

# Leveling the Playing Field:

*Supporting Disabled Students and Early Career Professionals through Mentorship*

Webinar presented by:

APHA Disability Section Mentoring Program



# Session Reminders

- **Closed Caption via CART services available** – turn on at bottom of screen, near chat box
- **Please turn off camera during presentations** – to allow for main presenters to be easily visible
- **Pin videos & Speakers** – choose the 3 dots that appear in the top right of their picture
- **Use the Chat box for questions during pauses in presentation** – the full Q&A will be at end
- Introduce self when talking
- **Slides and recording will be available** – link to slides is in chat

# Live Tweeting

Throughout this webinar, please feel free to live tweet this session and the lessons that you have learned or nuggets that you have caught

- Please use the hashtag: **#DisMentoring**
- You can also mention: **@APHADisability**  
**@Public Health**  
**@DisInHigherEd**

You can also include your discipline specific hashtags, ie:

- #MedTwitter, #PsychTwitter, #DisabilityTwitter, etc.



# Webinar Overview



- **Introduction**  
Bridgette Schram
- **Making the Case**  
Meredith Williams and & Hana Meshesha
- **Identity & Intersectionality**  
Cindy & Petros & Syreeta Nolan
- **Disclosure of Disability Status & Discrimination**  
Chloe Simpson & Mike McKee
- **Accommodations/Asking for Help**  
Chloe Simpson & Courtney Fecske
- **Self-Determination/Alternative Paths & Timelines**  
Meredith Williams & Dot Nary
- **Allyship/Co-instigator**  
Syreeta Nolan & Meg Traci
- **Q&A**



**DISABILITY  
SECTION**

# Making the Case

Meredith Williams, MPH

Hana Meshesha, MEd MA

# Who are people with disabilities?

> **25%** US population

- Diverse
- Persistent
- Creative
- Problem solvers
- Team players
- Experts





# What about students and professionals?



7% of  
graduate  
students



3% of  
physicians



1.5% of full-  
time faculty



# Why mentoring?



Benefits mentees



Benefits mentors



Benefits the field

# What is the Disability Section Mentoring Program all about?

- Initiated and founded by disabled students and scholars
- One-to-one support and guidance
- Open for undergraduate and up
- Diversity is welcomed
- We are open to non-disabled students and scholars whose interest is to work and study in disability area



APHA

**DISABILITY  
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# What have we done so far?

## Mentoring matches

- 2020 & 2021

## Networking

- Webinars
- APHA Annual Meeting & Expo Student Mentoring Sessions
- Facebook, Slack, LinkedIn groups



# What do we have for today?

Let's learn from each other

- What do we bring to the table?
- How do we navigate the system of the academy and workplace?
- The voice of Allies/Co-Conspirators

Who is invited to speak?

- Mentees, Mentors & Allies/Co-Conspirators





**DISABILITY  
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# **Identity & Intersectionality**

Cindy Petros

Syreeta Nolan

# Identity and Disability

## Social Model of Disability

- Disability as social construct that prevents individuals with impairments from participating in full and engaged lives
- People with disabilities (or disabled people) can have multiple social identities

