

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE JOINT DEI
COMMITTEE

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Making Connections Through DEI Discourse

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) with disabilities often face additional barriers to care, resources, and supports

According to the Center for Disability Rights, “Ableism is a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be ‘fixed’ in one form or the other. Ableism is intertwined in our culture, due to many limiting beliefs about what disability does or does not mean, how able-bodied people learn to treat people with disabilities and how we are often not included at the table for key decisions.” For people with disabilities who also happen to be people of color, the injustices and discrimination faced are frequently made worse. This is a product of stereotypes and damaging ideas about the worth and humanity of people of color and people with disabilities, as well as systemic racism and ableism within our health and social care institutions. Hence, people of color with disabilities frequently encounter extra obstacles when trying to get the treatment, resources, and assistance they need.

People of color with disabilities face added barriers to financial security.

According to US Census Bureau data, the poverty rate for Black people with disabilities is at 36 percent. There are many different ways that poverty, disability, and race are related. According to a National Disability Institute report, poverty can raise a person's risk of developing a disability because it increases exposure to dangerous environmental toxins, such as early lead exposure, increases the likelihood that a person will work or live in a dangerous environment, and decreases their access to early identification programs that can result in early access to necessary resources.



Because people with disabilities face difficult barriers in the job market, have high medical costs, and/or must rely on symbolic safety net resources like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) poverty is frequently exacerbated. Disability and poverty are related to racial inequities as well; people of color are more likely to face financial hardships, health problems, and disabilities.

Another area where we observe inconsistent results is with the physical safety of people of color with disabilities. Researchers with the Ohio Disability and Health Program write “rates of violence against people with disabilities are staggering: 50% of adults with disabilities reported experiencing violence in the past year, while children with disabilities are more than three times as likely to experience abuse and youth aged 12-19 experience violent crime victimization at a rate nearly 3 times higher than their peers without disabilities.”

There is ample evidence of disproportionately high incidence of victimization and violence against people of color.

People of color with disabilities face a significant safety risk as a result of this "double burden," and their contacts with the criminal justice system usually do not go well. According to a Disability Rights Ohio Report on Policing and Racial Justice “30-50% of individuals subject to use of force or killed by police have a disability. This risk cumulatively increases based on the person’s race, class, gender, and LGBTQ+ status.” They also have a disproportionately higher chance of being arrested and imprisoned, as well as a lower likelihood of receiving proper, intersectional treatment in correctional facilities.

Broader structural inequalities contribute to unequal access.

While there is robust evidence to demonstrate the negative health and social outcomes too often experienced by people with disabilities who are people of color, less data is available to illustrate their experiences within the disabilities system.

Less information is available to show how people of color with disabilities interact with the system, despite strong evidence showing the detrimental health and social results that they all too frequently face. Nonetheless, it is evident that unequal access is a result of more general structural disparities. As the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network describes, states with large populations of people of color were less likely to increase Medicaid eligibility, and states that have higher proportions of people of color tend to spend less on Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and more on institutional care. This has serious consequences for independent living.

There are also racial differences in access to HCBS, according to other studies. Researchers looked specifically at racial differences in HCBS spending and utilization in 2018 for people with multiple sclerosis. Compared to White people, Black people were less likely to obtain nurse care, case management, equipment, technology, and modification services. Fabius et al., (2018) state “Additionally, Black men had the lowest Medicaid HCBS expenditures, while White men had the highest.”

A 2022 study from the Ohio Disability and Health Partnership examined the ways in which these problems appear and identified several important domains in which individuals with disabilities who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) reported lower results in comparison to White individuals. Reports from BIPOC respondents were more likely to:

- Feeling left out
- Fair or poor health
- Delaying or avoiding care due to transportation challenges
- More frequent visits to the emergency room

In the social services and healthcare sectors, we need to increase our efforts to address issues like implicit provider bias and inadequate intersectionality training. We also need to come up with plans to restore community confidence. Across specializations, more training for healthcare and direct support professionals on the best ways to care for people with disabilities would be an essential first step. Finding a suitable provider match would also be facilitated by making it simpler for all people with disabilities to locate providers who value intersectional perspectives.

In order to make sure that people of color with disabilities' perspectives are central to decisions that affect their lives, we must elevate their experiences in programmatic and policymaking decisions. If their experiences are absent, we run the risk of assuming the wrong things about the needs of this group, or worse, letting our own prejudices get in the way of making decisions.

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Center for Disability Rights

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Did You Know?



