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>> PAIGE BUSSANICH: Hi, everyone, and welcome. We will get started in just a few moments. Hang tight. It looks like some folks are introducing themselves in the chat box. We'd love to have everyone do that if you're comfortable. Thank you.

Hi, everyone, and good afternoon and happy Wednesday. I still see folks joining the room. We'll just hang tight and let folks continue to joining. Then we'll get started. Thank you.

All right, everyone. We will go ahead and get started. I think we're still waiting on one panelist to get here. I don't know about y'all, but it's been a busy day for us. We will extend some grace to us to join. Welcome to our second coffee talk in a series for our State Public Health Autism Resource Center. We are excited to have some really wonderful speakers gather today. Before we get started, I'll just do a few really quick housekeeping items.

First, as you all have probably realized that we are in Zoom webinar. Not Zoom meeting. I know that sometimes the controls are a little bit different. Just wanted to point out and also mention, because this a coffee talk, although we are in webinar mode, we still want to have conversation with you all. Once the time -- once we get to the time, we'll have discussion and time for discussion and answers. We will allow you to unmute. I just wanted to point that out in the audio settings. Once it comes time for that, you can unmute. We also have CART captioning today. If you see on your Zoom settings bar, you should be able to enable the captions there. You can show subtitles or full transcript. If you have a question or technology need, please let us know just by sending us a chat, and we can help with that.

And/or you can raise your hand as well. What's really exciting about our autism acceptance months event is we have so many people joining us from organizations they may be unfamiliar with our organization here at AMCHP. AMCHP is an acronym for our organization which is the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs. At AMCHP we vision a nation that values and invest in the health and well-being of all women, children, youth, families, and communities so that they may thrive. We are in association. Our membership comes from leaders and staff at state and territorial health agency as well as their partners who implement programs to improve the health of women, children, and families.

At our organization, we have the State Public Health Autism Resource Center funding by the maternal health bureau of health services administration. At our resource center, SPHARC, which you can see the website here on the screen. What we do is really want to help states build capacity to implement systems of care and something that we've really been trying to do is walk the walk and make sure we're evaluating the voices of those who are most impacted by those systems of care. In this case, the wonderful autistic advocates. Today, we're joined by two wonderful humans who is going to lead us in a conversation. Looks like tech difficulties got sorted out for Jess. She is here which is great.

Hi, Jess. Before I turn it over to our esteemed speakers today, I'll just introduce them really briefly. I have their pictures here. If they feel so inclined, they can turn their cameras on as well. Today, we're joined by Lydia X. Z. Brown. They are an advocate, educator, and attorney

associated with the autistic women and nonbinary network. Then we have Dr. Jessica Horvath Williams, associated with the University of Minnesota, gender women and sexuality studies. I am not the expert here. I'm going to turn it over to the experts, but I'm here if anyone has questions. We do have the Q&A box enabled. Please send in your questions there as well as the chat.

I'm going to turn it over to Jess and Lydia. Thank you.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: This is Lydia X. Z. Brown. They, them, theirs pronouns. I'm an young East Asian person with short black hair and glasses wearing a dark shirt, CDT, center for democracy technology. I want to invite everybody to take a moment of pause and grounding to tune in our body minds, to check in with our access needs. I extend this invitation to Paige and Jess and Maura as well. Let's take a moment of pause. Do you need to grab something to eat? Do you need to grab something to drink? Move around? Change your position? Lie down? Scream in the void all night long. Let's take that moment of listening and tuning into our body, mind, and needs about where they are. Let's breathe. Let's meet ourselves on where we are at.

Please do lie down. I see in the chat somebody said that. You are welcome and invited to be on a couch, a bed, a bean bag chair, the floor. Wherever is most comfortable for your body, mind. We are all stressed and overwhelmed living through crisis and trauma. For many of us the intensity of that trauma is worse because of ableism, because of racism. For all of the different reasons that we move through the world affected by systems and structures and processes that are enormous, indescribable, impossible to begin to comprehend. Even though that is the work that we are often engaged in. Let's take that pause, that grounding together.

[Pausing for grounding].

Thank you for sharing in that moment with me. Jess, are you feeling okay? You're muted.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: I'm okay. I'm -- it was a little frantic there for a second, but I'm be okay.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Do you have something to drink?