## Disability Pronouns

- Person First
- Identity First

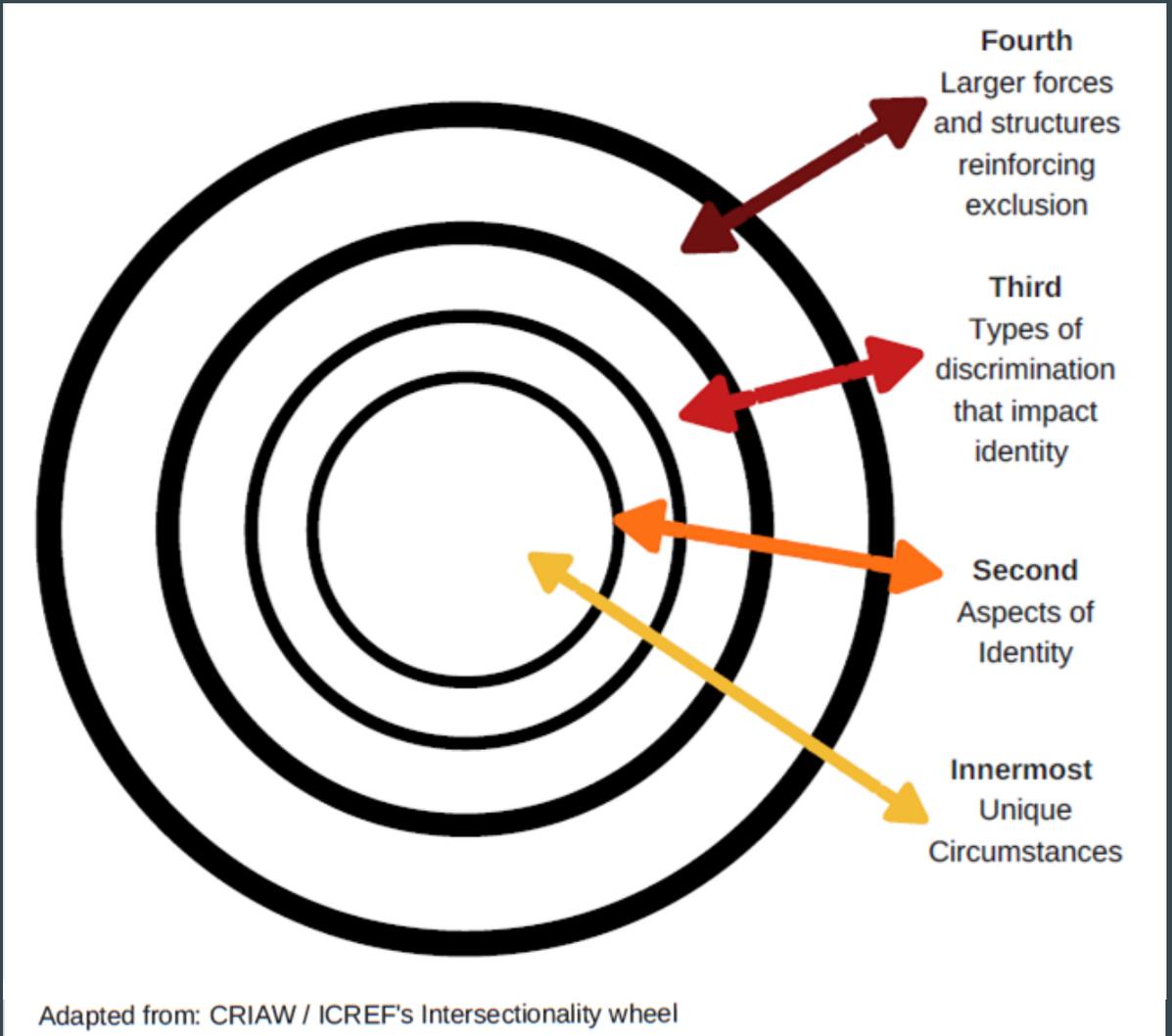
## Intersectionality Theory:

- Overlapping social identities that interact with structural systems of oppression and privilege
- Identities cannot be separated

Intersectionality is about fighting discrimination *within* discrimination, tackling inequalities *within* inequalities, and protecting minorities *within* minorities.

# How to support mentees with disability

- Take a step back and engage in active listening
- Learn more about your identities
- Learn more about your privilege
- Intersectionality Wheel
  - What are the obstacles/barriers Mentees' face keeping them from full participation?





