

EARN

Employer Assistance and Resource
Network on Disability Inclusion

ADVANCING
WORKFORCE
DIVERSITY

Meeting of the Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability (FEED)

February 8, 2023



Agenda

Introduction (1:00-1:05 p.m.)

- Akinyemi Banjo, Policy Advisor, Employer and Workplace Policy Team, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Department of Labor

Welcoming Remarks (1:05-1:13 p.m.)

- Taryn Williams, Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy, Department of Labor

Federal DEIA Summit Recap (1:13-1:20 p.m.)

- Jennifer Croft, Diversity Program Manager, Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, Office of Personnel Management

Presentation: Disability Through an Intersectionality Lens (1:20-2:35 p.m.)

- LaWanda Cook, Senior Extension Associate, Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, Cornell University

Question and Answer Session (2:35-2:55 p.m.)

Closing Remarks (2:55-3:00 p.m.)

- Wendy Doernberg, Attorney-Advisor, Federal Sector Programs, Office of Federal Operation, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Our Presenters

Jennifer Croft

- Diversity Program Manager, Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, Office of Personnel Management

LaWanda Cook

- Senior Extension Associate, Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, Cornell University

Federal DEIA Summit Recap

Jennifer Croft

Diversity Program Manager, Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, Office of Personnel Management

Disability Through an Intersectionality Lens

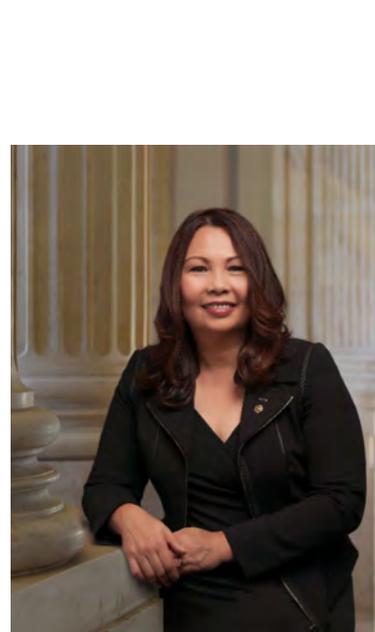
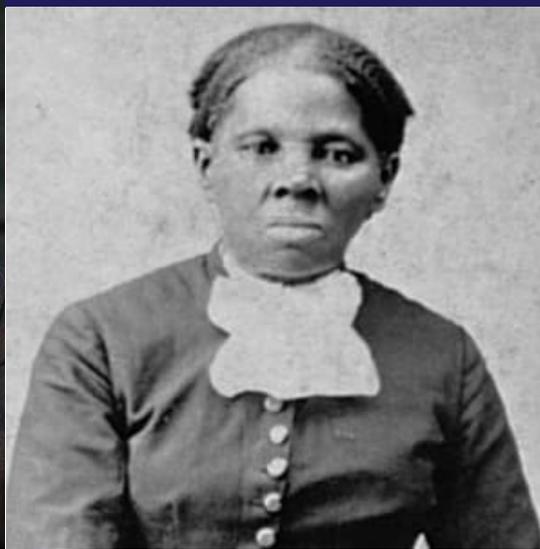
LaWanda Cook, PhD, CRC

lhc62@cornell.edu

In This Session

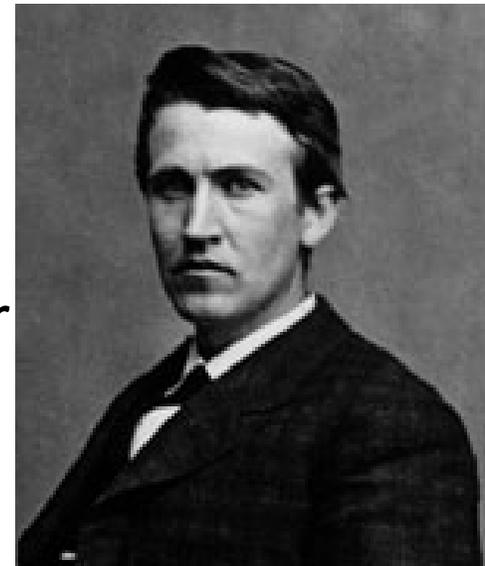
- Introduce/review the concept of intersectionality
- Define related terms
- Consider workplace culture and culturally relevant outreach efforts in meeting federal agency goals of fulfilling EO 14035 and ensuring a diverse and inclusive workplace

People with disabilities are in all walks of life, in all professions, and in all ages



Everyone has abilities.