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Oh, thank you for that. 1 second.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: That looks like a very comfy blanket behind you.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: I know. Lydia's known me for a long time. They know my behavior. I have one over here. It's the water that's really important.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Yes. Hydrating. I have hot chocolate. No coffee. I'm drinking coffee. I don't remember what I'm drinking half the time. I'm drinking something.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: As Lydia introduced themselves, I should introduce myself also. I am Dr. Jessica Horvath Williams. I am as Paige said I'm an instruct fellow at the University of Minnesota and the vice chair of the autistic women and binary network. I am a light skinned Black person. I'm wearing a purple top. I'm in my living room away from my office where my computer is that refuse Zoom. I have a lot of windows. I have a lovely wooden ceiling and makes me very happy. I am sitting on the couch. So

you're in my personal space in a way that meetings typically aren't. It's going to be okay.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Jess and I wanted to spend our time in conversation talking about some of the ways that racial, gender, and disability-based oppression operate together just to give a little bit of grounding and framework. We wanted to talk a bit about how we navigated that as people multiply impacted as persons of oppression and working as scholars, advocates, and leaders in this space. I can begin just by outlining a little bit about my understanding of ableism as a necessary underpinning and framework for the conversation that we're going to have today.

Some of you are probably already familiar with the concept of ableism. Most people describe it as disability to discrimination, as prejudice or bias or bigotry. Sometimes, it's stereotypes. You may have also heard it as disability oppression. I understand ableism as a system of structural and institution oppression which is a system of power relations and power differentials that embed certain values and beliefs about which kinds of people are human and which are not. Ableism grants enormous political, social, cultural, and economic power to people whose body, minds are understood as whole, healthy, functional, sane, stable, strong, intelligent, and beautiful. At the direct expense of and while depriving power from people's body, minds are instead understood, sick, broken, weak, defective, disordered, deficient, deviant, dependent, unstable, dumb, crazy, or ugly.

Ableism as a system of values is embedded in necessary for and dependent upon every other form of oppression. Ableism and gender-based oppression, patriarchal oppression, transmisogyny and misogyny that targets transpeople, that's what misogyny means. That oppression is rooted in and dependent on ableism. Ableism is rooted in and necessary for upon racism, White Supremacy, and subtle or colonialism. The logics of empire of White supremacist ideology of racism are deeply wrapped up in intimately tied to ableism. All of our conversations can only be understood with a critical and clear understanding of what ableism is and how it shows up.

Many broader historical terms, ableism, race-based oppression, gender-based oppression, and class-based oppression have always constituted the core formula for determining which people should have access to social services, to health care, or even the right to live and take up space and occupy land in the United States. Definitions of value based upon perceived or presumed ableness, competent, or intelligence underlie which people are considered worthy of an education, are considered contributing to society, and are considered capable of having or expressing sexual desire acting on reproductive capacity and making reproductive decisions, forming and participating in familial and other relationships and existing in others in our neighborhoods, communities, and societies.

When we think about gender, race, and disability, this also helps us understand specific disparities and disproportionalities in the ways that disability is attended to within our current social services, health, legal, and education systems. For example, in schools, children of color and particularly Black and Brown children are both likely to be overidentified inaccurately as disabled because of racist, ableist. And likely to be underidentified as not identified at all as disabled because of racist ableist beliefs. Those disparities and disproportionalities are tied to in deprivation of health care, housing, social support and services, and targeting for criminalization and surveillance and deprivation and incarceration. I don't know if you want to add to that, Jess, a little bit what you feel is also important to convey.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: There's nothing that I want to add. I think what I want to do is kind of unpack a little bit of what you said. When we think about ableism and when we think about racism and sexism and all of the other systems supporting each other the list that Lydia gave at the beginning are often to put it simplistically, the ways in which we see or we think about disability, those are often used as justifications to invalidate other groups of human as well as invalidating disabled people. So the example that I often give is that I studied in the 19th Century U.S. women were thought of both as emotionally labile, frail, as the weaker sex. Black people were thought of as less intelligent, able to do certain physical tasks and go without sleep in certain ways because of biological reasons that are of course nonsense.