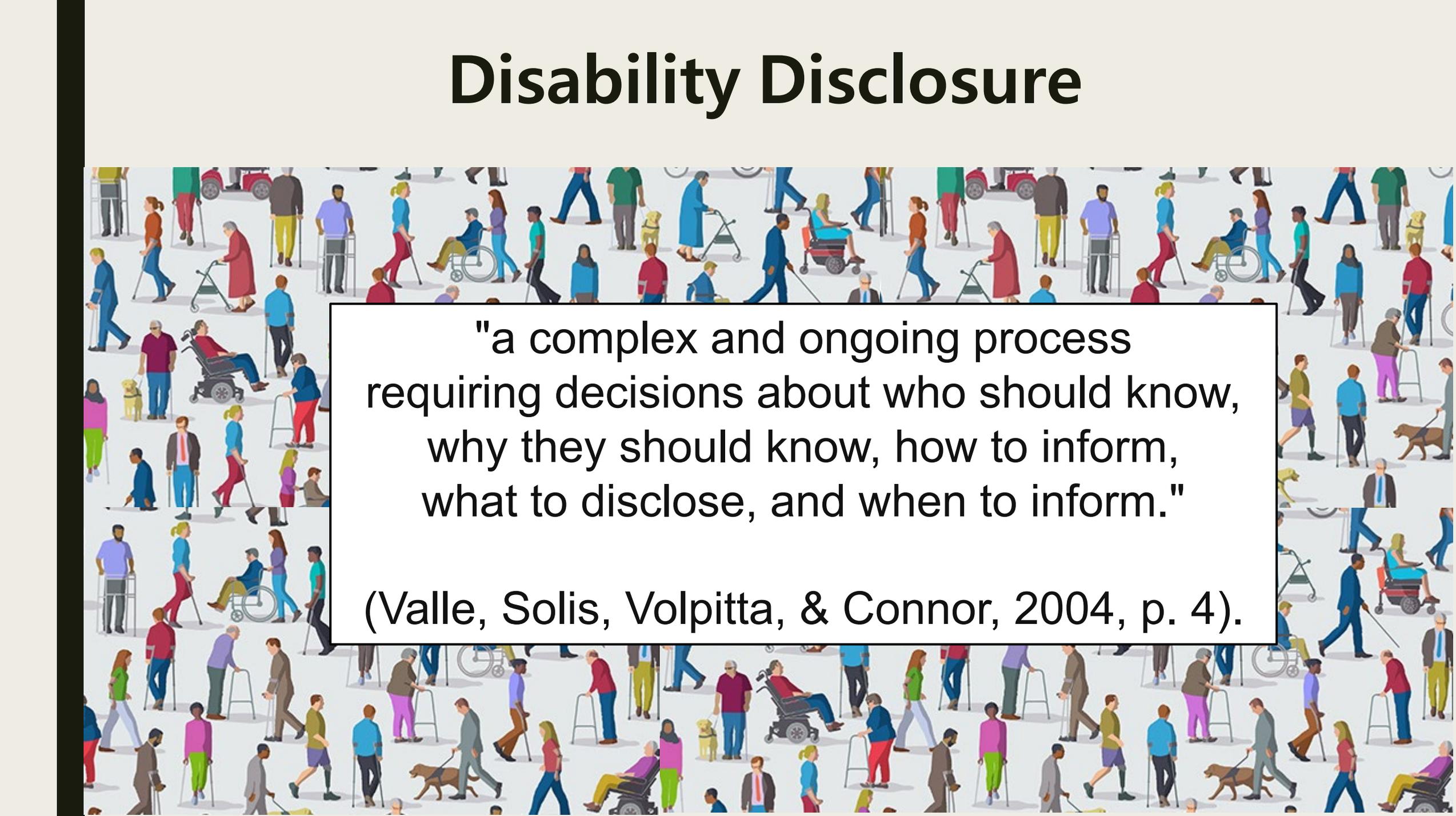
**DISABILITY  
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# Disclosure of Disability Status & Discrimination

Chloe Simpson, MS

Mike McKee, MD, MPH

# Disability Disclosure



"a complex and ongoing process requiring decisions about who should know, why they should know, how to inform, what to disclose, and when to inform."

(Valle, Solis, Volpitta, & Connor, 2004, p. 4).

