in supported environments do not have (or have limited) privacy in their homes, which they may share with others, or are not particularly sex-positive environments. Further, oftentimes the perspectives of support workers, friends, or family might lack the capability to support persons in this area or feel uncomfortable attending to these needs (Ibid). In addition, some so-called “homosexual acts” between individuals with intellectual disabilities are oftentimes misinterpreted as acts of platonic expression, rather than sexual desire or curiosity. These circumstances are imbedded in the long history of conceptualizing persons with disabilities as being incapable of sexual desire, which has led to their experiences infantilization and invisibility (Kulick & Rydström, 2015; Löfgren-Mårtenson, 2009; Martino, 2017).

There is also a growing body of recent research analyses that have emerged that seek to understand the complexities of the intersections of LGBTQ2+ identities and persons with disabilities. Although not an exhaustive list, there are few key experiences of discrimination listed below:<sup>15</sup>

- Coming-out as LGBTQ2+ can be an emotionally difficult action for many people, which can be even more difficult for queer persons who have disabilities due to ableism, homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism;
- There is a lack of educational resources for LGBTQ2+ persons with disabilities, and if there are resources, they tend to focus on heteronormativity, cissexism, or able-bodiedness;

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<sup>15</sup> Bennet & Coyle, 2001; Caldwell, 2010; Cuthbert, 2015; King et al., 2017; MacDonald, 2017; Martino, 2017; Chin, 2017

- Because of the lack of education, many LGBTQ2+ persons with disabilities are unable to articulate their sexual identities, desires and rights in a way that can ensure they are listened to;
- Further, many LGBTQ2+ persons with disabilities lack sexual role models and a supportive community that is *sex-positive*, leading to a possible reluctance to come out as LGBTQ2+;
- LGBTQ2+ persons with disabilities also typically experience fewer opportunities for meeting sexual partners and developing relationships, and even dating services made for persons with disabilities tend to once again, focus on heteronormativity;
- 18% of all hate crimes in Canada involved the LGBTQ2+ community in 2011;
- LGBTQ2+ persons with disabilities experience higher rates of sexual abuse; and
- The sexualities of people with intellectual disabilities are truly invisible because they have been perceived as either a sexual infantilized or hyper-sexual and dangerous.

One of the most prevalent themes in the literature on disability and LGBTQ2+ is the call for more research. Like studies on gender and disability, much of the research to date on disability and LGBTQ2+ has been male centric, and more specifically focuses on understanding the experiences of men with disabilities who identify as gay (Martino, 2017). Although through this lens, much research has been completed on issues related to dealing with stigma, experiences of sexual abuse, and the challenges about being open about one's sexuality, other disabled identities within the LGBTQ2+ community have experienced marginalization in both the disability community and in the LGBTQ2+ community.

For instance, there are very few studies exist about bisexual persons with disabilities, which may be accredited to the fact that mainstream gay and lesbian communities pose within-category othering and are not accessible to those who identify as bisexual. Further, many people who identify as bisexual are subjected to the compulsory monosexual norm that is often imposed by LGBTQ2+ communities (Caldwell, 2010; Martino, 2017). In fact, disabled and bisexual people face unique challenges due to the impact of invisibility and intersecting identities within the context of a resistant paternalistic and monosexual society (Caldwell, 2010). More research is required to understand the lived experiences of bisexual disabled people so that their experiences may contribute to theoretical dialogues among bisexual, queer, and disability theories (Martino, 2017). Asexuality is also under researched and is often thought of with suspicion by the community at large and the LGBTQ2+ community. The intersection of asexuality and disability is interesting because disability studies literature has commonly referred to asexuality as an oppressive stereotype which is frequently applied to persons with disabilities that diminish their sexual autonomy. This has to do with a history of sterilization, infantilization, etc. (Cuthbert, 2015; Martino, 2017). There is also a need to research the intersection between sexual orientation, gender identity and disability and poverty (Claire, 2015).

Given the oscillating nature of disability and LGBTQ2+ identities, perhaps it is no surprise that there has been tension between communities—and perhaps no more than between persons with disabilities and trans identities. Although there are similarities between transness and disability in that they both challenge able-bodied normativity, many trans people seek biomedical interventions that alter their body, and in doing so name their transness a disability or birth defect

(Claire, 2015; Puar, 2012). As a result, the division between trans and disabled identities is widened because many trans people adopt the medialization of disabled bodies, which is an ableist and politically archaic move that alienates potential alliances (Baril, 2015; Claire, 2015; Puar, 2012). In addition, persons with disabilities are often alienated and marginalized by several aspects of the LGBTQ2+ movement. For instance, inaccessible environments, unreliable transportation, ableist assumptions about disability, and problematic portrayals of the aesthetic and bodily ideals of traditional ideas of beauty and appearance which are often ubiquitous in the gay community are all issues (Martino, 2017).

Despite these tensions, LGBTQ2+ and disability intersect in a profound way that presents opportunities to question the normalcy of compulsory heterosexuality, cissexism, and able-bodiedness, and along with other critical scholars and activists, create strategies of emancipation (Claire, 2015; Martino, 2017; Puar, 2012). There are too many similarities to ignore the intersections, which include the “experience of passing, being in the closet, coming out, strategies for dealing with stigma, medicalization and pathologization, facing devaluing social and cultural representations based on stereotypes.... being denied human and sexual rights and experiencing high rates of violence and harassment” (Martino, 2017, p. 8). Moving on with intersectional research, it is up to policy makers, service providers, activists, and researchers to address issues composed by the systemic interlocking systems of oppression such as ableism, sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and transphobia (Ibid).

### *Disability and Race*

Disability and race have a long history, dating back in the United States to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, where the so-called “Ugly Laws” were enforced, which to disproportionately discriminated against black persons with disabilities (Schweik, 2009). Black people with disabilities were more likely to be associated with disease during this time, and according to the Ugly Laws, arrests were made for being “unsightly” in the public view—a crime that was not persecuted against white people, nor the able-bodied (Adams, 2015). The Ugly Laws tragic history is indicative of the oppressed histories that have occurred among persons located at the intersection of ableism and racism. Indeed, colonial ideologies, including the slavery of racialized persons in North America contextualized black people as “intrinsically degenerate [and thus] sought to bring these ‘bodies’ under control via segregation and/or destruction” (Erevelles & Minear, 2012, p. 133). During these historical periods, the connotation of disability-related labels as mongoloidism, feeble-mindedness and mental illness were often cast upon bodies that were marked by race (Adams, 2015; Goldberg, 2015).

Despite recent examples of scholarly work that examines the intersection between race and disability, many non-intersectional analyses, as well as social movements which adopt single identity politics have historically conflated or ignored intra-group differences (Erevelles & Minear, 2012; MacDonald, 2017). Indeed, as we have seen the label of *disability* has been used in colonial and neocolonial discourses to justify the brutality of slavery and assimilation of racialized bodies—bodies that have been the site of wounding, endurance, and struggle (Garland Thomson, 2002).

Yet, non-intersectional disability studies have predominantly been “white disability studies” such that there has been a lack of disability scholarship that incorporates racialization (Bell, 2006; Moshe & Magna, 2014). Conversely, much critical work in African-American, and post-colonial studies posits the racialized body with the assumption that of able-bodiedness, and remains unconscious, or at least non-analytical to the existence of disability as a social construct that intersects with racialized bodies (Aylward, 2010). Indeed, in many analyses, critical race scholars “mistakenly conceived of disability as a biological category” in their analysis (Erevelles & Minear, 2010, p. 132). When considering the discrimination that both racialized and disabled bodies are subjected to, the omission of intersectional analyses can miss recognition of the following experiences, including the following facts:<sup>16</sup>

- Racialized individuals have higher rates of disabilities, often in conjunction with lower socioeconomic or immigrant status, and face barriers accessing health services;
- In the United States, black and Latina women have higher prevalence rates of several chronic conditions than white women, with black women experiencing the most;
- In the United States, black women were found to experience functional impairments as they got older disproportionately to any other group;
- In the United States, black women experience higher rates of disability, which may be accelerated due to discrimination in health services, greater caregiving responsibilities in the home, poverty and poor living conditions;
- Various intersections contribute to health outcomes which are greatly affected by socioeconomic status as a key factor in determining disability;
- 52% of hate crimes in Canada are attributed to race and ethnicity, while persons with disabilities are two to four times more likely to be victims of abuse;
- Black men in the United States with mental illness experience heightened amounts of stereotyping, racial profiling, and violence.

Previous research also indicates that the American education system has disproportionate levels of racialized individuals receiving special education services, which are often segregated structures that are misrecognized as neutral and justifiable yet have classist and racist implications (Moshe and Magna, 2014). What some critics have called the “new segregation” of racialized populations, in these public education systems, disproportionate levels of black children with so-called “mild retardation” are segregated into special education classrooms (Erevelles & Minear, 2011; Gilborn, 2015). Racialized children represent 16% of the total school enrollment in the United States, yet constitute 21% of enrollment in special education, and more than twice as likely be labeled as having a learning disability (MacDonald, 2017, p. 152). These cohorts, often experience higher rates of underemployment once they graduate, face higher rates of poverty, and are arrested more frequently than their peers. Interestingly, schools with a history

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<sup>16</sup> Erevelles and Minear, 2010; Gilborn, 2015; MacDonald, 2017; Seaton, et al. 2013; Veenstra, 2011; Warner & Brown, 2012

of segregation against racialized populations account for the highest representation of black children labeled “mentally retarded” (ibid).

### *Disability and Indigeneity*

The intersection between disability and indigeneity is an under-researched subject area in Canada. As noted in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2012), the troubling history of colonialization and subsequent assimilation of many in Indigenous communities in Canada has had detrimental impacts on Indigenous peoples. Therefore, more research, better policy development and public education programs are required to gain a more thorough understanding of the complexities of experiences of Indigenous people with disabilities. Of the research that exists, authors have argued that the issues facing Indigenous people with disabilities are common to other people with disabilities yet are exacerbated by colonial oppression and the specific discrimination imposed on Indigenous peoples (Durst, 2017). In Canada, Indigenous persons are more than twice as likely to have a disability, which is often compounded by health-related issues, such as higher rates of diabetes, asthma, and trauma-related circumstances (Durst & Bluehardt, 2014; MacDonald, 2017). Moreover, Indigenous persons with disabilities experience higher rates of poverty and lower levels of education, which may be attributed to culturally nonresponsive systems that uphold negative stereotypes influenced by colonial frameworks (MacDonald, 2017).