Lesser-known quotes from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Every year, during the month of January you hear and read feel-good quotes from Dr. King. Usually these are quotes captured from his famous 'I have a Dream' speech. However, America's favorite soundbites don't represent his entire work or beliefs. His Whitewashed quotes do not do justice to his work, his intellectual brilliance, and his ability to bring together several social issues for the betterment of society at large.

Even though today's society remembers soft-spoken, and non-confrontational teachings, we would be doing a disservice to ourselves if we did not see the entire picture. The below facts are meant to get us to critically acknowledge fuller, more empathic ways of thinking about systems of oppression and how Civil Rights Leaders have, and continue to fight for the betterment of humanity.

At one point he was the most hated man in the U.S. Before Dr. King's murder at the age of 39, a Harris poll showed a 75 percent disapproval rating (at the time of his assassination) due to his push for economic and racial justice. In fact, his approval rating got systematically worse after the speech that everyone likes quoting.

He was also in the 'Most Wanted' list of the FBI and deemed one of the most dangerous men in the country. He was imprisoned 29 times during his lifetime. By 1966, Dr. King had become an outspoken opponent of "liberal" white complicity in white supremacy, of American imperialism and of the capitalist system itself.

Quoting I Have a Dream out of context robs MLK's words of their power and makes anti-racists out to be the enemy for fighting the same battles he fought. Below are a few of the less popularized quotes from speeches and letters, written and spoken.

- "I must confess that that dream that I had that day has in many points turned into a nightmare. Now I'm not one to lose hope. I keep on hoping. I still have faith in the future. But I've had to analyze many things over the last few years and I would say over the last few months, I've gone through a lot of soul-searching and agonizing moments. And I've come to see that we have many more difficulties ahead and some of the old optimism was a little superficial and now it must be tempered with a solid realism. And I think the realistic fact is that we still have a long, long way to go." (Interview with NBC, May 8, 1967)

Did You Know?

Lesser-known quotes from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

- “Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” (Letter from Birmingham City Jail, 1963)
- "And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it America has failed to hear?...It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice and humanity." (“The other America,” 1968)
- “Again we have deluded ourselves into believing the myth that capitalism grew and prospered out of the Protestant ethic of hard work and sacrifices. Capitalism was built on the exploitation of Black slaves and continues to thrive on the exploitation of the poor, both Black and White, both here and abroad.” (The Three Evils speech, 1967).





Words & Concepts of the Month



The Suffrage movement, Intersectionality, and the Forgetting of Black Women

Highschool level history lessons teach us that Suffragists fought for white women's voting rights when they convened in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. Participants included Frederick Douglass, a Black man, a group of white men who supported them, and middle-class and upper-class white women. Douglas, the renowned abolitionist had developed close working relationships with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, two prominent white women suffragists. Black women weren't present at the convention. They were never invited.

According to historian Lisa Tetrault, author of *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898*, and historian of the Seneca Falls meeting, the movement's origins were not widely recognized until the meeting's 25th anniversary in 1873. This suggests that writing the movement's origin story had not been given priority for about 25 years. Anthony was not present at the Seneca Falls convention in 1848, despite reports to the contrary. About 200–300 white men and women attended the little event, which Elizabeth Cady Stanton had arranged in a matter of days.

As damage control for the imprisonment of outspoken suffragist Victoria Woodhull during her 1872 presidential campaign, Anthony and Stanton attempted to demonstrate the movement's long and illustrious history by beginning to tell the story of the suffrage movement as beginning at Seneca Falls, according to Tetrault.

At a time when there were internal disputes among suffragists on the best approach to attain full equality for White women in American society, starting the movement's story at Seneca Falls, allowed them to omit suffragists who they no longer agreed with. For instance, Lucy Stone did not attend Seneca Falls; instead, in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1850, she organized what is regarded as the first national conference for women's rights.

Stone believed that rather than changing the US Constitution, the best method to ensure women's voting rights would be to implement state-level measures. She was also a member of the white suffragist movement that backed the 15th Amendment, which forbade states from voting restrictions based on race. Anthony and Stanton opposed the amendment because they did not think Black men should get the vote before white women.

Seneca Falls' and their own positions were further solidified by Stanton and Anthony's six-volume, more than 5,700-page History of Woman Suffrage. For a long time, the book was regarded as the only account of the suffrage campaign of the 19th century, however, it has been well documented that it omitted a large number of Black activists for voting rights.

