

>> SLIDE 1

**BACK TO THE
FUTURE** 2024

 **NCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON INDEPENDENT LIVING**

2024 Annual Conference on Independent Living

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Presented by the National Council on Independent Living

>> SLIDE 2

Radical Community

Anti-racist Organizing through Independent Living

Presenters:

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>> SLIDE 3: Community - what is it?

Community is what happens when people connect through the lens of their similarities.

Communities can form around shared identity, e.g. the LGBTQIA+ community.

They can form around shared cultural experiences, e.g. independence celebrations like Juneteenth, the anniversary of the ADA, and protests

>> SLIDE 4: Community - what is it?

Community is an active pursuit. We need to go back – returning to consumer-centered organizing

Independent Living (IL) is community because it is base building. It matches consumers with similar demands to medical, legal, and political power.

We're all community organizers! If you connect intent to action, you're organizing!

>> SLIDE 5: Systems change advocacy builds connection

- IL brings individuals with shared and related/similar identities together by mobilizing people who encounter the same barriers
- Connection builds community. People often have shared struggle, but not shared spaces to grieve, recover, and strategize

>> SLIDE 6: The core of IL is anti-racism

All work that seeks to fight systemic and structural oppression is ineffective unless it is also anti-racist.

Expanding IL programs is anti-racist work because it means funding services that comprehensively support a growing demographic: BIPOC with disabilities

>> SLIDE 7: Systems advocacy is the missing link

Services aren't enough. Systems advocacy is the only way to ensure a future for IL.

Systems advocacy through community organizing = IL growth

Anti-racism = ensuring ALL consumers are reached and supported... particularly those facing more barriers to entry.

>> SLIDE 8: Anti-racism is IL (cont'd)

“If one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected – those, precisely, who need the law’s protection most! – and listens to their testimony.”

- James Baldwin

>> SLIDE 9: Anti-racism in Healthcare Access

Treatment (primary care, mental health services, pain management, etc.) and clinical support lead to independence and agency for everyone; but are even more critical for underserved populations

>> SLIDE 10: Anti-racism in Housing

BIPOC communities suffer displacement, housing insecurity, and inadequate housing disproportionately. It is a human right for every resident to have access to a home, even when their needs indicate a demand for adaptive locations and flexible properties that support ramp installations and other access accommodations.

>> SLIDE 11: Anti-racism in Housing (cont'd)

Example: Independent Living housing

In BIPOC communities, independent living may seem counter-intuitive if it is described as solely being independent living housing. This is where consumer choice needs to be elevated.

Anti-racist IL organizing needs to keep in mind that independence can manifest differently in different cultural contexts. Sometimes collective, sometimes independent.

>> SLIDE 12: IL's Future is Bigger

The future of IL is bigger in two ways: in SCALE, and in SCOPE.

SCALE: we need federal funding to accommodate the current need for expanded programs, and that's just the start.

SCOPE: we need to expand IL to center anti-racist organizing to broaden our scope of consumers served.

>> SLIDE 13: Inaccessible Accessibility

Ableism + Xenophobia = inaccessible accessibility.

Racism and complications with the immigration process prevents consumers of color from accessing the relatively few responsive programs that *do* exist.

BIPOC consumer hesitance to make use of programs is largely rooted in valid concerns about being “in the system” and in social stigma.

>> SLIDE 14: BIPOC Barriers:

Foremost barriers for BIPOC consumers are:

- Institutional bias in black and brown communities
- Finding accessible subsidized housing
- CIL overhead and programs funding
- Language justice
- Stigma related to disability

>> SLIDE 15: BIPOC consumer support

Put it into action by ensuring your centers:

- Options counseling
- Focus on directly dismantling double oppression (racism compounded by ableism) your consumers face by correcting expressions of it in your CILs
- BIPOC disability pride: supporting self-identification and diagnostic paths, such as IEPs (individual education programs) for young consumers.

>> SLIDE 16: Breakout Groups

Discuss! We will break into groups. Each group will be asked to focus on *one* in their report-backs.

Group #1: What barriers do your black and brown consumers face in your service areas?

Group #2: How have you helped BIPOC consumers in your CIL?

Group #3: What are the most common concerns BIPOC consumers express when going through your I&R processes?

>> SLIDE 17: Report back!

Pick a delegate from your group to share what you discussed.

>> SLIDE 18: Workshop Close

There is no future for independent living unless it is fully inclusive. There is so much content on this topic. We couldn't possibly fit it all into an hour, but we hope this shed light on some of the challenges your consumers – and future consumers – face!

>> SLIDE 19

Comments or
Questions?