Another issue facing Indigenous persons with disabilities is that many live (both off-reserve and on-reserve) in impoverished conditions and do not have adequate access to governmental and community resources. The lack of responsive and accessible government initiatives, policies, services, and programs for Indigenous persons with disabilities creates major systemic barriers to access because they are often so convoluted and frustrating to navigate that many give up trying to access or make no attempt in the first place (Durst & Bluehardt, 2014). As Gillespie, et al. (2016) claim, although laws and policies are designed to ensure access to education, healthcare, transportation, housing, and culture for Indigenous peoples, they too often fail to address the needs of Indigenous individuals. A lack of resources for basic needs in rural and urban areas has detrimental consequences for Indigenous people with disabilities and their families (Aylward, 2010; Blackstock, 2012; Durst, 2017; Gillespie, et al., 2016; Varcoe, et al., 2009).<sup>17</sup> As a result, Indigenous persons with disabilities have become a “hidden and forgotten population” (Durst, 2017 p. 172). As the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (2017) claims, although there has been a historical lack of priority and interest in the needs of those located at the intersection of disability and indigeneity in Canada, it is anticipated that through consultations, legislation, and a growing awareness of the needs of indigenous populations, the importance will grow in the years to come (BCANDS, 2017).

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<sup>17</sup> During the 1990’s, the National Aboriginal Network on Disabilities (NAND) was funded, which was initially led by James “Smokey” Tomkins. The NAND were at table and working with other disability advocacy organizations to advance disability issues with and for Aboriginal Peoples during this time.

## *Disability and Mental Health*

In the recent past, political traction that has been made by psychiatric survivors and mental health activists in Canada, who have organized to change the mental health system using the tools of power analysis, critical thought, system thinking, and reflexivity (Hardie, 2009). Despite these achievements, the majority of the advocacy work has historically been done by volunteers working outside both the formalized mental health system and the academy, which has made it difficult to secure funding. The challenges of trying to make system change while experiencing a lack of resources and support from allies has been problematic for organizations which seek to challenge the siloing of sectors by doing intersectional work on cross-disability issues. For example, as a totally consumer/survivor driven organization, NNMH:

Operates on the principles of inclusion and informed choice and respects each person's individuality as they work together to find common ground" ... The NNMH is committed to promoting hope and recovery for everyone. By working closely with our membership, and by forging partnerships and alliances, we promote social justice, human rights, and help capture and amplify a strong, unified voice of consumers in influencing decisions which affect them and that enhance their quality of life. (retrieved from <http://nnmh.ca/who-we-are/vision-mission/>).

This intersectional approach to addressing issues related to mental health is essential, because as the academic literature suggests, more cross-sectoral research, policy work and joint activist initiatives between mental health and disability communities are required to fully understand the political potential of joining forces (Beresford, 2000; Burns, 2009; McWade, et al., 2014).

Despite the challenges, in Canada, psychiatric consumer/survivor advocates (with the help of allies and academics) have engaged in grassroots organizing grounded in the principles of "informed choice" and "inclusion" which has been successful in raising awareness about the discrimination and violence that persons with mental health issues<sup>18</sup> experience with hope of realizing transformative system change (S. Hardie, personal communication, March 23, 2018). For instance, early activist work has influenced many realms of society including the academy, where the discipline of Mad Studies has emerged (see Beresford, 2000; Reaume, 2003) while other activists have taken up the challenge of academe to begin documenting the lived experiences of the diverse mental health community. Changes have been made in critical discourse and political action, which have led to some decrease in institutionalization and punitive treatments for persons with mental health issues, yet mainstream mental health services remain grounded in medicalization and psychiatric frameworks. These frameworks focus on the problem of mental illness and diagnoses endorsed by psychiatric diagnostic system such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) (British Psychological Society, 2011; Larson, 2017; Timimi, 2015).

In Canada, persons with mental health issues have experienced stigmatizing labelling and subsequent marginalization on a large scale (Larson, 2017; LeFrançois, 2013). Through the systematic imposition of so-called helping professionals, persons with mental health issues have been subjected to judicial processes, social policies, and restrictive practices that have neglected their freedoms, rights, and capabilities through such actions as forced treatment, professional

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<sup>18</sup> *Mental health issues* is a term used in this report to refer to importance of critical thought and reflection on issues related to the systematic labelling of individuals.

interventions, and incarceration (Morrow & Malcoe, 2017, p. 3). The biomedical framework endorsed by the mainstream mental health system has maintained the status-quo of power relations, while ignoring the social, political, cultural, and historical production of mental health. As a result, persons with mental health issues or psycho-social impairments experience social exclusion, stigmatization, disempowerment, un/underemployment, and mistreatment by professionals and first responders (Josewski, 2017; Larson, 2017; Morrow, 2009).

In Canada, not only do social policies and structural processes fail to address the social, economic, and political inequities that persons with mental health issues experience, they too are inadequately represented in research, and public and theoretical discourse (Morrow & Malcoe, 2017). As Rosenfield (2012) claims, social science research on mental health has largely failed to recognize intersectional research methods. For instance, one's experience of mental health may be impacted by one's race, gender, and socioeconomic status. However, the majority of literature on mental health does not include an analysis of how one's diverse locations impacts their experiences of discrimination, health and well-being (Mens-Verhulst & Radtke, 2008; Rosenfield, 2012; Seaton, et al., 2013).

In addition to the several gaps in research, theory, and policy in Canada NNMH has lagged behind other disability organizations in securing core funding when it was available through the Secretary of State: Disabled Persons Participation Program (DPPP). Therefore, when NNMH was incorporated in 1991, the core funding program was ending, meaning that the organizational development work done by NNMH, which entailed travelling to each province and territory to barter with well-funded mental health agencies, came to an end. Seeing it as a necessary step to further advance grassroots organizing and system advocacy, NNMH responded in the spring of 1994 by hosting a fully funded founding conference called "United We Stand", bringing in 125 psychiatric consumers/survivors from across Canada. Much of this history remains in grey literature, in notes of speeches and workshops, and shared through oral history. The lack of documentation and systematic support has had the detrimental consequence of minimizing and ignoring the experiences of persons a part of the psychiatric consumers/survivors' movement who have advocated for system change. In fact, today some advocates in the mental health sector report engaging in shared disability activism as a "new" area of work. However, this is not a new area of work as demonstrated through the historical tracings of mental health activism.

An intersectional approach to understanding the discrimination that persons with mental health issues experience as a part of the cross-disability population allows for an acknowledgment of these histories that have shaped the present. As such, increased uptake of intersectionality in research, policy and practice is required to understand the lived experience of persons from various social locations (Das, 2012). An increased focus on work exploring how intersectional analysis compliments mental health practice, policy, and research may ensure that the perspectives of those who established the groundwork for practice, critical thinking, and system change are acknowledged both in and outside the academy.

## Practical Applications

In practice, partners and key informants emphasized a focus on the subjective embodied lived experiences of people with disabilities. This focus involved listening to people with disabilities and other groups about their experiences to bring institutions into view. This meant tuning into how social policies, processes, values and norms impact and influence the experiences of diverse individuals. Participants placed an emphasis on listening to the voices of those who are oppressed and excluded by policies, programs, services and norms to understand what the issues are and then working up from there. As one key informant said:

*“Rather than beginning at an identified need and a policy response and working down; [intersectionality] is about identifying people in need and working up from their needs. It takes a dramatic shift in thinking about how to do policy.”*

This quote indicates a need to re-design existing services and programs from the expressed interests and needs of people. This means working up from the voices of those who are excluded socially, economically and politically; rather than looking down from the impacts of policies, programs and services. Participants indicated that “voice” is a collective term that aspires to represent users/consumers who their needs and experiences verbally, through art, communicative devices, etc. Working up from the voices of those who are excluded challenges policy makers, practitioners and communities to ensure that diversity is considered in all their work including representation.

When partners and informants spoke about their work about intersectionality, they talked about practical applications are outcome focused. For instance, partner organizations have vision and mission statements that guide their work. As the literature review highlighted, intersectionality is goal oriented and has a social justice intent. Interviewees said that their vision of social justice focuses on equity. This concept was distinguished from the concept of equality as two strategies that can be used to produce fairness. As another key informant described:

*“Equity is about including all those who have been excluded and recognizing and identifying the characteristics in society that exclude some people.”*

Equity involves giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equality on the other hand, involves treating everyone the same. Equality also aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. The following image presents the difference between these two concepts.



Figure 1: Equality vs. equity (photo credit: The Second Line Education blog)

This image portrays people of different heights trying to see over a fence. In practice, equality means providing each person with the same sized stool to stand on, so they can see over the fence. As each person is of a different height, the stool does not provide everyone with the ability to see over the fence. Equity means providing everyone with what they need to be able to see over the fence. This means that a taller individual does not need a stool, a relatively shorter individual needs two stools, and a person in a wheelchair needs a ramp so they can all see over the fence. Accordingly, one partner said:

*“There is no one size fits all approach when there are inequalities across the board.”*

This partner said that when they think about intersectionality, they think about the needs of groups of people who are disproportionately impacted by systems of oppression. This meant “looking at the various identities that people have and that they experience, and how those identities intersect, and how that changes their positionality within society.” In this way, practical applications of intersectionality involve understanding the root causes of problems, which were often described in the forms of ableism, racism, sexism, transphobia, mentalism, etc., and then working to address these causes. The notion of equity was often used in relation to intersectionality and was intimately tied to human rights.