# Disability Disclosure



“With disability, consent is no longer a given choice; instead, one must disclose in order to gain access, which often involves not mutual understanding but an imbalanced (and imposed) sense of power between the parties involved.”

(Pearson & Boskovich, 2019)

## Recommended Read:

*Problematizing Disability Disclosure in Higher Education: Shifting Towards a Liberating Humanizing Intersectional Framework*

(Pearson & Boskovich, 2019)

# Diversity Includes Disability!

“It is a simple matter of social justice and equity that our health care professional community mirror society also in the inclusion of physicians with disabilities.”

- Former president of the AAMC, Jordan Cohen

- **Our disability is not a burden but an aspect to celebrate.**



# Mentorship

- Important for a student or young professional's success
- “Lack of mentoring” as either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important factor impacting career success\*
- Keys
  - *Navigating barriers*
  - *Know how/ Skill building*
  - *Networking*
  - *Support and Opportunities*
  - ***Advocating on behalf of your mentee!***

\*Jackson, et al., 2003. "Having the right chemistry": a qualitative study of mentoring in academic medicine



**DISABILITY  
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# Accommodations & Asking for Help

Chloe Simpson, MS &  
Courtney Fecske, PhD, CTRS

# Student Perspective: Formal Accommodations

1. Locate Services

2. Request Accommodation

3. Gain Accommodation



If documentation is insufficient, student must schedule and pay for new evaluation

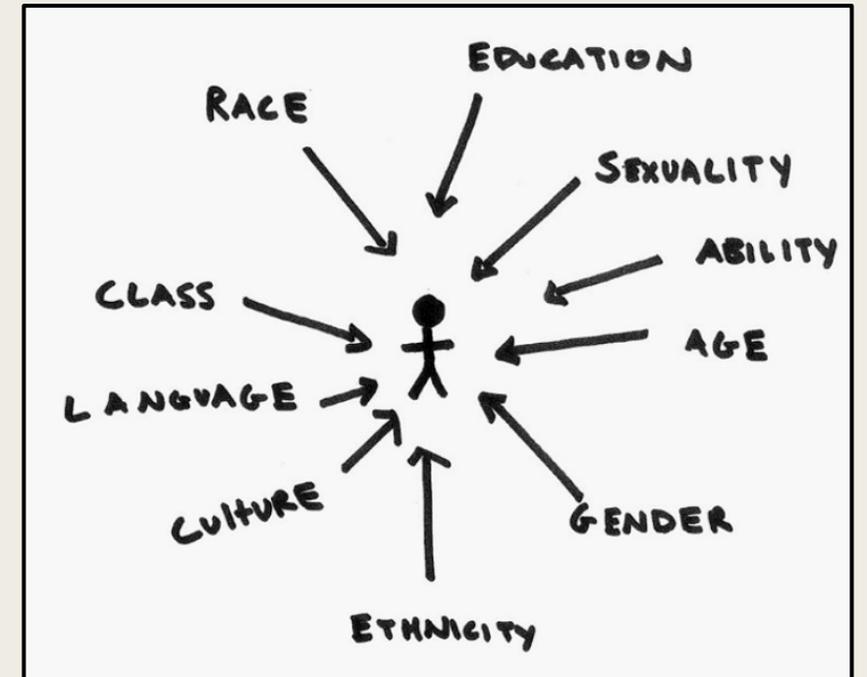
Obtain a letter of support from a medical professional familiar with you and your disability

Accommodations at the post-secondary level will not be personal in nature

# Student Perspective: Accommodation Recommendations

## Tips for mentors from a student

- **Recognize individuality**
- Normalize accommodations early on
- Be aware of your institution's services and processes
- Support students' self-empowerment
- Know the legislation
  - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
  - Section 504 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973



# Mentor Perspective: Accommodations

## Support students registering with DSS/DRC: increases resources

- Be aware of what documentation is needed and how you can support/prepare your mentee/s
- Be patient (this can be an emotional, time consuming, and expensive process)