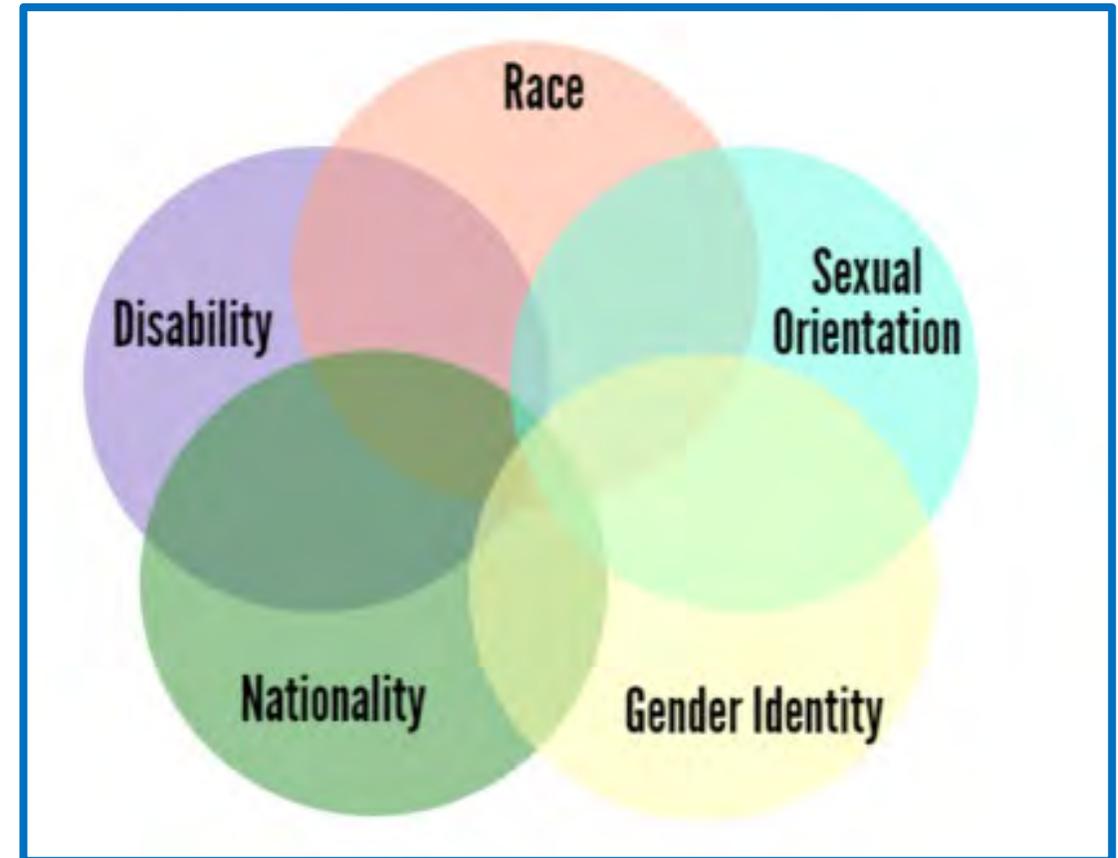
Often, the biggest barrier is not the disability, but the attitudes of others.



Identities Exercise #1

- Please list 4 of your identities that are important to you.

(Image source: YW Boston, 2017)



Multiply Marginalized

Multiply

People have multiple, overlapping identities and perspectives that shape their everyday lives.

Marginalized

Being marginalized is the social process of being deemed “less than” or outside of mainstream society, **preventing full participation in cultural, social, economic and political life enjoyed by dominant group members.**

Underserved

In the context of the federal workforce...

“underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, who have been **systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social and civic life.**

Intersectionality

“[An] intersectional framework enables the acknowledgment of our multiple identities **as well as** the ways in which various social injustices are intertwined and interactively affect our daily lives.” — **disability justice scholar and activist Akemi Nishida**

[“What is Intersectionality?”](#)

Harriet Tubman



Combahee River Collective (1974-1980)

- There is an interlocking system of oppression: racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and other oppressions are interrelated.
- "We also often find it difficult to separate race from class and from sex oppression...in our lives they are ...experienced simultaneously."
- Until Black women are free, none of us is free.

Structural and Political Intersectionality



- <https://youtube.com/watch?v=yWa63FLEYSU&spfreload=10>

Ableism

able·ism

/ˈæbəlɪzəm/ noun

A system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism.

This systemic oppression that leads to people and society determining people's value based on their culture, age, language, appearance, religion, birth or living place, "health/wellness", and/or their ability to satisfactorily re/produce, "excel" and "behave."

You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

working definition by @TalilaLewis, updated January 2022, developed in community with disabled Black/negatively racialized folk, especially @NotThreeFifths. Read more: bit.ly/ableism2022



Poll 1:

TRUE or FALSE?

In the 1850's, an American physician proposed “Drapetomania” as the cause of enslaved people running away, and advised regular whipping as the best way to prevent this condition.

Poll 2:

How many states have laws explicitly allowing the forced sterilization of disabled people?

- 5
- 15
- 25
- More than 25

Source: <https://nwlc.org/resource/forced-sterilization-of-disabled-people-in-the-united-states/>

Different Perspectives on Disability

Native American communities are more tolerant of mental disabilities and disorders because of a deep cultural belief that altered mental states bring better connections to the spirit world and new types of learning into a tribe's community.

Source: [https://lewisar.sites.grinnell.edu/HistoryofMedicine/uncategorized/everything-in-nature-goes-in-curves-and-circles-native-american-concepts-of-disability/#:~:text=Native%20American%20cultures%20believed%20\(and,the%20physical%20manifestations%20or%20i,mpairments](https://lewisar.sites.grinnell.edu/HistoryofMedicine/uncategorized/everything-in-nature-goes-in-curves-and-circles-native-american-concepts-of-disability/#:~:text=Native%20American%20cultures%20believed%20(and,the%20physical%20manifestations%20or%20i,mpairments)

Poll 3:

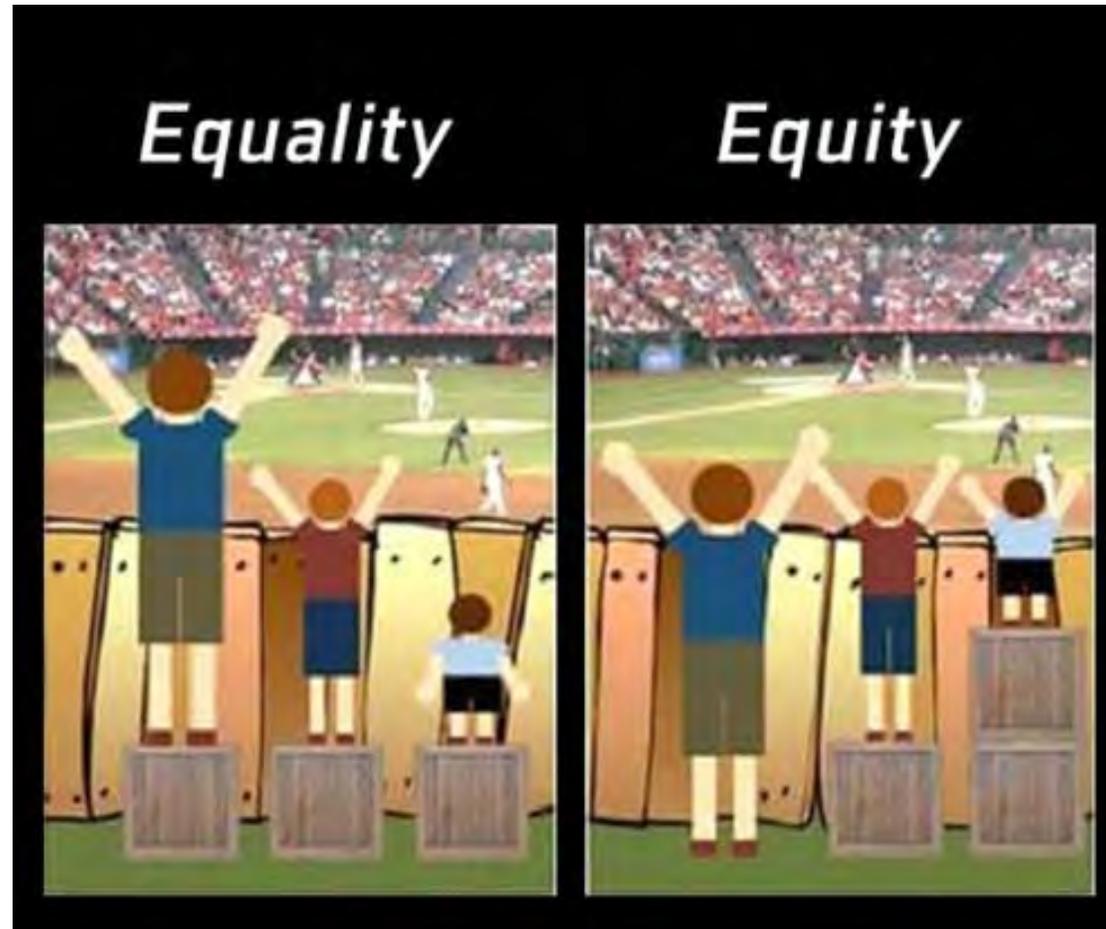
TRUE or FALSE?