## **Human Rights**

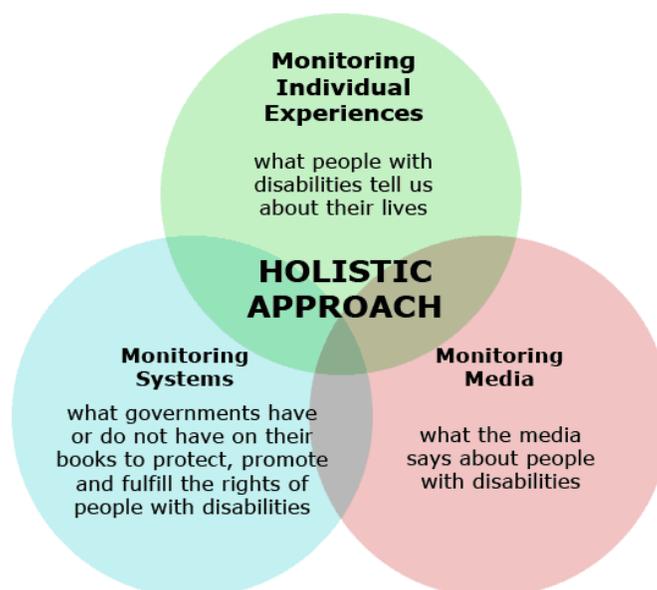
Most partners and informants linked considerations of practical applications of intersectionality with human rights conventions and codes. Several partners and informants indicated that provincial, national and international human rights codes, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) influences or guides the work that they do. At a national level, some participants positively commented on the inclusion of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered, and the recent addition of gender identity or expression, among the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

At an international level, other participants positively commented on the intersectional approach and development of the CRPD. The CRPD was developed collaboratively by diverse people with various disabilities from around the world. People with disabilities, disability organizations and their allies from around the world came together to draft the CRPD and its Optional Protocol (<http://www.un.org/disabilities>). The CRPD explains what existing civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights mean for people with disabilities and what must be done to make sure these rights are promoted, protected and enjoyed by all.

One key informant shared an example of how the intersectional approach of the CRPD has been put into practice. This application has been developed through the work of Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI) based out of Toronto, Ontario Canada. DRPI has adopted three broad areas for monitoring based on recommendations by diverse people with disabilities around the world. These areas include: monitoring systems, monitoring individual experiences and monitoring media. Human rights monitoring has been broken down into these areas to find the

discrete pieces of knowledge to paint a picture of the current situation faced by individuals with disabilities. Data collected during the monitoring activities in all three areas is used as evidence for advocacy efforts and improved government policies and laws.

The three broad areas for monitoring, monitoring systems, monitoring individual experiences and monitoring media, are represented in the following Venn diagram.



*Figure 2: Disability Rights Monitoring Framework*

This practical application of intersectionality resonates with Crenshaw’s conceptualization of structural, political and representational intersectionality. Both frameworks account for the overlaps of individual experiences with political systems and public policies, as well as media portrayals of certain social categories of people.

### **Shared Understanding**

These applications resonate with our shared understanding of intersectionality. Through a series of working group meetings, we have discussed our understanding of intersectionality and its relevance to disability issues in Canada. As a collaborative group, we understand intersectionality as an equity first approach grounded in social justice. We believe that intersectionality represents worldviews that collide with dominant society. To us, intersectionality involves a resistance to labelling individuals by focusing on commonalities while respecting and valuing diversity. We acknowledge lived experience across the lifespan, inclusive of families, communities and individuals. We also acknowledge and utilize the power dynamics that everyone holds.

This understanding of disability values a focus on person-environment fit in contrast with mainstream disability services and support that tend toward a focus on individual deficiencies. It also explicitly recognizes simultaneous experiences of privilege and oppression that can be

enabling or disabling. Individuals are understood as people with multiple identities which contrast with identity politics. As one partner put it:

*“It’s the tension between the inclusion and exclusion; [such that] the application of intersectionality leads to inclusion and the absence of it leads to exclusion...It’s a fulsome understanding of who somebody is. To support people from a policy perspective, you have to include all the things that make up who that person is.”*

Another partner said:

*“It’s life. It’s every experience in life. It’s looking at a person as a whole...It’s like peeling the onion beyond, and exploring the depth of discrimination...It is about more than just a person’s quality of life to include [considerations of] oppression, gender, immigrations status, etc.”*

Partners recognized intersectionality as an evolving concept which presents opportunities and challenges for its practical application. One partner said:

*“Intersectionality is an emerging research and policy paradigm which seeks to reveal the complex interactions among multiple social categories (gender, race, class, culture, age, ability, sexuality) and processes of domination and oppression, sexism, racism, classism, colonialism, ageism, ableism, homophobia...mentalism or sanism; that simultaneously produce experiences of discrimination and privilege. For me it’s not just about oppression or discrimination; but [the recognition that] we can simultaneously experience a different life at different points along the life journey or within different parts of our life.”*

In this way, it appears that intersectionality is being applied in various ways in research, policy and practice within and beyond the Canadian context. Some applications appear to be more or less aligned with the theoretical roots of the concept. Over the course of this project we have gathered together a list of several other local, national or international initiatives that apply intersectionality in various ways. These initiatives are community-based, governmental, academic or otherwise and are listed in appendices with URL links for more information.

While it is encouraging to see a growing body of initiatives that are taking up intersectional approaches, there are a number of challenges for the practical application of intersectionality.

### ***Challenges and key issues***

Overall, the evolving conceptualization and understanding of intersectionality as described in the literature review poses some challenges for its practical application in various contexts. Partners and key informants indicated that a primary challenge with the implementation of intersectionality is falling prey to a focus on individual characteristics rather than system characteristics that create the conditions for discrimination. Interviewees described these characteristics as the key issues facing people with disabilities from various social locations in Canada. These issues are associated with systemic and structural violence in the forms of:

- Poverty;
- Oppressive funding structures and government policies;

- Intended and unintended effects of “othering” groups of people via language. For example, identifying people as “the vulnerable” or “the marginalized” can effectively vulnerable-ize and marginalize them;
- Lack of opportunities for self-governance, agency and autonomy; and
- Disconnections between individuals and communities.

Interviewees indicated that these issues are related to the social, political and economic exclusion of people with disabilities. As such, poverty was defined broadly as those who experience multi-dimensional poverty in terms of income, social exclusion and powerlessness. Moreover, poverty is also described across the life-course, such that insufficient income, social exclusion and powerlessness experienced in childhood and during youth can have implications across an individual’s lifespan.

According to interviewees, effectively addressing issues of poverty is hindered as support and consumer-driven organizations are being shifted into business models with less system impacts, even among advocacy groups. Partners highlighted that their organizations are being drawn into the busyness of project-based funding models and pulled away from advocacy and capacity development. The limited amount of core funding opportunities has placed limits on the disability movement and has promoted greater competition between organizations. One partner commented:

*“I think we are at a risky place where we need to figure out how to work together or we are at risk of losing that voice from the community and others speaking for [the community] again.”*

This funding structure was associated with the persistence of identity politics and silos within and beyond the disability sector. This challenge was described by interviewees as the tendency for people of a particular religion, race, social background, impairment type, etc., to form exclusive alliances and move away from broad-based system level organization. Identity politics was described by some as the antithesis of intersectionality. In this way, organizations are formed according to individual characteristics and can fall into silos that separate them from others. This separation can promote competition for resources offered through project-based funding mechanisms. One partner described this as the “Oppression Olympics” such that different groups are recognized as marginalized or vulnerable but are working in social structures that do not allow for work to address the various forms of oppression and discrimination at the same time.

A few interviewees suggested that to address the challenge of identity politics, silos and poverty requires beginning from an understanding who is poor and why. In relation, another key issue the lack of quality employment among people with disabilities and the lack of a coherent national disability support system. As one key informant described:

*“We continue to have a checkered income support system in Canada [across provinces and territories] which creates barriers....it seems there is not much progress in terms of federalism...There are promising practices in each province, but they are so piecemeal.”*

This informant suggested that some provinces have some policies that are better than others in other provinces which makes it difficult for people to move from one province to another without sacrificing a potential aspect of their support system. This insight also reflects the risk of falling into tokenistic applications of intersectionality.

Several interviewees suggested that a common challenge when taking up an intersectional approach is the tendency to view intersectionality as a checklist of individual characteristics. In this way, interviewees suggested that it is not enough to just have representation of people from various social locations, but to promote real social, economic and political inclusion. Partners suggested that there is a need to focus on the common factors underlying the forms of discrimination that impact persons with disabilities in Canada. Partners said they need to beware of tokenism. This tokenistic approach often involves recruiting a small number of underrepresented groups to give the appearance of intersectionality or equality within a committee, board, working group, etc. Interviewees suggested that staying tuned into institutional challenges and systemic barriers to inclusion can help avoid this tokenistic approach to intersectionality in practice.

According to several partners, another challenge is knowledge translation and mobilization. Several partners said that academic discussions of intersectionality can leave out the perspectives of community members and community-based organizations. Partners indicated that it can be difficult to translate and mobilize intersectionality as a theoretical and analytical framework, into practice. As a team, we have attempted to bridge this gap between academic and community perspectives through our project process and to articulate some considerations going forward.

## IV: Discussion

### Suggestions for practice, policy, research

Our findings indicate a need to focus on preventing the conditions of negative discrimination and oppression. Previous literature and interviewees indicated that intersectionality involves the identification of the root causes of structural and systemic issues, problems and challenges. In this respect, going forward may require taking a step back to the roots of intersectionality in black feminist thinking and early grassroots organizing around various human rights issues related to disability, mental health, race, Indigeneity, gender and sexual orientation. Next, we provide a few preliminary suggestions for consideration in practice, policy and research. These suggestions are intended to provoke further discussions on how to address recommendations and concerns outline in the Concluding Observations adopted by the UNCRPD following Canada's appearance before the UNCRPD in April 2017.

#### *For practice*

Several interviewees suggested that practitioners may be intuitively aware of the idea of intersectionality but may not refer to it as such. As one informant commented. "Lots of practitioners are aware of these issues. They might not be using the language of intersectionality or identifying with that term at all but lots of those working front line get this [idea]." This suggests the need for education and training about intersectionality for a range of individuals and stakeholders. As such, we propose the following suggestions to practically apply intersectionality. Some of these suggestions include workshops, skill development, training and other educational efforts. These educational activities could be co-delivered or guided by grassroots organizers and activists who have taken up intersectionality to promote social change.