## Be in the know: Be aware of common accommodations

- If the student is apprehensive, you can explain benefits (next slide)
- Accommodations are proactive NOT retroactive. Be prepared if accommodations are needed
- Knowledge is power. A student does enough to demonstrate a need for accommodations. It is NOT their job to educate you
- As a professor/mentor, if you give me your accommodations, it is now my responsibility to make my content accessible (often this benefits EVERYONE!)
- Consider how to make your learning content inclusive to begin with

## Be supportive of accommodations at ALL learning levels

- Health conditions, learning disabilities, mental health diagnosis, etc. do not disappear because a student earned a Bachelors degree
- Ex. Extended time on preliminary written exams

# Mentor Perspective: Accommodations

**As a mentor/advisor when a student uses accommodations I see:**

Autonomy

Proactive

Strong self-advocacy

Building rapport

Communication skills

Increased representation

\*Self-disclosure/vulnerability

(Why would a student potentially be uncomfortable even with these positives?)



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# **Self-Determination & Alternative Paths/Timelines**

Meredith Williams, MPH

Dot Nary, PhD



# **SELF- DETERMINATION**

- **Self-determination** is a combination of attitudes and abilities that lead people to set goals for themselves, and to take the initiative to reach those goals.
- In order to succeed in their education and future careers, self-determined students and ECPs:
  - Accept their disability and understand how it affects learning and achievement
  - Understand when and which accommodations are needed
  - Know how to describe their disability and the need for accommodations
  - Have the determination to overcome barriers they may encounter. (Getzel & Thoma, 2008)
- Successful mentoring of disabled students and ECPs involves:
  - Respecting their knowledge of their own disabilities
  - Understanding that timelines and career trajectories may be different, or change periodically
  - Providing support when barriers are encountered
  - Suggesting ways to navigate those barriers



# Self-Determination

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- Making your own decisions
- Setting your own goals
- Having control over when and how you reach those goals



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# **Allyship/Co-conspirator**

Syreeta Nolan

Meg Traci, PhD

# Land acknowledgements and Intros

Syreeta Nolan

- The UC San Diego community holds great respect for the land and the original people of the area where our campus is located. The university was built on the unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. Today, the Kumeyaay people continue to maintain their political sovereignty and cultural traditions as vital members of the San Diego Community. We acknowledge their tremendous contributions to our region and thank them for their stewardship.

Meg Ann Traci, PhD

- The University of Montana acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. We honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.

# Allyship and Co-Conspirator

- “And we need **partners** even more than we need innovators or entrepreneurs. Joining an effort already underway instead of centering yourself and your own ideas can be hard. Sometimes it’s a sacrifice. But it’s the essence of true allyship.”

(Andrew Pulrang, *3 Ways Disability Allyship Can Go Off Track*, Forbes).

# Allyship and Co-Conspirator

**Partners** agree that the work is conducted with:

- Values of the [Independent Living](#) and [Disability Rights Movement](#)
- Leadership of the Disability Community
  - [National Council on Disability's \(1988\). On the Threshold of Independence.](#)
  - Emerging voices in Disability advocacy and leadership

# My perspectives of an ally/co-conspirator

(Disabled student representative @Nolan\_Syreeta)

- ❑ **Balance** between we want allies and we don't trust people
- ❑ Disabled students can run out of financial aid
  - Helping disabled students find alternate sources of financial aid
- ❑ Social media, #DisabilityTwitter @DisInHigherEd
- ❑ **Creating a space** for all of us to be together so we can all thrive.
  - ❑ JADE, Justice Advocacy and Disability Education @JADEDJustice
- ❑ **Respect healthy skepticism**

# My perspectives of an ally/co-conspirator

(Disability and Health Researcher @TraciMeg)

What do I bring to the partnership?