When we think of other systems that are existing, oppressed, many groups of people, the justification for those systems often comes from the language of disability. So that's a -- what Lydia gave was the very, very scaled up -- so Lydia gave you the complete way that disability and racism and sexism and all of the -isms interlock to create and co-justify each other. And the ways in which those systems are created by other structures that exist in society. Colonialism, capitalism. All of the other systems creating social -- that's the word? Creating power dynamics in our society that create certain people. Simultaneously, those systems are justifying, dehumanizing groups of people and perpetuating the creation of disability, the lack of access of resources. All of these different things.

Often through the language of disability which is viewed kind of as the ultimate way to not be human. And so I don't have anything to add. It's more to make connections in there that show the ways that these things get wrapped up into each other. If that makes sense.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: To expand on that, what you're talking about the ways in which women have been painted as neurotic or hysterical, prone to irrationality. That's the logic of ableism. Using disability-based concepts or the language used to justify extraction or exploitation of labor and resources from people of color, Black and slaved people, native people whose land were stolen and occupied, Chinese immigrants working in mine or railroad and so many other groups. It's rooted in -- your body is disease-prone body compared to Whiteness or the extent you exist for certain reasons of intellectual capacity. That capacity exists only as both a threat to Whiteness and as a resource to be exploited and extracted for the benefit of capitalized.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: And a justification of releasing the bodies especially in the case -- well, we see it now. Lydia talked about Asian American labor. The idea that Asian American communities at certain points in our history were thought to be disease-ridden was served as the justification for policing -- heavily policing those areas, creating laws for immigration. These justifications of ableism scale up to the superstructure, legal structure of our societies that then go back and repolice or perpetuate the policing.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: When we talk about what happens to the queer and transpeople, it arises from the same logic. Same ableism, same Whiteness and heterosexuality. Even in the conversations we have about disabilities where everybody assumes by default, you're talking about disability, you only mean White, straight, and disabled people. Ableism work together to make disability hyperdisable in White people if it means from a pity, charity context you need help and deserving of help and make disability only visible

in negatively racialized communities or genders or sexualities if it existed as a threat, as a menace, as a danger.

If we think of ways as queer, trans, asexual, and aromantic communities has -- especially when queerness is connected to our race and culture as not definable or recognizable by White western expectations about gender and sexuality. We experience the same type of pathologization using ableist ideas. Queer, trans, asexual, and aromantic people must need to be fixed, must need to be reformed or rehabilitated using the same language of concept of disability. We can see what that actually results in. The fact that for me of us in queer and transcommunities, receiving health care is a deeply traumatizing and retraumatizing experience. Where health care providers, where a physical health care or mental health care are often active participants in systems that abuse us, that harm us, that deprive us of autonomy and deny us our agency or even our self-knowledge and who we are and how we exist in the world.

If you're disabled, queer or transperson of color that's amplified because of racist police and racist medical violence, because of racist police and racist ableism that target us and because of how queer and transbody have always explained in dehumanization. Disability is one of the most extreme ways to dehumanize a person. To remove somebody from a definition of personhood.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: And to give an example of that that I think is very easy to kind of think through, we often -- so, when we're thinking about our previous president, the language surrounding his behavior was often that he was quote insane and also he was a monster.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Or dumb.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Or dumb. So this language, they all get -- they get joined together in very particular ways. We want to say that someone's behavior is unacceptable so we place them outside of what we view to be humanity; right? So we say that they are monstrous, but we also at the same time say they are insane, or they are stupid. These are not characteristics that we want to own in our human group. His behavior is not something that we think is indicative of humanness. In fact, it is very human. Historically so and currently so; right? This is how human beings act. But the fact we reject that behavior and we say, no, this belongs over there and give it -- we assign it very ableist language is indicative of these values on how we view people we don't think share our reality or who -- and sharing our reality can be an ableist but also a racist thing. It can be a lot of different things; right?