- **Offer critical thinking / systems thinking skills development, training and/or education for individuals from various social locations.** This education could aim to support individuals to self-define their experiences and their selves through the development of reflexive practice. Critical reflexive practice embraces subjective understandings of reality as socially constructed. Cunliffe (2004) suggests that critical reflexive practice offers a basis for thinking more critically about the impact of our assumptions, values, and actions on others. This practice can help develop more collaborative and responsive ways of managing projects, organizations or other initiatives. It can also support people to connect the personal with the political and promote greater consciousness-raising about the root causes of structural and systemic issues, problems and challenges.
- **Facilitate workshops for front-line service providers about intersectionality to promote strategic development of intersectionality in practice.** This project revealed a wealth of diverse knowledges among the partner organizations engaged in this work including BCANDS, NNMH, DAWN Canada, Egale and CCDS. These diverse knowledges could be leveraged to provide community and academic perspectives on intersectionality so as to promote strategic thinking and decision making for the development of services that reflect the diversity of Canadians. In this way, these workshops could promote uptake of intersectional approaches to service provision that is

accountable to consumers. Our project has also identified a number of community-based and academic resources to support effective education and training in communities of practice.

- **Consider the CRPD as a roadmap for change.** The CRPD provides a roadmap for service provision and social policies that goes beyond charity and protection to advance the rights of people with disabilities. Interviewees indicated the CRPD highlights the specific vulnerabilities of people with disabilities, the irreducibility of their experiences and avoids creating an isolated set of disability rights because it draws on existing established human rights concepts.
- **Develop partnerships and collaboration with other organizations working to address similar institutional challenges (going beyond the disability sector).** Practitioners could consider starting by seeking out the commonalities with other marginalized humans. This could mean considering political alliances with other groups with similar social-political-economic agendas. This process could begin by determining a common agenda of social justice through an examination of various theories of social justice. In this way, this collaborative approach could consider development of a national critical collective impact strategy.
- **Promote quality employment of diverse people with disabilities in senior leadership roles.** The employment of diverse people with disabilities in senior positions may make them more visible in Canadian society where employment is tied to status, citizenship and power. To avoid a tokenistic approach to hiring, efforts should focus on how organizations can evolve to have a broader and more diverse membership which may change their mandates about who they hire and why. Practitioners could develop and encourage practices of effective job matching that meets the needs of employers and the interests and skills of diverse people with disabilities. This means going beyond individual skill training and development.
- **Be wary of co-optation disguised as social inclusion.** As one partner pointed out, there has always been a need for voices from the movement both within and outside the system. But at this moment “We are at risk of losing the voices outside the system.” Thus, we suggest critical considerations of how to promote inclusion while avoiding being co-opted into a social-political-economic agenda that upholds the exclusion of others.

### *For policy*

Most participants we spoke with agreed with the UNCRPD’s recommendations for policy change to address the intersecting nature of discrimination against diverse persons with disabilities who face heightened risks of gender-based violence, poverty, marginalization, and barriers in access to mental health care services. A few key recommendations arose during our research and are listed below.

- **Use intersectional analysis at the federal level and offer tools for this analysis.** Several participants and previous research indicates that gender-based analysis + (GBA+) reflects an emerging awareness of the need for intersectional analyses. We also found that Status of Women, Public Health Agency of Canada and a few other government agencies are beginning to acknowledge and apply intersectionality in their work. Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis (IBPA) developed by Hankivsky and others in 2012 provides a potential method for understanding the varied equity-relevant implications of policy and for promoting equity-based improvements and social justice within increasingly diverse and complex populations. IBPA is founded on reflexivity; relationality; processes shaping power differentiation within and among populations; and accounting for resistance and resilience. The IBPA Framework includes a set of guiding principles, and a list of overarching questions to help guide, frame or shape the analysis.

To do this, organizations need sustainable resources to provide them with stability to provide ongoing service in a healthy manner. Core operational funding opportunities could support such efforts. Core funding could provide financial support to cover core organizational and administrative costs such as salaries for staff, office space and equipment, as well as expenses related to program delivery. Moreover, long term and stable funding could enable non-profit organizations to build supportive structures that are embedded in communities. The SDPP-D appears to acknowledge the need for this form of funding through a recent call for disability organizations to apply for operational funding. Status of Women Canada also appeared to acknowledge this need through their recent call for concepts under the gender-based violence program. This call represented a new approach to their grants and contribution management in that only high-level information was required at the concept stage and Status of Women Canada provided financial support to those applicant organizations whose concepts were approved, in order to support the development of a full proposal.

- **Promote better access to information.** Access to information is a key issue which may be highlighted in rural or northern communities of Canada where young people may leave to gain education and may not return home. We suggest there is need for improved supports remote or isolated communities to gain better access to education, literacy skills and technology in order to promote greater awareness of access to social and health services, and how to ask the right questions to gain access. This could involve providing education about public resources available coupled with information about individuals' human rights and responsibilities

### *For research*

Our literature review shows that intersectionality began and gained credibility through the work of black feminists. In turn, much of the literature, policy, and research has focused on women, but also positing the category of the “black woman” falsely, as a monolithic category (Bowleg, 2012). Thus, there is rightly some concern amongst scholars and activists as to whether intersectionality will “...remain attached to the conventional mantra of race, gender, sexuality, and class and continue to exclude other groups, such as disability and age” (Martino, 2017, p. 3).

As such, we suggest the need to posit intersectionality as a useful tool, but one that researchers also need to critique.

- **Employ critical theoretical frameworks.** Critical theory, inclusive of critical feminist theory, is useful because it accounts for power relations that shape the conditions for exclusion/inclusion; unleashes the potential of all human beings, links theory and practice. Using this framework, research could focus on building a better understanding of the realization of human rights in Canada and why – while avoiding an individualistic focus that deals with human rights on a case by case basis.
- **Apply a broad definition of poverty and power.** A broad definition focuses on who is being systematically left out from education, access to information, housing, employment, etc. Poverty and power is not just about money, it is also about dignity and autonomy. Following a broad definition can involve examining how people self-define their selves, and their subjective everyday experiences, especially those experiencing poverty and powerlessness. This could involve implementing the principle of reflexivity, as proposed by Hankivsky (2014). Reflexivity in research:

Acknowledges the importance of power at the micro level of the self and our relationships with others, as well as at the macro levels of society. Reflexive practice recognizes multiple truths and a diversity of perspectives, while giving extra space to voices typically excluded. (p. 10; see also Fook, 2002)

Practicing reflexivity requires researchers to commit to ongoing dialogue about various ways of knowing and influences of knowledges. Reflexivity can help bring critical self-awareness, role-awareness, interrogation of power and privilege, and the questioning of assumptions and ‘truths.’ One way to do this is to ask those who are experiencing poverty: What does being in poverty mean to you?

- **Examine the potential risks and unintended consequences of taking up intersectionality at a policy level.** Our research indicates a need to think through how intersectionality would really be implemented at a policy level. Further research is needed to think through what intersectionality looks like in policy, associated costs, alignment and disconnects with other policies. It may be helpful to consider if an intersectional policy would disrupt or be abandoned because it did not fit with other related policies. In this way, future research could critically examine what has been effective in addressing the conditions of exclusion among different groups of people. For example, women, Indigenous people and racialized communities have fought collective for decades to find some entry points. Future research could examine these entry points and consider how to adapt for diverse people with disabilities.

## Reflections on the project process

This project brought together multiple organizations that aim to support people with disabilities in Canada. Within the very short time frame of this project, we have begun to develop a collective shared understanding of intersectionality in theory and in practice. To accomplish this, we engaged in several discussions with each other, as partners, to explore the intersections of disability with other social locations. These discussions began with a specific focus on our diverse knowledges of the intersections of disability with gender (women and girls), gender identity, LGBTQ2IS, mental health issues, and Indigenous peoples. To date, we have had just begun to explore ways to mobilize best evidence identified in the environmental scan, literature review, conversations with partners and key informant interviews. These discussions have resulted in an expressed interest amongst partner organizations to continue to work together post-project, thereby sustaining a focus on intersectionality and disability beyond the current project.

From November 2017 until March 2018, we have worked collaboratively through a series of three working group meetings. An introductory meeting was held in December 2017 via webinar to set the stage for working together on this project. This meeting allowed us to learn more about each other, our respective organizations and the work we do. We also reviewed and discussed the project workplan, milestones and expected outcomes, and discussed practical matters such as contact persons for the project, best ways of communicating as a group, and so on.

A second face-to-face full-day meeting was held in Ottawa in January 2018. This meeting included informal presentations and group discussion about our research findings to date, followed by a facilitated group discussion about our shared conceptualizations of intersectionality and disability. This meeting resulted in a developing shared understanding of intersectionality and identification of some of the key issues facing Canadians with disabilities from various social and geographic locations.

Our third meeting took place in early March 2018 via webinar. This meeting included another update on project activities to date and an opportunity to debrief about the process and outcomes of our in-person team meeting held in January. Partners reflected on the content presented, and the facilitation process. We also reviewed and discussed the final report and other opportunities for collaboration going forward.

Upon reflection of the project process, partners felt that there was a need for more time to allow us to meet formally and informally to better learn with, and from each other. We found that it takes time to figure out where each of us, as individuals and organizations, are starting from in order to figure out where to go. We needed more time to gather together in-person to mutually understand and truly honour the histories and grassroots experiences of each individual and organization that contributed to this project. Thus, this project has just begun to scratch the surface of the possibilities for collaboration; and has given us the opportunity to start from a better place of mutual understanding. We have made great strides in the short amount of time we have had to work together as partner organizations on this project. Overall, this project has allowed us to begin to develop the possibilities for the development of a common agenda that breaks down barriers shared by all.

## V. Conclusion

Despite the great theoretical contributions of intersectionality, it is important to note that one of its many drawbacks is its complexity, as many practitioners, service providers, and activists, grapple with its application. This, in part may be attributed to the multitude and infinite number of social locations that intersectionality asks us to consider when thinking about identity. Indeed, intersectionality demands a commitment to those who wish to adopt it as an analytical tool, which extends to organizations who are trying to adapt it. For instance, at an organizational level, implementing tasks that reflect intersectionality must happen carefully, without rush and done with thoughtful planning. Intersectionality requires a sincere recognition of the political, social, and historical forces that impact various groups of people. We cannot deny the historical roots of discrimination that has been formed from the larger societal and economic system. Therefore, one of the frustrations of intersectionality is a realization that it cannot happen overnight—it takes resources, funding, time, and a commitment to intersectionality from government, organizations, communities and individuals.