- **Tools to co-produce actionable solutions** to priorities and concerns of the disability community
  - e.g., as an experimental psychologist trained in life-span developmental psychology and early intervention
    - Pursuing a Career in Experimental Psychology, available at: <https://www.apa.org/action/science/experimental/education-training>

# My perspectives of an ally/co-conspirator

(Disability and Health Researcher @TraciMeg)

## What do I bring to the partnership?

- **Design, budget and build** to reflect these values
- Be ready to **listen, learn, and change**
  - Prioritize opportunities to listen and show up when invited to disability-led spaces
  - Have colleagues to share the experience and advance changes needed in the field
- Resist work done with a charitable approach or solely using the medical model and not **the social model of disability**
  - regardless of how 'cool' or profitable.
- Advocate for **meaningful and sustainable change initiatives** over activities

# My perspectives of an ally/co-conspirator

(Disability and Health Researcher @TraciMeg)

## What do I bring to the partnership?

- **Be mindful** about invitations and clarify who you are and the need for disability representation
- **Be ready to be unpopular** for:
  - Advocating for accessibility, even the low threshold of ADA requirements
  - Emphasizing unfairness and inequities when others want to celebrate
  - Protecting disability leadership in the integration of technology and programs into population-based systems.

# Key Take-Aways

## **Making the Case**

- Disabled people are a large and underrepresented population
- We bring diverse skills, strengths, and lived experience to research and practice

## **Identity & Intersectionality**

- Identity is individual & personal
- Disabled people are diverse on all dimensions
- Be ready and willing to learn from outside resources, along with your mentee

## **Disclosure of Disability Status & Discrimination**

- Disclosure is difficult and is an ongoing process unique to each individual
- Listen, validate, & support

# Key Take-Aways

## **Accommodations & Asking for Help**

- Formal accommodation processes are complex, time-consuming, and changing
- Providing accommodations for individuals can increase inclusivity for everyone

## **Self-Determination/ Alternative Paths & Timelines**

- Disabled mentees are experts on what works best for them
- Learn to redefine successful paths, processes, & outcomes based on mentee values
- Join your mentee in flexible thinking, persistence, and creative problem solving

## **Allyship/Co-Conspirator**

- Actions speak louder than words
- Listen, build trust, lift, & connect

# Additional Resources

- Grigely, J. (2017). The neglected demographic: Faculty members with disabilities. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-neglected-demographic-faculty-members-with-disabilities/>.
- Meeks, L. M., & Jain, N. R. (2018). *Accessibility, inclusion, and action in medical education: Lived experiences of learners and physicians with disabilities*. Washington, DC: Association of American Medical Colleges.

## Identity & Intersectionality

- National Museum of African History & Culture
  - <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/social-identities-and-systems-oppression>
- Universal of British Columbia: Social Identity Worksheet
  - <http://timeandplace.ubc.ca/files/2014/06/Appendix-2.pdf>
- Forbes: How to Find Your Disability Community
  - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewpulang/2021/05/31/how-to-find-your-disability-community/?sh=324fb3f910fe>
- Autistic Hoya: Ableist Words and Phrases to avoid
  - <https://www.autistichoya.com/p/ableist-words-and-terms-to-avoid.html?m=1>
- Sociologist for Women in Society: Factsheets Oppression without Bigots
  - [https://socwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/fact\\_3-2010-oppression.pdf](https://socwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/fact_3-2010-oppression.pdf)
- Intersectionality Wheel:
  - <https://medium.com/the-red-elephant-foundation/understanding-intersectionality-a1da46e2e0b2>

# Additional Resources

## Disclosure

- Pearson & Boskovich. (2019) Problematizing Disability Disclosure in Higher Education: Shifting Towards a Liberating Humanizing Intersectional Framework
  - <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/6001/5187>
- Valle, Solis, Volpitta, & Connor. (2004) The Disability Closet: Teachers with Learning Disabilities Evaluate the Risks and Benefits of "Coming Out"
- Jackson, et al., 2003. "Having the right chemistry": a qualitative study of mentoring in academic medicine
  - [https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Fulltext/2003/03000/Ageism\\_in\\_Medical\\_Students\\_Treatment.20.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Fulltext/2003/03000/Ageism_in_Medical_Students_Treatment.20.aspx)