So we continue to put those people outside of the definition of human. When we put outside of the definition of human, that means that it's okay to do not great things to them because they're not human. And it's a very slippery process because we so easily call someone like that insane. We so easy call them a monster. What are we doing? What kind of violence are we enacting? Not against him but against all of the other people who have been called that when we say that so casually. Because we want to reject someone and reject their perspective. I would caution you, I would urge you to simply reject their perspective. Not to label them as human but to label it as consistent with who we are as human beings but not something we are going to engage with.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: We also talked about yesterday just kind of transitioning into a little more conversation. When we were preparing for our session about what it means to us to have to move through a world where

we're not considered within the definition of human. Yet, I know for me and you talked about this a little bit in a different way. Perhaps you can share, too. I moved through the world as someone who experiences multiple forms of marginalization because I'm openly a nonbinary transperson, because I'm openly queer, because I'm opening disabled, and because I'm an East Asian person of color. At the same time, I move through the world with access of privilege and resources.

Even if some of those forms of privilege are conditional or contextual. I'm a light skin person of color. I hold U.S. citizen. While I'm certainly disabled; right, I'm a hearing, sighted, and ambulatory disabled person. That means I move through the world with certain experiences of relative or absolute privilege. I also move through the world as someone who has a graduate degree as a lawyer. Somebody who has a career. That's not true of many other multiply marginalized people because of systems, patterns of deprivations and denial of access. That means there are ways I can move through spaces and have a better chance of not being subjected to some of the worse most overt violence that other people might not have any chance of escaping.

That's not a guarantee. My life has not been free of violence or harm by any means. It means because of the levels and types of privilege I have, I'm not always going to be the primary target for the worse kinds of violence. That's very publicated and difficult for me to navigate. Not a lot of people know how to talk about it because it requires nuance to understand what intersectionality is. Intersectionality is a framework as it was introduced by Kimberly Crenshaw's original work help us understand the way world overlaps rather than be simple addition. Other part of understanding interactional analysis is understanding the ways in which people's access to privilege, resources, or power also shape our experiences in the way we move through the world in conjunction as marginalized people. Some people will call this either with shame or with anger that, if we're able to move through spaces where domination and oppression exists, we must be somehow playing through respectability.

You and I talked about the simplification ignores the reality to survive what might look like playing respectability to somebody else might be a moment a choice between am I going to be considered threatening in this particular moment? Can I reduce the likelihood that someone will think of me as dangerous or unstable? Can I reduce the likelihood that I might lose a job and therefore my ability to pay the bills? Can I reduce the likelihood that I will be treated in such a way that it will devastate my mental health, that it will be catastrophic for my life? Those things that we do using certain language, dressing in a certain way, moving through space and interacting with people in certain ways can be never a guarantee of safety, but might be something we do as a way of trying to get through the world to have another day later.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Before I get in into deep, I think -- I wish I could offer a poll.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: We can ask people to answer in the chat.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Or we can by a show of your virtual hand, how many people have heard the terms or feel comfortable with the term respectability and respectability politics? Like is --

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Four people have put up their -- no. Five people put up their virtual hands. We'll give it a minute. 8, 9, 10. Some

people keep raising them and putting them down. There's ten-ish. Roughly a quarter of people so far have indicated they are familiar.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Okay. Then let's take a moment of pause and talk about respectability. Respectability politics. I like to think of it like this. Respectability politics is not great. In fact it's pretty not great. So you know my take on it before we get there. Respectability politics set phrase is the idea that, if that -- if I mimic dominant behaviors or if I show to the dominant culture that I am like them in some way, then they will not hurt me. They will give me a job. They will view me like them. Then they will give me rights is often the trajectory. When it happens in our communities, our communities police themselves. We say to the young Black men pull up your pants. We say to people who experience police violence like, if we hadn't been wearing X or if he had been more compliant in very particular ways, if he had done certain behaviors, he wouldn't have been shot, assaulted. If he had been more a White kind of person, a more recognizable safe Black person, queer person, transperson, disabled person -- it happens in disability community as well. Respectability is everywhere.