At times, we are more successful at talking about the importance of intersectionality without actually practicing it. This may be due, in part, to the time needed to understand identity in terms of instability and fluidity. In this way, the language of intersectionality can be similar to the language of multiculturalism, accessibility, or diversity such that if left alone with no action, these terms become meaningless, and even dangerous if posed as progressive yet uncritiqued.

With consideration to some of the barriers and challenges of intersectionality, this emerging practice, policy and research paradigm requires organizational resources, funding, commitment, and a dedication to understanding the historical, political, and social context of various discriminations and privileges. There are many ways to incorporate intersectionality into practice, policy and research, and it will appear differently depending on one's standpoint. This difference is the beauty of intersectionality.

## VI: Appendices

### Reflections on the Literature: A Response from DAWN Canada

Written by: Sonia Alimi of DAWN Canada

## For a definition of intersectionality

### Feminism: Fertile ground

Theorist Sirma Bilge argues that the analysis of the plural dimension of oppression has not punctuated mainstream social movements (feminist, anti-racist, gay and lesbian) from their very beginnings. On the contrary, they are often willingly carried along by the condemnation of a shared oppression having the same effects on everyone, often carried out by a one-dimensional view of oppression based on an unequivocal worldview, a power structure based on a single axis (patriarchy, racism, capitalist exploitation or heterosexism) that operates through social categories thought to be mutually exclusive (for example sex or gender, race or ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and disability).<sup>19</sup> Indeed, whether in the struggle against capitalism, patriarchy or a heteronormative society, the plurality of systems of oppression and their interweaving have rarely been taken into account by mainstream social movements.

More specifically, it is in social movements concerned with women's rights that lies the seedbed for the development of the theory of intersectionality. In fact, it was driven, among other things, by a desire to *de-marginalize feminism*. bell hooks, one of the initiators of this thinking, states that the reflexive angle of feminism must shift from the margins to the centre.<sup>20</sup> Thus, by referring to the central position of reflections re-examining the normalized gaze of feminism, she testifies to the power and value of a discourse that identifies systems of plural oppressions. When we speak of majority or minority feminism, we are not referring to numerical data, but to the position that feminism has either given itself or taken. Democratic values, where the quantitative reference prevails to make decisions or to prove the legitimacy of thinking that does not reflect the different lived realities, are obsolete.<sup>21</sup> Thus, to think of de-marginalization within feminism

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<sup>19</sup>Sirma Bilge, Olivier Roy, "La discrimination intersectionnelle: la naissance et le développement d'un concept et les paradoxes de sa mise en application en droit antidiscriminatoire" *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, Volume 25, Number 1, 2010, pp. 51 (Article). Published by Cambridge University Press.

<sup>20</sup> bell hooks, "de la marge au centre: theories feministes" ("Feminist theory: from margin to center"), Cambourakis, Collections Socières, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Cîrstocea, Ioana, and Isabelle Giraud. "Pluralisme dans les mouvements féministes contemporains" "[Translation] It also makes it possible to go beyond thinking in terms of 'majority-minority,' which does not necessarily reflect a demographic imbalance in social movements and which is equipped with the democratic form of legitimacy to resist demands to relinquish power." *L'Homme et la société*, vol. 198, No. 4, 2015, p. 41.

is to give voice to pluralities. According to Ioana Cîrstocea and Isabelle Giraud, to de-marginalize is to listen to minoritized people and refocus the analysis on their social and political experiences; it is to put the production of knowledge at the centre of power issues and relationships.<sup>22</sup>

The unequivocal nature of the fields of activism and the claim of multiple oppressions have thus made it possible for the concept of intersectionality to emerge. Black feminist theorists in the United States (hooks, Lorde, Hill Collins) launched the political battle for the inclusion of intersectionality. They did this by highlighting their twofold exclusion: first, in the anti-racist field, men asked black women to conform to gender roles, that is, to assume a subordinate position.<sup>23</sup> Thus the androcentric vision in the U.S. anti-racist activist field seems to have been an obstacle to the consideration of women's interests. Second, in feminist fields, bell hooks informs us that the racial imperialism of white women has promoted the use of the term "women" by academics even when they are referring to the experience of white women only.<sup>24</sup> This is also true in Canada, and more specifically in the province of Quebec, as shown in the reflections of Quebec researchers Naima Hamrouni and Chantal Maillé in *Le sujet du féminisme est-il blanc?*<sup>25</sup> In this book the question is raised whether the demands at the heart of feminism today truly represent the deep concerns of minoritized, racialized women or more closely reflect the experience of white women privileged by their colour. As for disability itself, Jillian Ridington stated in the early 1990s in Canada that numerous women have not been recognized within the feminist movement.<sup>26</sup> She even described their efforts as "incomplete"<sup>27</sup> and the marginalization of women with disabilities as very significant.<sup>28</sup> This universalizing logic reveals the problem that has fostered the emergence of the concept of silencing the most marginalized voices:

[Translation] What woman is so in love with her own oppression that she can no longer see her own heel marks on another woman's face? What woman here

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<sup>22</sup> Idem.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>24</sup> bell hooks, "Ne suis-je pas une femme?" *Collection Sorcières* translated from the English (United States) by Olga Potot, Cambourakis, p. 46, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Naima Hamrouni, Chantal Maillé, *Le sujet du féminisme est-il blanc? femmes racistes et recherches féministes*, Les éditions remue-ménage, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Jillian Ridington, "Who Do We Think We Are: Self-image and Women with Disabilities" Position Paper No. 1 prepared for DAWN Canada, February 1989.

<sup>27</sup> Idem, p. 60.

<sup>28</sup> "The feminist movement has sought to overcome the boundaries of social categories, and to focus on our common experience as women. This process has been incomplete. There are still gaps and misunderstandings between women of different classes and sexual orientations, and between white women and women of colour. But no larger gap remains than the gulf between women with disabilities and non-disabled women," p. 60.

uses her own oppression as a means of entering the ranks of the righteous, far from the icy winds of self-examination?<sup>29</sup>

Returning to the concrete origin of this analysis, the black American lesbian feminist women's organization Combahee River, formed in the 1970s, affirmed the significance of the integrated analysis and practice of simultaneous oppression systems.<sup>30</sup> They state that oppression<sup>31</sup> stems not only from one system of oppression, but is the result of the interweaving of different systems. According to Sirma Bilge, discrimination is rarely the result of an exclusive relationship of oppression unrelated to other relationships of inequality.<sup>32</sup> These women highlight the importance of taking into account these different systems in the activist and theoretical fields, with the goal of promoting true social justice.

The term "intersectionality" itself appeared at the end of the 1980s (Hill Collins, 1990) and was mainly used by Kimberlé Crenshaw.<sup>33</sup> Crenshaw pointed out shortcomings in the legal system, in the social movements and in the handling of violence against black women:

Because of their intersectional identity as both women *and* people of color within discourses that are shaped to respond to one *or* the other, the interests and experiences of women of color are frequently marginalized within both.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lorde Audre, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," keynote speech given in June 1981 at the conference of the National Women's Studies Association in Storrs, Connecticut. Compilation published by Mamamélis in 2003, *Sister outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* on poetry, eroticism, racism, sexism.

<sup>30</sup> Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix, "Ain't I a Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 5, 3 (2004), 78.

<sup>31</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, "Toujours courageuses? Le féminisme noir en tant que projet de justice sociale." ("Still brave? Black Feminism as a Social Justice project.") "Oppression: an unjust situation where, systematically and over a long period of time, one group denies another group access to the resources of society." *Les cahiers du CEDREF* [online], 20 | 2015, published on June 15, 2015, retrieved on November 21, 2017. URL: <http://cedref.revues.org/77>

<sup>32</sup> Sirma Bilge, Olivier Roy, "La discrimination intersectionnelle: la naissance et le développement d'un concept et les paradoxes de sa mise en application en droit antidiscriminatoire" *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, Volume 25, Number 1, 2010, pp. 56 (Article). Published by Cambridge University Press

<sup>33</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991), 1241.

<sup>34</sup> Crenshaw Kimberlé, "Cartographie des marges : intersectionnalité, politique de l'identité et violence contre les femmes de couleurs" ("Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"). *Cahier du genre*, vol. 2, no. 39, p. 54, 2005.

That is why the feminism of Afro-American women, according to Ochy Curiel, helped to complement feminist theory and the theory of racism, by explaining how racism, sexism and classism affected women, which Hill Collins called the matrix of domination.<sup>35</sup> Thus, based on their own experiences, anti-racist feminists have developed situated knowledge, seeking to break out of this universalizing, colonialist and racist logic while exposing the plurality of multiple systems of oppression.

Moreover, although intersectionality has developed around a social struggle mainly carried by black women, Sirma Bilge nevertheless reminds us of its universalist potential. However, this concept is not meant to revolve around a typology of oppression since, by taking shape around the plural notion of oppressions and their interweaving, it allows for a malleable analysis. In short, according to Sirma Bilge, an intersectional analysis

- captures a whole range of interactions between the axes of differentiation, be it gender, race, class, sexual orientation, disability, age or another vector of social relations structuring inequalities and hierarchies; and<sup>36</sup>
- can be applied to the experiences of all social groups, majority and minority, along all socially significant axes of differentiation in a given society and at a given time.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, intersectionality has the political ambition to provide these same groups with tools to denounce oppression and to remedy the injustices they suffer.<sup>38</sup> As sociologists Ioana Cirstocea and Isabelle Giraud write, it is an infinitely renewable tool that makes it possible to enrich analysis and reflection, which will have an impact on practice.

Last but not least, intersectionality makes it possible to revitalize social and political struggles.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, since intersectionality provides a plural political dimension, it integrates the various

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<sup>35</sup>Ochy Curiel, “Critique postcoloniale et pratiques politiques du féminisme antiraciste,” *Mouvements* 2007/3 (no. 51), p. 124.