Even though there was undeniable lack of Black women in Seneca Falls, there was still hope for increased cultural inclusion in the near future. Such hope is brought forth with the name of Abolitionist Sojourner Truth, a Black woman who spoke at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in May 1851. The early origins of Black women's voting rights struggle are not included when discussing the history of Seneca Falls' activism. However, these efforts date back to the 1820s and 1830s, according to historian and author of Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All (Martha S. Jones).

Although they were not present at the Seneca Falls convention in 1848, Black women were in Philadelphia that spring battling for the right to have a license to preach. Sojourner Truth, an activist and former enslaved woman from upstate New York, represented Black women at the 1850 national convention for women's rights. The following year, she inspired a new generation of voting rights campaigners with her "Ain't I a Woman" address, which framed voting rights as human rights.

Black suffragists like Mary Church Terrell embodied intersectional feminism at its best by the turn of the 20th century. Terrell, who was born into a family of former enslaved people in Memphis, Tennessee, attended Oberlin College for her bachelor's and master's degrees. She also held the position of president for the "National Association of Colored Women." Terrell gave a speech in February 1898 in Washington, D.C. at the National American Woman Suffrage Association meeting. Throughout her speech, influential White women were compelled to consider the systemic violence and ongoing injustice that Black women experienced throughout enslavement. She praised the sheer determination and intelligence of liberated Black women as she concluded on a more upbeat note.

State laws that were passed during the Jim Crow era in order to circumvent the 15th and 19th Amendments did not specifically address race, but they were applied unfairly. Black Americans were significantly more frequently than White Americans made to answer questions like "how many bubbles are in a bar of soap," take "literacy tests," and pay penalties known as "poll taxes." Suffrage clubs were then established by Black women, such as the writer Ida B. Wells, to inform Black people on what to expect on election day. Fannie Lou Hamer, who was in her 40s when she discovered she could vote, traveled the nation assisting others in doing the same.

Many of the voting restrictions from the Jim Crow era were outlawed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But the struggle to keep its teeth intact continues. For example, A 2013 decision by the US Supreme Court reduced federal control over state voting regulations. There are currently fewer polling places and lengthier lines for voters in communities with a high concentration of Black and Brown residents.

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Tetrault, L. (2014). The myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the women's suffrage movement, 1848-1898. UNC Press Books.

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Mary Church Terrell



Sojourner Truth

This Month...

American Heart Month

February is American Heart Month, a time when all people can focus on their cardiovascular health. The Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention is shining a light on hypertension (high blood pressure), a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke. The Division is committed to addressing barriers to health equity in communities disproportionately affected by cardiovascular disease.

[Learn more](#)



Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by Black Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event was partly founded by noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent Black Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history. Throughout future Newsletters we will learn more about Black American history and engage it on a monthly basis. Stay Tuned!

[Learn more](#)



Days of the Month

February 1 National Freedom Day

The holiday commemorates the day in 1865 when President Abraham Lincoln signed what would later become the 13th Amendment. This amendment is important because it effectively ended slavery in the United States.



[Learn more](#)

February 3 International Wear Red Day

The first Friday in February (February 3) is National Wear Red Day. On this day, taking place during American Heart Month, everyone across the country dons the color red in order to raise and spread awareness in hopes to help eradicate heart disease and stroke in millions of women all over the nation.



[Learn More](#)

February 4 Rosa Parks Day

Rosa Parks Day honors an American Civil Rights hero twice a year on February 4th (her birthday) or December 1st. The holiday recognizes the civil rights leader Rosa Parks. Learn more about Rosa Parks, her experiences on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and her role in the Civil Rights movement. Discover how the Montgomery Bus Boycott affected the bussing system. Some movies and books to consider: Quiet Strength: The Faith, the Hope, and the Heart of a Woman Who Changed a Nation by Gregory J. Reed and Rosa Parks, Rosa Parks by Rosa Parks, She Would Not Be Moved by Herbert R. Kohl, Boycott (2001) and Selma (2014).



[Learn more](#)

February 10 Lunar New Year

This signifies the first new moon of the lunar calendar. It's a time rich in traditions and cultural festivities, often featuring family gatherings, special foods and diverse cultural rituals that differ from country to country, including performances, special decorations, and the giving of good-luck gifts.