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and other people of color) is the preferred term when referring to racially and ethnically minoritized people.

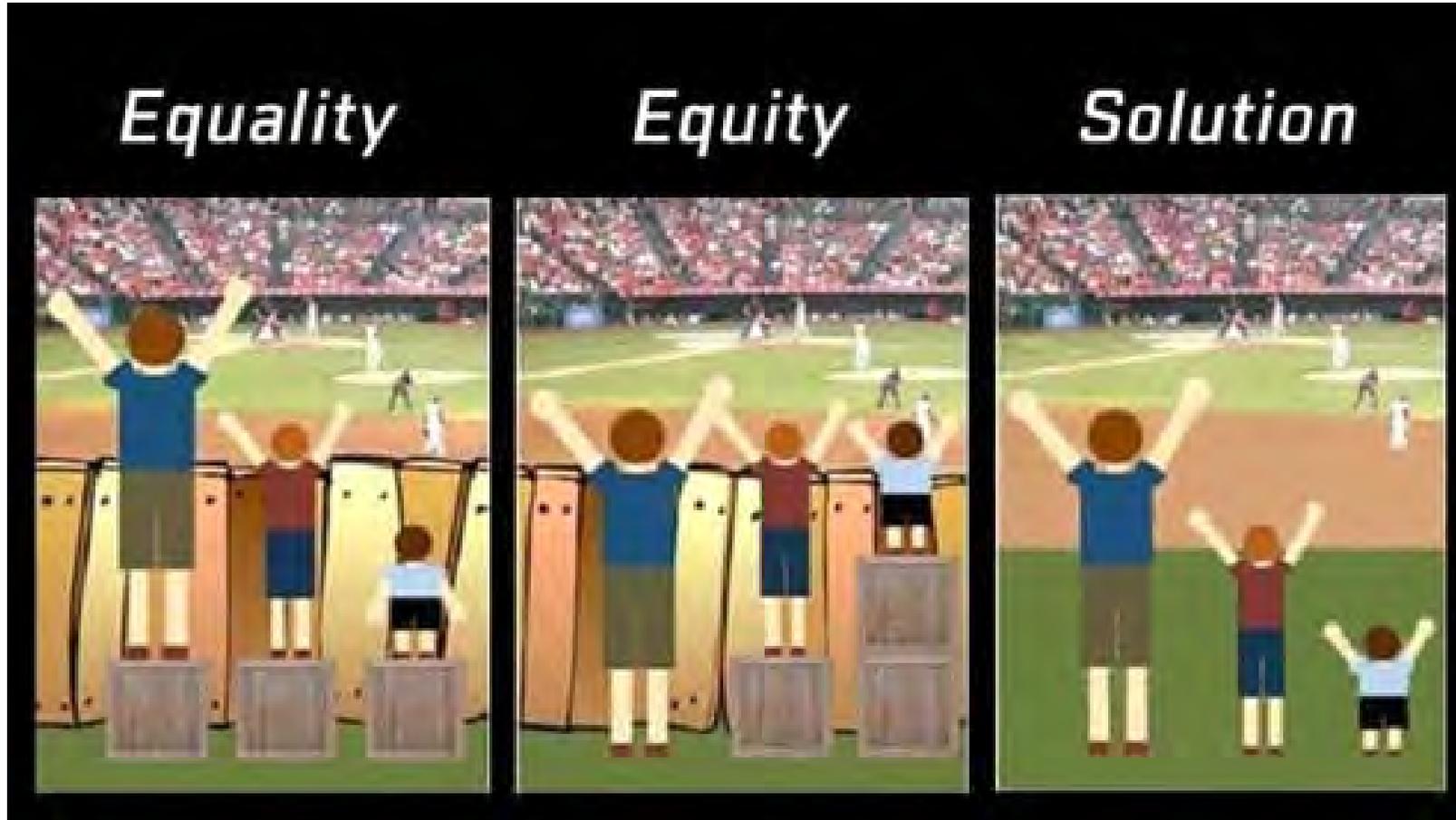
Intersectionality is NOT

- **Oppression Olympics**
 - recognizes that all oppressions are designed to maintain current structures of privilege and power
- **Only about identities**
 - **positionality** – how identities have historically been viewed in society - is key to understanding intersectionality
- **Simply additive**
 - it is a way to **see** that multiply marginalized people don't just face more oppressions, but a person's combination of identities creates unique experiences in their daily lives

Equality vs. Equity



Solution: Barrier Elimination



Workplace Scenario 1: Siu

Siu, the only staff member in their unit who identifies as a person of color, was asked to be on an interview panel for hiring a new employee. As the panel prepares, the HR Director, Jay, comments on all the “odd ball” names on the resumes. Jay jokes that one candidate, Sanjiv, must not be making enough money at their convenience store, and that a candidate named Shaniqua probably has “crazy looking” fingernails. Everyone is laughing except Siu. Siu tells Jay that they are uncomfortable with these comments, to which Jay replies, “Ha, why do you think we hired *you*?” Siu’s supervisor, who is also on the panel, and the other panelists, say nothing.

- **What do Jay’s comments and the panelists’ responses tell us about the workplace culture?**
- **What are some other ways Siu’s coworkers could have responded to Jay’s comments?**
- **What do the behaviors of the rest of panel suggest about how diverse and/or multiply marginalized staff and partners might experience working for or with the organization?**