<sup>36</sup>Sirma Bilge, Olivier Roy, “La discrimination intersectionnelle: la naissance et le développement d’un concept et les paradoxes de sa mise en application en droit antidiscriminatoire” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, Volume 25, Number 1, 2010, pp. 57 (Article) Published by Cambridge University Press

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Idem.

<sup>39</sup> Cîrstocea, Ioana, and Isabelle Giraud. “Pluralisme dans les mouvements féministes contemporains” *L’Homme et la société*, vol. 198, no. 4, 2015, p. 41.

social relations under a single analysis.<sup>40</sup> As such, it is the promise of complex political criticism<sup>41</sup> and a consensus-building tool<sup>42</sup> in women's movements.

## **Putting intersectional analysis into practice: Sexism, racism and capacitism**

The concept of intersectionality enables us to understand that women with disabilities, apart from suffering oppression because they are women, are also subject (like men with disabilities) to oppression related to the (in)abilities, according to the social norm, of their bodies. This is what Garland-Thompson calls "capacitism," which normalizes and hierarchizes bodily capacities and excludes bodies that do not meet these norms.<sup>43</sup> In this respect, capacitism "is a system" in the sense that it infuses and structures all aspects of societal life (subjectivities and identities, social relations and social arrangements, institutions, representations and environments), in all spheres of social life.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, feminist organizations such as the Disabled Women's Network of Canada and Action des femmes handicapées de Montréal demonstrate through the prism of violence that there is also a form of patriarchal domination, but that this oppression is intensified by the (in)capacities of the victims.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to gender and capacitism, women with disabilities are in societies in which class- and race-based social relations are present. As feminist disability theorist Janet Price states, there is deep class and race discrimination.<sup>46</sup> This is why, for Helen Meekosha, also a feminist disability theorist, it is important to also work on analytical supports based on colonial and neo-colonial processes, and on building a new social order that takes disability processes into account.<sup>47</sup> How do these different systems of oppression fuel each other? Ultimately, it means trying to understand how different systems of oppression interact, assess the impact they have on groups

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<sup>40</sup> Idem, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Idem, p. 42.

<sup>42</sup> Idem.

<sup>43</sup> Masson Dominique, "Femmes et handicap," *Recherches Féministes*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Idem.

<sup>45</sup> Masson Dominique, "Femmes et handicap," *Recherches féministes*, vol. 26, no. 1, p. 120 "[Translation] A patriarchal form of oppression of women, domestic and sexual violence are in fact intensified by their articulation with inferiorization based on disabilities." p. 122.

<sup>46</sup> Price Janet, "The Seeds of a Movement—Disabled Women and Their Struggle to Organize," Association for Women's Rights in Development, a case study produced through the Building Feminist Movements and Organizations initiative, p. 9, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Price Janet, "The Seeds of a Movement—Disabled Women and Their Struggle to Organize," Association for Women's Rights in Development, a case study produced through the Building Feminist Movements and Organizations initiative, p. 10, 2011.

of people, and then identify their specific needs. The following is therefore intended to highlight the three analytical components identified, although this literature review is not exhaustive.

## **Brief historicization of the different systems of oppression: A common Western history?**

Sociologist Anne Marcellini<sup>48</sup> informs us that, historically, the domination processes of capacitism and racism are closely linked, notably through the identification of bodies that do not conform to dominant norms. Indeed, was it not in Europe and North America that people with physical characteristics considered as “peculiar” and people from various colonized countries were put on display in the 19th century?<sup>49</sup>



Racist colonial exhibition<sup>50</sup>



Capacitist exhibition<sup>51</sup>

At that time, discomfort about the bodies of people that did not meet social norms arose both in scientific discourse and in practice. According to the author, this led many Western societies to develop classification systems with the goal of establishing societal eugenics. The following excerpt from Gregory Katz-Benichou's *L'inepte et l'inapte*<sup>52</sup> refers to the eugenic scientist Vacher de Lapouge:

[Translation] The selective “butcheries” to which he refers should obviously apply first to the inferior and decadent races, mainly “Negroes” and “Jews,” both of which taint the eminence of the Aryan race, he wrote in 1896. In addition to racism itself, Vacher advocates a preventive health purification program to prevent patients from spreading their bad chromosomes. Above all, it is necessary to avoid misguided charity that might promote the reproduction of the ill-born. He

<sup>48</sup> Marcellini Anne, “Nouvelles figures du handicap? catégorisation sociales et dynamique des processus de stigmatisation/déstigmatisation,” in Gilles Boetsch et al., *Corps normalisé, corps stigmatisé, corps racialisé*, De Boeck Supérieur, “Hors collection,” 2007, (), p. 199-219.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> France.

<sup>51</sup> United States

<sup>52</sup> Katz-Benichou Gregory, “L'inepte et l'inapte,” in Gilles Boetsch et al., *Corps normalisé, corps stigmatisé, corps racialisé*, De Boeck Supérieur, “Hors collection” 2007, p. 313-330.

also contemplates imposing sexual abstinence on degenerates, a tax for offenders, a health record for each person and sexual services to promote the lineage of eugenic individuals.<sup>53</sup>

In this excerpt, we see not only the legitimization of hate speech through the idea of race and disability or deficiency, but also the implementation within a “scientific discourse” of a classification of bodies, of individuals deserving or not deserving to live. Therefore, scientific discourse and practices institutionalize oppressions based on the social constructions of disability and race.

Another feminist disability theorist, Ellen Samuels, focuses her reflections on this double or triple process of politicization of the body in a U.S. context. Going back specifically to the foundations of political and federal structures, she shows how they were shaped by an ideal of both equity-equality and “exclusion of certain kinds of persons,” in particular women, people with disabilities and racialized people.<sup>54,55</sup> Thus, the creation of a supposedly identitarian categorization among social groups was precisely part of this socio-historical context. Finally, what is important to highlight for the author is that the classification of identities by socially constructed bodies and bodies by socially constructed identities has been shaped around these categories of race, gender and capacity status. Thus, identities are “structured by vectors of power”<sup>56</sup> and essentialized in discourses, practices and social relationships.

## **Racialization of disability**

The other line of thought revolves around the notion of racialization of disability.<sup>57</sup> This would refer to the attribution of capacity-incapacity characteristics to a group of racialized individuals. This process thus reintroduces the medical model of disability to racialized people. It individualizes and essentializes a disability with a group of people.

To shed light on this subject, we will use examples from the texts studied, most of which are based on mental health disabilities. It is important to point out that there is much debate about whether “disability status” should be assigned to people with various mental health conditions that do not correspond to the norm. To this end, we used advocacy literature, including AJ Withers’ speech in Toronto in 2010 for the PsychOut conference, to implement resistance to psychiatry while conceiving that there will be discursive and theoretical boundaries. Withers

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race*, New York University, p. 1, 2014.

<sup>55</sup> Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race*, New York University, p. 1, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race*, New York University, p. 27, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Baiocchi Arturo, “The Racialization of Mental Illness,” *The Society Pages*, 2011.

states that the stigma of disability in a society imposing social norms was intrinsic to their status as psychiatrized people. He says that “in regards to some psychiatric survivors not wanting to adopt another stigma by identifying as disabled, I would argue it is irrelevant whether or not people want to be stigmatized or be associated with the disability stigma. The reality is that that stigma exists, and like people with physical disabilities and cognitive disabilities, it is already imposed upon psychiatrized people.”<sup>58</sup>

First, Arturo Baiocchi,<sup>59</sup> a doctoral student in sociology, wrote an article in 2011 on the racialization of mental illness in the online journal *Sociological Images*. Based on Jonathan Metzler’s reflections and in a U.S. social context, he revisits the shift in the attribution of schizophrenia from one social group to another. He shows that during the 1950s, schizophrenia was a mental health condition that was attributed mainly to middle-class white women. It then became a defining characteristic of black people. The author believes that the government’s intention was to “rationalize” movements of revolt in favour of the civil rights demanded by these people. In 1969, in *The Protest Psychosis*, the author states that “psychiatrists postulated that the growing racial disharmony in the US at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, reflected a new manifestation of psychotic behaviors and delusions afflicting America’s black lower class.”<sup>60</sup> Pharmaceutical companies then developed a series of drugs to “pacify the masculinized black threat.”<sup>61</sup>

Second, in 1992, Suman Fernando<sup>62</sup> had already stated these notions in *Roots of Racism in Psychiatry*, referring mainly to British society. Indeed, he demonstrates how the evolution of medicine crystallized in and through a racist society in which racism was integrated into their traditions.<sup>63</sup> He writes, “By the end of the last century, the myth was accepted that brains of black people were smaller than those of whites.... A well-known psychologist of the turn of the century, Stanley Hall, described Asians, Chinese, Africans, and indigenous Americans as psychologically ‘adolescent races.’”<sup>64</sup>

Given these reflexive premises both in the literature review and in the field of activism, many questions remain. In particular, the impact of disability on identity, as we have seen with the example from the United States, is not without social ties. It has even legitimized racist institutional practices. What is ultimately the impact of the racialization of disability and how does it demonstrate that people with disabilities will not only have specific needs with regard to

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<sup>58</sup> A.J. Withers, speech given at PsychOUT: A Conference for Organizing Resistance Against Psychiatry, Toronto 2010.

<sup>59</sup> Baiocchi Arturo, “The Racialization of Mental Illness,” *The Society Pages*, 2011.

<sup>60</sup> Baiocchi Arturo, “The Racialization of Mental Illness,” *The Society Pages*, 2011.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Fernando Suman, *Roots of racism in psychiatry*, Openmind, 1992.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

this situation, but also with regard to all that constitutes their identity and the systems of oppression in which they find themselves? Intersectionality thus appears necessary for establishing policies and mechanisms that respond as much as possible to people's needs.