## Accommodations

- A new decade for assessment: Embedding equity into assessment praxis. Montenegro, E., & Jankowski, N. A., January 2020.
  - <https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-COVID-Survey.pdf>
- Building More Inclusive Communities with Grading for Equity. Joe Feldman.
  - <https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/summer-2019/grading-for-equity/>
- Grading for Equity: What it is, Why it matters, and How It Transforms Classrooms. Mark Boswell and Joe Feldman.
  - <https://youtu.be/bE4RmeuPT-w>

# Additional Resources

## Self-Determination

- Getzel, E.E., & Thoma, C.A. (2008). Experiences of college students with disabilities and the importance of self-determination in higher education settings. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 31(2), 77-84.
  - [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237305663\\_Experiences\\_of\\_College\\_Students\\_With\\_Disabilities\\_and\\_the\\_Importance\\_of\\_Self-Determination\\_in\\_Higher\\_Education\\_Settings](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237305663_Experiences_of_College_Students_With_Disabilities_and_the_Importance_of_Self-Determination_in_Higher_Education_Settings)

## Allyship & Co-conspirator

- BECOMING AN ALLY AND CO-CONSPIRATOR IN DEVELOPMENTAL SCIENCE NOVEMBER 18, 2020 ERI COMMITTEE: ANTI-RACISM WEBINAR SERIES PRESENTERS (IN REVERSE ALPHABETICAL ORDER): DR HYUNG CHOL YOO, DR. LIONEL HOWARD, DR. GABRIELA CHAVIRA, DR. DIAMOND BRAVO, & DR. MONA ABO-ZENA MODERATOR: DR. MARIAH CONTRERAS (2018).
- 3 Ways Disability Allyship Can Go Off Track. Andrew Pulrang, Contributor, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Exploring disability practices, policy, politics, and culture.
- Why Co-Conspirators? Tufts toolbox.
  - <https://researchguides.library.tufts.edu/AntiRacismResourceGuide/WhyCoConspirators>
- WORKPLACE MENTORING: IT'S ALL GOOD! Melanie Whetzel, M.A., CBIS, Lead Consultant – Cognitive/Neurological Team, Job Accommodations Network.
  - <https://askjan.org/articles/Workplace-Mentoring-Its-all-Good.cfm>

# Reminders

- APHA Disability Mentor Program
  - **Open to additional Mentors and Mentees**
  - For more information, contact:
    - Meredith Williams at [willi632@uwm.edu](mailto:willi632@uwm.edu)
    - Hana Meshesha at [hana.meshesha@mso.umt.edu](mailto:hana.meshesha@mso.umt.edu)
- Future webinars, building on these topics
- Twitter conference for students and early career professionals



The poster features the APHA logo (a colorful wheel) and the text 'APHA | DISABILITY SECTION' at the top. The main title '1ST ANNUAL TWITTER CONFERENCE' is in large, bold, yellow-green letters. Below it, a white horizontal line is followed by the text 'SUBMISSIONS OPEN UNTIL JUNE 7TH'. Further down, it says 'STUDENTS AND EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONALS ENCOURAGED TO APPLY'. The URL 'http://bit.ly/DisTwitterConf' is provided in yellow-green. At the bottom, it says 'Reach out to [ekschmid@bu.edu](mailto:ekschmid@bu.edu) with questions'. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner. The background of the poster is a dark blue/black gradient with a white diagonal stripe and a landscape image of mountains and trees.

APHA | DISABILITY SECTION

## 1ST ANNUAL TWITTER CONFERENCE

SUBMISSIONS OPEN UNTIL  
JUNE 7TH

STUDENTS AND EARLY CAREER  
PROFESSIONALS ENCOURAGED TO  
APPLY

<http://bit.ly/DisTwitterConf>

Reach out to [ekschmid@bu.edu](mailto:ekschmid@bu.edu)  
with questions



# Questions for the Panel

STUDENTS



MENTORS



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AUCD

ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES  
THE LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH NETWORK