[Learn more](#)

February 10 Tết

Vietnamese New Year generally falls in January or February, based on the lunar calendar. The Vietnam Tet in 2024 will occur on February 10, the year of the Dragon. Tet Nguyen Dan is another term for the New Year according to the Vietnamese lunar calendar. Tet marks the first morning of the New Year, which can bring luck in the coming year. It is considered Vietnam's most significant holiday and festival, with a long history that can be traced back to the agricultural traditions of ancient Vietnam.



[Learn more](#)

February 11 International Day of Women in Science

Globally, only 33 per cent of researchers are women, and they are awarded less research funding than men, and are less likely to be promoted. In the private sector too, women are less present in company leadership and in technical roles in tech industries. Women account for just 22 per cent of professionals working in artificial intelligence and 28 per cent of engineering graduates. These glaring under representations limit our ability to find inclusive, sustainable solutions to modern problems and build a better society for all.



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February 13 Mardi Gras

This year, Mardi Gras falls on Tuesday, February 13. Also called, Carnival, Mardi Gras is celebrated on Fat Tuesday each year, which always lands precisely 47 days before Easter and one day before Ash Wednesday. Because Easter changes each year (it's always the first Sunday after the full moon following the spring equinox), so does Mardi Gras. Easter can fall on any Sunday between March 23 and April 25, so Mardi Gras can be any day from February 3 to March 9.



[Learn More](#)

February 14 Frederick Douglass Day

While the year of his birth has been narrowed down to two possible candidates, the actual month and day Douglass was born are still unknown. Although Douglass was born into bondage, and never knew his birthdate, he chose to celebrate every year on February 14th. We celebrate this day as a moment for preserving Black history together. Douglass first rebelled against his southern captors by learning to read and write mostly with the help of young white children who lived nearby, even though it was illegal for enslaved people to learn such things. After escaping, he used his writing and wordsmithing skills as a way to make a case against slavery.



[Learn more](#)

February 14 Valentine's Day

There are a number of Saints called Valentine who are honored on February 14. The day became associated with romantic love in the Middle Ages in England. This may have followed on from the Pagan fertility festivals that were held all over Europe as the winter came to an end. Traditionally, lovers exchanged handwritten notes. Commercial cards became available in the mid nineteenth century.



[Learn more](#)

February 15 Susan B. Anthony's Birthday

This women's suffrage leader advocated for equal pay and the right to vote for White women. Susan B. Anthony was born on February 15, 1820 in Adams, Massachusetts. Anthony was good at strategy. Her discipline, energy, and ability to organize made her a strong and successful leader. Anthony and Stanton co-founded the American Equal Rights Association.

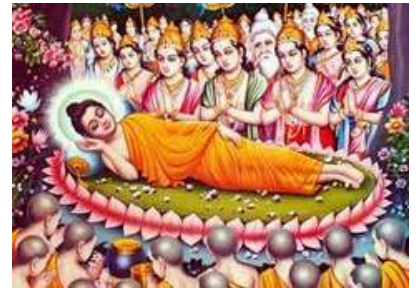
[Learn more](#)



February 15 Nirvana Day (Parinirvana)

Parinirvana Day, or Nirvana Day is a Mahayana Buddhist holiday celebrated in East Asia, Vietnam and the Philippines. By some it is celebrated on 8 February, but by most on the 15 February. In Bhutan, it is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the fourth month of the Bhutanese calendar. Day when the Buddha is said to have achieved Parinirvana, or complete Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body.

[Learn more](#)



February 19 Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II

On this day in 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which gave the U.S. Army the authority to remove civilians from the military zones established in Washington, Oregon, and California during WWII. This led to the forced removal and incarceration of some 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast, who had to abandon their jobs, their homes, and their lives to be sent to one of ten concentration camps scattered in desolate, remote regions of the country.

[Learn more](#)



February 20 World Day of Social Justice

Each year on February 20th, the United Nations, countries, communities, and individuals worldwide commemorate the World Day of Social Justice. This year, we celebrate this day to support international efforts to promote transitions to formal employment as a necessary condition for reducing poverty and inequalities, advancing decent work, and increasing productivity and sustainability.



[Learn more](#)

February 22 Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is a holy day of prayer and fasting in many Western Christian denominations. It is preceded by Shrove Tuesday and falls on the first day of Lent. It is observed by Catholics in the Roman Rite, Lutherans, Moravians, Anglicans, Methodists, Nazarenes, as well as by some churches in the Reformed tradition.