### **The “disable-ization” of “social races”**

For Isabella Kres-Nah, in her article “Racism and Ableism,”<sup>65</sup> disability and racism are systems of oppression whose respective evolutions correlate, but nevertheless act differently in the perpetuation of the social hierarchy: “Racism and ableism are often thought of as parallel systems of oppression that work separately to perpetuate social hierarchy.”<sup>66</sup> To Kres-Nah, that has consequences. First, they are involved in ignoring the lived experiences of racialized people with disabilities. Second, to Kres-Nah, it is a mistake not to examine how race is pathologized to produce racist oppression.

She bases her remarks on the following example: “One historic example of this comes from the island of Malaga, Maine. Prior to 1912 the island was settled by both white and black families who lived together in peace. In 1912, however, the Governor evicted all 45 families from Malaga Island. The residents of this racially mixed community were said to be feeble-minded and many were sent to the Maine School for Feeble-Minded in Pownal, Maine.” This historical episode shows how institutions have used disability to justify the establishment of state racism. Activist A. J. Withers points out that, under slavery in the U.S., slaves with “an irrestrainable propensity to run away” were diagnosed with “drapetomania.” The cure that was found was “amputation of the toes.” Withers states, “Here psychiatry was being used to legitimize the torture and punishment of slaves and to legitimize the racist slavery system as a whole.”

At the end of this section, which reviews the beginnings of the literature review on the connection between race and disability, it is clear that the two systems of oppression are not bound by additive interweaving but are in fact complementary. It is evident that there is an implicit burden on one another and that the conceptualization of disability is the very tool of the process of racializing groups of people. That is precisely what Ellen Samuels states, that disability posed the notions of physical or physiological normality, while systems of oppression found the junction point for legitimizing oppressive practices such as slavery. Furthermore, the institution of the patriarchal system oppresses women. According to her, the significance of disability is increasing to permeate the debate on race and gender.<sup>67</sup> Finally, from a theoretical and activist point of view, the author mentions that the state of this knowledge concerning

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<sup>65</sup> Kres-Nah Isabella, “Racism and Ableism,” American Association of People with Disabilities, 2016, <http://www.aapd.com/racism-and-ableism/>

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race*, New York University, p. 27, 2014.

gender, race and disability is a new fact. Despite the success of intersectionality in the academic and feminist activist fields, very little thought has been given to the interweaving of these three relationships of oppression. Yet this analysis is necessary because it provides a more complete theoretical understanding of oppression and the development of multidimensional resistance strategies.

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## Online Environmental Scan Resources

| Organization  | Year | Type                                | Reference   | Web address   |
|---|------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Action Canada for Sexual and Health Rights  | 2015 | Blog post                           | D'Elio, F. (2015). <i>Intersectionality in LGBTI Advocacy</i> . Ottawa: Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights.   | <a href="https://www.actioncanadashr.org/intersectionality-in-lgbti-advocacy/">https://www.actioncanadashr.org/intersectionality-in-lgbti-advocacy/</a>   |
| Advanced Thematic Network in Women's Studies in Europe  | 2009 | Educational toolkit                 | Franken, M., Woodward, A., Cabo, A., & Bagihole, B. (Eds.). (2009). <i>Teaching Intersectionality: Putting Gender at the Centre</i> . Stockholm: Athena.                                  | <a href="https://atgender.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/207/2017/08/Teaching_Intersectionality.pdf">https://atgender.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/207/2017/08/Teaching_Intersectionality.pdf</a>   |
| Assembly of First Nations   | 2017 | Report on federal legislation       | Assembly of First Nations. (2017). <i>First Nations and First Nations Persons with Disabilities: Engagement on Federal Accessibility Legislation</i> . Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations. | <a href="https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/afn_fal_report_phase1_eng-final.pdf.pdf">https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/afn_fal_report_phase1_eng-final.pdf.pdf</a>   |
| Association for Women's Rights in Development: Building Feminist Movements and Organizations Initiative | 2004 | Factsheet                           | Symington, A. (2004). <i>Intersectionality: A Tool for Gender and Economic Justice</i> . Toronto: Women's Rights and Economic Change: Association for Women's Rights in Development.      | <a href="https://lgbtq.unc.edu/sites/lgbtq.unc.edu/files/documents/intersectionality_en.pdf">https://lgbtq.unc.edu/sites/lgbtq.unc.edu/files/documents/intersectionality_en.pdf</a>   |
| Association for Women's Rights in Development: Building Feminist Movements and Organizations Initiative | 2011 | Case study                          | Price, J. (2011). <i>The Seeds of a Movement: Disabled Women and their Struggle to Organize</i> . Toronto: Association for Women's Rights in Development.                                 | <a href="https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/changing_their_world_2_-_disabled_women_and_their_struggle_to_organize.pdf">https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/changing_their_world_2_-_disabled_women_and_their_struggle_to_organize.pdf</a> |
| British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)                                      | 2017 | Consultation on federal legislation | British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS). (2017). <i>National Indigenous Federal Accessibility Legislation Consultation</i> . Victoria: BCANDS.                 | <a href="http://www.bcands.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCANDS-January-March-2017-Accessibility-Consultation-Report.pdf">http://www.bcands.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCANDS-January-March-2017-Accessibility-Consultation-Report.pdf</a>   |
| Canadian Human Rights Commission  | 2013 | Strategic Framework                 | Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2013). <i>CHRC's Gender Integration Framework (GIF)</i> . Ottawa: Government of Canada.  | <a href="https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/gender_integration_framework.pdf">https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/gender_integration_framework.pdf</a>   |

| Organization  | Year | Type                | Reference  | Web address   |
|---|------|---------------------|--|---|
| Canadian Human Rights Commission                                  | 2015 | Monitoring report   | Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2015). <i>The Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Equality and Non-Discrimination: Monitoring the Implementation of the UN</i> . Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission.                   | <a href="http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/rights-persons-disabilities-equality-and-non-discrimination">http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/rights-persons-disabilities-equality-and-non-discrimination</a>   |
| Canadian Human Rights Commission                                  | 2017 | Monitoring report   | Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2017). <i>Left Out: Challenges faced by persons with Disabilities in Canada's Schools: Monitoring the Implementation of the UN Convention on the</i> . Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission | <a href="http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/left-out-challenges-faced-persons-disabilities-canadas-schools">http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/left-out-challenges-faced-persons-disabilities-canadas-schools</a>                                       |
| Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) | 2009 | Educational toolkit | Simpson, J. (2009). <i>Everyone Belongs: A Toolkit for Applying Intersectionality</i> . Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW).   | <a href="http://www.criaw-icref.ca/sites/criaw/files/Everyone_Belongs_e.pdf">http://www.criaw-icref.ca/sites/criaw/files/Everyone_Belongs_e.pdf</a>   |
| Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) | 2006 | Strategic Framework | Bunjun, B., Lee, J., Lenon, S., Martin, L., Torres, S., & Waller, M. (2006). <i>Intersectional Feminist Frameworks: An Emerging Vision</i> . Ottawa: The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW).        | <a href="http://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Intersectional%20Feminist%20Frameworks-%20An%20Emerging%20Vision(2).pdf">http://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Intersectional%20Feminist%20Frameworks-%20An%20Emerging%20Vision(2).pdf</a> |
| Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) | 2017 | Public policy       | Acker-Verney, J. (2017). <i>Changing Public Services: Intersectionality and the Experiences of Women with Disabilities</i> . Ottawa: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.                                     | <a href="http://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/page/changing-public-services-intersectionality-and-experiences-of-women-with-disabilities">http://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/page/changing-public-services-intersectionality-and-experiences-of-women-with-disabilities</a>   |
| Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) | 2014 | Educational toolkit | Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW). (2014). <i>Intersectionality Toolkit</i> . Ottawa: The International LGBTQ Youth and Student Organization.  | <a href="https://www.luthercollege.edu/public/images/Intersectionality_Toolkit_and_other_resources.pdf">https://www.luthercollege.edu/public/images/Intersectionality_Toolkit_and_other_resources.pdf</a>   |
| Canadian Human Rights Commission                                  | 2013 | Strategic Framework | Canadian Human Rights Commission. (2013). <i>CHRC's Gender Integration Framework (GIF)</i> . Ottawa: Government of Canada.   | <a href="https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/gender_integration_framework.pdf">https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/gender_integration_framework.pdf</a>   |

| Organization   | Year | Type                | Reference   | Web address   |
|--|------|---------------------|---|---|
| Centre for the Study of Gender Social Inequities and Mental Health | 2013 | Scoping Review      | Ingram, R., Wasik, A., Cormier, R., & Morrow, M. (2013). <i>Social Inequities and Mental Health: A Scoping Review</i> . Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Gender, Social Inequities and Mental Health.   | <a href="https://www.tepou.co.nz/assets/images/content/training_fundings/tools-for-learning/files/Recovery-Scoping-Review.Final_STYLE.pdf">https://www.tepou.co.nz/assets/images/content/training_fundings/tools-for-learning/files/Recovery-Scoping-Review.Final_STYLE.pdf</a>   |
| City for All Women Initiative                                      | 2015 | Educational toolkit | City for All Women Initiative. (2015). <i>Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities</i> . Ottawa: City for All Women Initiative.   | <a href="http://www.cawivt.org/sites/default/files/publications/advancing-equity-inclusion-web_0.pdf">http://www.cawivt.org/sites/default/files/publications/advancing-equity-inclusion-web_0.pdf</a>   |
| McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism                 | 2017 | Placement Report    | Dion, J. (2017). <i>Falling Through the Cracks: Canadian Indigenous Children with Disabilities</i> . Montreal: McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism.  | <a href="https://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/files/humanrights/ihri_wps_v5_n12_dion.pdf">https://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/files/humanrights/ihri_wps_v5_n12_dion.pdf</a>   |
| DisAbleD Women's Network of Canada (DAWN-RAFH)                     | 2013 | Factsheet           | DisAbleD Women's Network of Canada (DAWN-RAFH). (2013). Factsheet: Women with Disabilities and Violence. Montréal : DisAbleD Women's Network of Canada (DAWN-RAFH).   | <a href="https://www.dawncanada.net/main/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/English-Violence-January-2014.pdf">https://www.dawncanada.net/main/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/English-Violence-January-2014.pdf</a>   |
| DisAbleD Women's Network of Canada (DAWN-RAFH)                     | 2016 |                     | Hutchison, C. (2016). <i>DisAbleD Women's Network (DAWN-RAFH) Canada: Brief for the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights (JUST)</i> . Montreal: DisAbleD Women's Network (DAWN-RAFH) .  | <a href="https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/JUST/Brief/BR8311083/br-external/DisAbleD Womens NetworkCanada-e.pdf">https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/JUST/Brief/BR8311083/br-external/DisAbleD Womens NetworkCanada-e.pdf</a>   |
| Disability Credit Canada: Advocating for Disabled Canadians        | 2017 | Blog post           | Mandel, I. (2017, April 7). <i>Disabled and Queer</i> . Retrieved from Disability Credit Canada.  | <a href="https://disabilitycreditcanada.com/disabled-and-queer/">https://disabilitycreditcanada.com/disabled-and-queer/</a>   |
| Disability Rights Promotion International (DRP)                    | 2016 | Monitoring Report   | Gillespie, E., et al (2016). <i>Expanding the Circle: Monitoring the Human Rights of Indigenous, First Nations, Aboriginal, Inuit and Métis People with Disabilities in Canada: Systemic Report</i> . Toronto: Disability Rights Promotion International Canada (DRPI- Canada). | <a href="http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/north-america/north-america-publications-resources/expanding-the-circle-monitoring-the-human-rights-of-indigenous-first-nations-aboriginal-inuit-and-metis-people-with-disabilities-in-canada-site-report/">http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/north-america/north-america-publications-resources/expanding-the-circle-monitoring-the-human-rights-of-indigenous-first-nations-aboriginal-inuit-and-metis-people-with-disabilities-in-canada-site-report/</a> |