This idea that, if we do that, then the dominant culture will not hurt us, and they will give us rights. It's going to be great. That's respectability politics. It's the idea that through your individual actions you can somehow dismantle these horrific systems by -- and the problem is that it is also -- respectability is also a survival strategy because the -- respectability apart from respectability politics is also a survival strategy. Think about being undercover where you put on the gear and get the -- and go in the thing like we're in some kind -- like you're infiltrating the mob. How do you be in those spaces but not take the mentality of them; right? How do you understand how power flows and the ways in which it will be violence against you because of how you are in the world, how you present in the world whether they can see it or apparent to them or not. In order to survive on an individual level without buying into the idea that the respectability politics is going to save us and that this individual action is somehow going to dismantle all of these systems.

And it's difficult because the things that we learn to do to survive, we pass those on. We don't just pass them on as strategies. We pass them as ideologies and belief system. This protected me. This might protect you. The framework of trying to navigate and trying to be -- trying to understand also simultaneously that being able to engage in respectability is a privilege. That's what Lydia's point was. There are -- I am a light skinned conventionally attractive Black woman. I am very, very feminine. I can use that femininity to navigate certain spaces in ways that people don't see me as a threat. Even though they otherwise would because I'm also kind of -- like I have very -- not all of my autistic behavior are visible. Some are. There are ways in which I violate social norms every day. So I can play into certain parts of how I look and how I am and how I talk in order to mitigate the ways in which I might be targeted for violence.

But I still might be targeted for violence. There -- because these systems exist. You're trying to play with respectability not respectability politics -- you're trying to play the odds in particular ways. It's an ugly, ugly system. There are people who can never engage in respectability so it's not extendible to all communities. Respectability is not cool. It's not great. We shouldn't have to do it. No one should have to police their bodies to the extent that we do in order to be safe, in order to keep body and soul together in a very real way. But we do do it and those of us who are -- who have the capability to do it in particular ways despite being able to be marginalized often do. Then we try to help other people, and we often

don't do that very well because the strategies that work for us don't necessarily work for everyone.

So I think we wanted to bring up respectability today. One, because it's once again in the media. A -- I will not call him a friend. A person in my life brought up that many of the White people who have been shot by the police, who have experienced police violence were having mental health crisis. Where is this in our language of talking about police violence? Why are we only talking about Black people? And it's there. When we talk about ableism, when we talk about the ways that people don't fit -- let me scare quote this -- in the world or view to be outside of it and thus become targets for violence, we are always talking about all of these groups of people. No one should have to experience that -- no one should have to lose their life or experience violence because they don't fit in certain ways or thus viewed as vulnerable to certain moments of power. Let's call them that.

When you enact power on other people is because you can. There is a complicated relationship between fitting. Being able to put on the respectability cloak and what it means do that on the level of individual survival and family survival and simultaneously understanding that? It's ultimately a drop in the bucket; right? So -- it doesn't help other people get free. And so there are -- I hope that we've been able to like nuance that discussion because you're going to see it again and again in the news with everything that's happening. If X person had only done Y thing, that is often more respectable, then that person would not have experienced a violence they did which is false. At the same time, sometimes, you can get a job by wearing a nice shirt.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Spoiler alert. Most days I wear T-shirts because I like them. We have a couple of questions that have come in it looks like in the Q&A. Someone anonymously asked -- it's directed to me. I feel like we both can talk about it. As a person that can be marginalized and a person with privilege, how do you negotiate this? I feel guilt acknowledging my differences because I've had so many opportunities, and my differences are hidden. I would say to that an owl of your experiences are yours and all valid. This can be true at the same time as it being true that not all spaces or moments are the right time to talk about all of your experiences. Here's what I mean by that in a concrete way.

If you are disabled, if you are queer, if you experience marginalization any way that is not necessarily readily apparent, that doesn't necessarily mean it's not real or not valid. If you know you were disabled even if most can't tell just by looking at you, that doesn't mean you're disabled or wrong that you are disabled. Likewise, if you experience oppression along another axis that isn't necessarily readily apparent to somebody observing externally, that doesn't mean your experience, your community connection, or identity are wrong to name, hold, or claim. At the same time, if a conversation is centered around the pain and experiences of people who experience a different type of oppression that you don't, that's not the right space to talk about your identity in that moment.