[Learn more](#)

February 24 Magha Puja Day

The second most important Buddhist festival after Vesak, celebrated on the full moon day of the third lunar month in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Sri Lanka and on the full moon day of Tabaung in Myanmar. It celebrates a gathering that was held between the Buddha and 1,250 of his first disciples, which, according to tradition, preceded the custom of periodic recitation of discipline by monks.

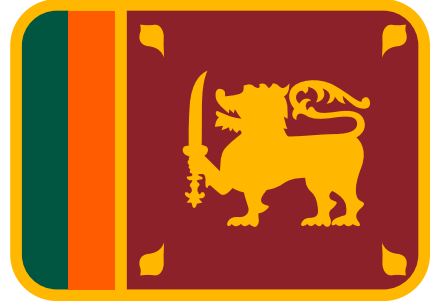


[Learn more](#)

Independence Days Around The World

February 4 Sri Lanka Independence Day

Sri Lankan national holiday celebrated annually on 4 February to commemorate the country's political independence from British rule in 1948. It is celebrated all over the country through a flag-hoisting ceremony, dances, parades, and performances.



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February 7 Grenada Independence Day

On 7 February 1974, Grenada became a sovereign nation, gaining independence from over 200 years of British colonial rule. Almost precisely 300 years after the island first became a French Crown colony in 1674 (the island was settled by the French in 1649), Grenada became the first of the Associated States to gain independence, becoming one of the smallest independent nations in the Western Hemisphere at the same time.

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February 18 Gambia Independence Day

Gambia Independence Day is celebrated on February 18 to mark the anniversary of The Gambia's liberation from the British Empire. After centuries of colonization and exploitation, The Gambia finally gained the right to self-governance on February 18, 1965.

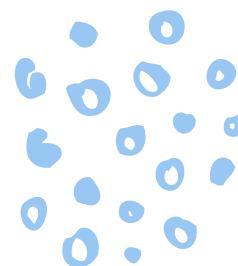
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February 22 Saint Lucia Independence Day

Saint Lucia Independence Day is celebrated annually on February 22 to commemorate the day when Saint Lucia gained its complete independence from the United Kingdom in 1979. First inhabited by the Arawaks and Caribs, Saint Lucia was colonized by the French and British in the 17th century. Previously called Iyanola by the Arawaks and later Hewanorra by the Caribs, Saint Lucia was also known as Helen of the West Indies due to being frequently switched between French and British control. It was then officially ceded to the British by the French in 1814.

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February 23 Brunei National Day

The National Day of Brunei Darussalam is celebrated annually on February 23. This marks the day that Brunei became officially independent from British control on February 23, 1984. Though the Proclamation of Independence was made before that on January 1, 1984, Britain's control over Brunei ceased on February 23, making it the official date of the country's independence. On December 31, 1983, the country's citizens geared up for the big day during mass gatherings in various mosques all over the country. Then, as the clock struck midnight on January 1, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah read the proclamation that declared Brunei's independence.

[Click to learn more](#)



February 24 Estonia Independence Day

Estonian Independence Day (iseseisvuspäev) is a public holiday in Estonia, always celebrated on February 24th. This is Estonia's National Day, marking the anniversary of the declaration founding the Republic of Estonia on this day in 1918. On February 24th 1918, Estonia issued a declaration of independence from the new Soviet Russia, which was followed by a war with the Soviets to maintain Estonian liberty. On February 2nd 1920, the war ended with the Tartu Peace Treaty which guaranteed Estonia's independence for all time. The Soviets went on to break this pact, however, and Estonia was under Soviet control for over 50 years.

[Click here to learn more](#)



February 25 Kuwait National Day

Kuwait National Day is celebrated on (يوم الكويت الوطني) the 25th of February every Year with vigor and enthusiasm. Kuwaitis celebrated their first Independence Day on June 19, 1962. This time Kuwaitis will celebrate 61st Kuwait National Day in 2023

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February 27 Dominican Republic

Dominican Republic Independence Day is celebrated every year on February 27. It first gained independence from the Spanish Empire in 1821, and from Haiti in 1844. The first celebration was observed in 1844 and it has been almost two centuries since. The Dominican Republic was under Haitian rule for 22 years before the independence war finally set them free. After they gained autonomy, the island of Hispaniola was divided into Haiti and Dominican Republic.

[Click here to learn more](#)



Call for Submissions, Feedback and Suggestions

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Monthly Newsletter invites contributions to our monthly publication that fits into the following categories:

- News items and announcements
- Short stories
- Recognitions
- Member profiles



Tell us what you want to see more of!

Send us your feedback!



Submit your materials to:
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