Intersectionality in the Workplace

- Center the experiences of multiply marginalized people.
- Establish a climate where employees feel “seen.”
- Provide opportunities for ongoing learning.
- Encourage collaboration between employee resource groups and utilize their feedback.

Workplace Scenario 2: Kendrick

Kendrick is the chairperson of a disability committee at a local church. The church is affiliated with a national faith-based organization that is committed to social justice for all. You would like Kendrick to help you gain access to the communities he identifies with.

- **What are some specific things you can do to achieve this goal?**

Reaching Diverse Communities

- It's about relationships - people, not "projects"!
- Work with credible messengers
- Go where community members are
- Adjust approach based on communication needs and cultural expectations

Reaching Diverse Communities (2)

- Address “needs” *as defined by community*
- Work *with* – don’t do to
- Compensate and acknowledge collaborators
- Share results and resources in ways that are useful to the community

Beyond Access to Wholeness

Ableism is connected to all of our struggles because it undergirds notions of whose bodies are considered **valuable, desirable** and **disposable**.

Mia Mingus, from *How our communities can move beyond access to wholeness*

An Intersectional Lens

“If you don't have a lens that's been trained to look at how various forms of discrimination come together, you're unlikely to develop a set of policies [or practices, products and services] that will be as inclusive as they need to be.”

Kimberle Williams Crenshaw



Image from: <https://www.newtactics.org/blog/intersectionality-tool-realizing-human-rights>

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