

Relational Resilience:

Sustaining Disability Community As Disabled
Working Professionals

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Learning Goals and Framing

At its core, this workshop goes beyond discussion on building formal spaces within the university and encourages us to explore what it means to build long lasting relationships of care, support, and mutual aid.

Learning Goals

- Reflect on our own experiences, challenges, and insights in building community, and build a plan to strengthen relationships based on our own needs

Presenter Introductions

Presenters met in different spaces focused on disability in their institutions and regions.

We have supported/cared for each other both inside and outside of the institutions we are a part of, often using institutional resources.



Acknowledging our Whiteness



[Disability Visibility Podcast Ep 24:](#)
[Disability Justice and Community Organizing](#)

Some Examples:

- "Disability Doula"
- Material support basic life necessities
- Leveraging institutional resources
- Listening and holding space
- Safety and emergency planning
- Navigating 'mandatory reporting'



Activity One: Community Reflection

Reflect on when you have found community as you have navigated a challenging or isolating time.

1. **Free Write (3 minutes)**

- How did it feel to have community in this time?
- What did it look like?

2. **Table Discussion (4 minutes)**

- Were there unexpected ways that relationships developed or changed?
- How might you describe the relationships that developed?

Crip Care: understandings and origins

- Crip Care asks,
 - What care do we need and how do we get it?
 - What care are we allowed to give in different contexts?
- Comes from Disabled BIPOC Fem movement work
 - What happens when state-sponsored care practices are inaccessible, not practical, and not enough?

**We need these skills/relationships when these systems
break down for everyone**

Recognition of Care as Work

Care work has, in many (but especially western) historical traditions, been unvalued and undervalued

- Who cooks? Who cleans?
- Who listens when someone needs to vent? Who give patience when someone says something harmful?
- Who then works to mediate conflict and repair harm?

Care is work. It is valuable. It is challenging. It is skilled.

Care work is disability justice

"If care labor is, well, labor, and we participate in an emotional economy all the time, what would a just care labor economy look and feel like? What would I want to get paid (in money or care labor or appreciation), and how? What would I want the conditions of my labor to be, to feel that my work was in safe, compensated conditions that had my worker's rights at the center?"

— Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice (2018, Arsenal Pulp Press)

Activity Two: What Do We Need?



Make a list (in your head, note-book, phone) of what you or someone might need – you can pull from any of the below pools and more:

- Example areas: practical day to day, emotional needs, material and financial needs, intimacy, safety
- How does our sense of safety thrive, and feel connected in community?

Crip Care - Why is it needed?

When we talk about Crip Care, we are talking about a culture built out of care work

- Celebrates care and dependency
- Pushes boundaries that directly confront ableist, white supremacist, and patriarchal relational norms
- Committed to a liberatory future as a practice in care



Story: AAA

Themes: Care outside of positional norms / leveraging institutional resources

'Self-Care' vs. Communal Care

Commodified Self-Care

Asks us to separate from our
"productive" spaces to
"recharge" on our own

Self-care normalizes that
moving together can only
wear us down

Community Care

Asks us to ask how we might
build a community of care
together that builds capacity

Experiments with ways
of being together that have
been disincentivized.

Care Webs

In the realm of disability, there are many different ways to map care. Examples include: Pod Mapping, Care Webs, Mad Mapping, and more...

We are not looking for personal details, and you're welcome to make up a map that is not personal to you/a fictional map.

Consider the many different types of care:

- Tangible, physical, corporeal, emotional, social, interpersonal support, pragmatic, practical, 'how to' support or mentoring, belonging, sense of safety...

Activity Three: **Care Webs**



PROMPT

'Connecting the dots', of your relations of care, what do your communities, or systems/maps you're connected to, look like?

Think back to your 'what do I need' lists if helpful.

BREAK



Activity: Collective wisdom sharing

What is something, over the course of this presentation, that has been mentioned and you thought *"Oh, I already do that"* or *"So that's what that can be called"*?

Recognition is important! What have you experienced, facilitated, or engaged in that is recognized in these conceptual frameworks?

[Link to Live Notes Document](#)

We invite you to share/shout them out!

Closing Offerings

- How did this session impact your ideas of what care in action can look like?
- Who is someone that you want to share this presentation or ideas and concepts with?
- When might you next have opportunity to practice some of these concepts in praxis? Tonight? Next week back at work? At a specific upcoming life event?

Resources

- Join our [Higher Ed Disabled Community Google Group](#) to stay connected.
- [Disability Identity, Studies & Culture \(DISC\) Knowledge and Practice Community \(KPC\)](#) at AHEAD
- [Mad Mapping: A guide to create an emotional safety plan](#)