| Organization   | Year | Type             | Reference  | Web address   |
|--|------|------------------|--|---|
| Egale Canada Human Rights Trust  | 2017 | Policy Report    | Bucik, A., Ptolemy, A., & Simpson, A. (2017). <i>Canada: Discrimination and Violence against LGBTQI2S Persons with Disabilities</i> . Toronto: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust.  | <a href="https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Egale-Canada-CRPD-Submission-2017-02-24.pdf">https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Egale-Canada-CRPD-Submission-2017-02-24.pdf</a>                                     |
| Egale Canadian Human Rights Trust<br><br>LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention<br><br>Manitoba Health Commission of Canada      | 2014 | Educational tool | Dyck, R. D., & Schellenberg, M. (2014). <i>Supporting LGBTQ Youth: Key Learnings from the 2012 and 2014 LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention Summits</i> . Ottawa: Manitoba Health Commission of Canada, LGBTQ Youth Suicide Prevention, Egale Canadian Human Rights Trust | <a href="https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/initiatives/11885/suicide-prevention-webinar-series-archive">https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/initiatives/11885/suicide-prevention-webinar-series-archive</a> |
| Egale Canada Human Rights Trust  | 2015 | Submission Paper | Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. (2015). <i>Working in Solidarity: Broadening Canada's Overseas Assistance Programs to be More Inclusive of LGBTQI2S Minorities Rights Globally</i> . Toronto: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust.                                      | <a href="https://egale.ca/gac-submission-2016/">https://egale.ca/gac-submission-2016/</a>   |
| Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights<br><br>Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants<br><br>Rainbow Health Ontario | 2015 | Factsheet        | Hall, S., & Sajani, R. (2015). <i>Mental Health Challenges for LGBT Asylum Seekers in Canada</i> . Toronto: Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights.  | <a href="https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Envisioning-Mental-Health-Sheet.pdf">https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Envisioning-Mental-Health-Sheet.pdf</a>               |
| Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences  | 2010 | Blog Post        | Robbins, W. (2010, April 28). <i>'The Work is Far From Done': Women, Feminism, Intersectionality</i> . Retrieved from Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences.   | <a href="https://www.ideas-ideas.ca/blog/work-far-done-women-feminism-intersectionality">https://www.ideas-ideas.ca/blog/work-far-done-women-feminism-intersectionality</a>   |

| Organization   | Year | Type                | Reference  | Web address   |
|--|------|---------------------|--|---|
| Government of Canada                                     | 2015 | Government Report   | Government of Canada. (2015). Status of Women Canada, Privy Council Office and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Action Plan (2016-2020). Ottawa: Government of Canada. | <a href="http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acs/plan-action-2016-en.PDF">http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acs/plan-action-2016-en.PDF</a>   |
| Government of Canada                                     | 2016 | Government Report   | House of Commons Canada. (2016). <i>Bill C-16: An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code</i> . Ottawa. Retrieved January 3, 2017.                    | <a href="http://www.parl.ca/Content/Bills/421/Government/C-16/C-16_1/C-16_1.PDF">http://www.parl.ca/Content/Bills/421/Government/C-16/C-16_1/C-16_1.PDF</a>                                     |
| Government of Canada                                     | 2017 | Government Report   | Government of Canada. (2017). <i>Aboriginal Victimization in Canada: A Summary of the Literature</i> . Ottawa: Government of Canada.                                       | <a href="http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd3-rr3/p3.html">http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd3-rr3/p3.html</a>   |
| Government of Canada                                     | 2015 | Government Report   | Government of Canada. (2015). Status of Women Canada, Privy Council Office and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Action Plan (2016-2020). Ottawa: Government of Canada. | <a href="http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acs/plan-action-2016-en.PDF">http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acs/plan-action-2016-en.PDF</a>   |
| Government of Ontario                                    | 2016 | Strategic Framework | Government of Ontario. (2016). <i>A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan</i> . Ottawa.  | <a href="https://files.ontario.ca/ard-report-tagged-final-s.pdf">https://files.ontario.ca/ard-report-tagged-final-s.pdf</a>   |
| Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy      | 2014 | Educational tool    | Hankivsky, O. (2014). <i>Intersectionality 101</i> . Burnaby: Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy, Simon Fraser University.                                | <a href="http://vawforum-cwr.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/intersectionality_101.pdf">http://vawforum-cwr.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/intersectionality_101.pdf</a>                 |
| New Brunswick Association for Community Living           | 2017 | Educational tool    | Wilkins, G. (2017). <i>Supporting People with Dual Diagnosis</i> . St. John: New Brunswick Association for Community Living. Retrieved from                                | <a href="http://wmaproducts.com/nbacl/module1/">http://wmaproducts.com/nbacl/module1/</a>   |
| National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health | 2016 | Educational tool    | National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. (2016). <i>Intersectionality and Health Equity</i> . Antigonish: St. Francis Xavier University.                  | <a href="http://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/public-health-speaks-intersectionality-and-health-equity">http://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/public-health-speaks-intersectionality-and-health-equity</a> |

| Organization   | Year | Type              | Reference   | Web address   |
|--|------|-------------------|---|---|
| National Collaborating Centre for Health Public Policy                                     | 2015 | Briefing Note     | Morrison, V. (2015). <i>Health Inequalities and Intersectionality</i> . Montreal: National Collaborating Centre for Health Public Policy.   | <a href="http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2015_Ineg_Ineq_Intersectionnalite_En.pdf">http://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2015_Ineg_Ineq_Intersectionnalite_En.pdf</a>   |
| National Network on Environments<br><br>Women's Health and Toronto Women's Call to Action. | 2013 | Briefing Note     | Haniff-Cleofas, R., & Khedr, R. (2013). <i>Women with Disabilities in the Urban Environment</i> . Toronto: National Network on Environments and Women's Health and Toronto Women's Call to Action.                  | <a href="http://www.twca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Women_with_Disabilities_in_the_Urban_Environment.pdf">http://www.twca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Women with Disabilities in the Urban Environment.pdf</a>                                   |
| US Human Rights Network and Rutgers: Center for Women's Global Leadership                  | 2013 | Educational tool  | Tomlinson, Y. (2013). <i>Framing Questions on Intersectionality</i> . New York: US Human Rights Network.  | <a href="https://www.ushrnetwork.org/sites/ushrnetwork.org/files/framing_questions_on_intersectionality_1.pdf">https://www.ushrnetwork.org/sites/ushrnetwork.org/files/framing_questions_on_intersectionality_1.pdf</a>                               |
| Women with Disabilities Victoria   | 2017 | Literature Review | Dimitriadis, L., & Smyth, A. (2017). <i>Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Regional Action Plan Capacity Building Project: Women with Disabilities</i> . Victoria: Women with Disabilities Victoria. | <a href="http://www.wdv.org.au/documents/.PVAW%20Lit%20Review%20%2028Jun17.pdf">http://www.wdv.org.au/documents/.PVAW%20Lit%20Review%20%2028Jun17.pdf</a>   |
| Women's Health Research Network  | 2009 | Policy report     | Hankivsky, O., & Cormier, R. (2009). <i>Intersectionality: Moving Women's Health Research and Policy Forward</i> . Vancouver: Women's Health Research Network.  | <a href="http://bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2009_IntersectionalityMovingwomenshealthresearchandpolicyforward.pdf">http://bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2009_IntersectionalityMovingwomenshealthresearchandpolicyforward.pdf</a> |

## List of Participating Organizations with Contact Information

### Canadian Centre on Disability Studies

Unit #10, 226 Osborne Street North  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 1V4  
Telephone: 1-204-287-8411  
Website: <http://www.disabilitystudies.ca/>



CANADIAN CENTRE ON DISABILITY STUDIES

### DisAbleD Women's Network Canada

462 St Laurent Blvd  
Montreal, Québec  
H2S 3C4  
Telephone: 1-514-272-0680  
Website: <https://www.dawncanada.net/>



**DAWN**  
Canada

DisAbleD Women's Network Canada  
Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées Canada

### Egale Canada

185 Carlton Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5A 2K7  
Telephone: 1-647-404-7156  
Website: <https://egale.ca/>



Canada Human Rights Trust

### National Network for Mental Health

Station Main, PO Box 1539  
Catharines, Ontario  
L2R 7J9  
Telephone: 1-888-406-4663  
Website: <http://nnmh.ca/>



National Network for Mental Health  
Réseau national pour la santé mentale

### British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

#6, 1610 Island Highway  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V9B 1H8  
Telephone: (250) 381-7303  
Website: <http://www.bcands.bc.ca/>



British Columbia Aboriginal Network  
on Disability Society (BCANDS)