For example, as a multiply disabled person, I have never been institutionalized. That's a privilege. I've never been institutionalized in any form. If I'm in a room with other disabled people talking about having been institutionalized in a psych hospital, group home, a large-scaled developmental institution, in a prison, and I decide to talk about, I haven't had that experience, but I've experienced disable oppression and other ways. I'm talking over the conversation in a way that is not just appropriate. That doesn't mean I can talk about the ways that I experience ableism oppression in other context. Analogy that I've used and heard other people use the same kind of analogy before is, if someone tells you my mother just



died of cancer, it is not the right time to say, oh, yeah, I had an aunt die of cancer, too, and start making it about this other story when somebody else is talking about their direct and immediate experience of loss. It's not because you can never talk about your aunt having died of cancer. In that particular context, it's not the right time, not the right place.

I know that that's a very specific answer to what I feel can be a much broader question. I think of that as a starting point in thinking how do I negotiate that? First of all, it's my life. Most people -- I don't think people talk about this enough. Most people experience both some forms of marginalization and some forms of privilege. Just by us being here today, no matter what forms of marginalization people experiences, everyone has experience Internet access because we're all on Zoom. I don't know all of those details besides what people share in chat. I think, if we try to split the world into who has the most privilege and experience and marginalization, we're falling for the trap of trying to create the hierarchy of oppression which is not helpful to anybody, prevents opportunities for solidarity, and cross-movement community building.

We need to own the ways in which our experiences are shaped in multiple categories of identity and experience.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: I think the only thing that I would like to add to that -- I just wanted to take a moment and pause on that word guilt because guilt -- guilt is -- guilt doesn't help you, and it doesn't help anyone else. It is why -- why do you feel guilty because you have things that other people don't have? Guilt is not an appropriate response to that. Sharing is an appropriate response to that. A lot of people come to me -- I'm sure come to Lydia -- and try to use us as -- I'll talk about race because race is easier for me in this instance because I have a ready example.

I am not -- I am Black, but I do not experience the same kind of oppression because I am a light skin Black woman. When people come to me and try to make me the poster child for Black experiences, I pass them on to other people. I'm like you don't need to talk to me about this because my experiences in the world are not representative. They are not a -- they are not -- you need to talk to my dark skin friends. These people experience a more common more of racial oppression of being Black. They don't get to speak about it because I'm the person that people come to because I'm the comfortable form of being Black. When you -- and that's not on me because that's on their perception of my Blackness.

But the moment that I have the privilege, I share. I pass it on; right? Because I know that people are going to come to me. So I'm going to direct them to other people. I would argue that that moment of privilege, the moment of having things means that we pass it on. Not that we redistribute in certain ways, but that we literally become a channel for other people to get the things that they need. That's all I have to add.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: I would add to that, too, on that same topic of guilt now that you mentioned it. Guilt is a weapon and tool of systems of domination and oppression. It serves to render invisible the mechanics of oppression by placing the honest of oppression of individual people to solve. Guilt simultaneously operates by telling people who hold privilege in a particular context or moment or experience that it is their individual responsibility to disappear oppression similar simply by being guilty for experiencing privilege. Simultaneously, guilt operates to tell people who are marginalized or oppressed because of a particular context or part of their identity or experience, that they must feel guilty for surviving, for continuing to live. We must feel guilty for choosing to be victims.

They say people who choose marginalization loves to be the victim. The feeling of guilt that our existence is the problem. The solution we face is for us to solve oppression as if it can be an individual problem to be involved.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: That is the thread with both ableism and respectability politics that we were talking about earlier; right? I -- because America is a very individualistic society -- that would be another whole another huge conversation. Get me on individualism and I have things to say.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: I also know we've got two other people with hands up.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Okay. The point is -- no. I'll come back to it later. Anyway, yes.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: There's -- looks like Emily Scott and Alex. Go ahead, Emily. You can unmute.

>> I'm sorry. I left my hand up from the last question about respectability. My bad.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: No problem. Alex, did you have a question?

>> I was the same as Emily. My bad as well. Sorry.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: No problem. Jess, you were making a point. Did you want to finish your point?

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: I was just saying this idea of individualism of our individual actions fix oppression of any sort is like -- it runs through all of these different -- it runs through respectability politics. It's the way -- it's one of the ways that ableism operates in the world. It's a thing. I just wanted to make that connection back. We also had a question that Paige sent us about environmental racism and toxic dumping. Grace has a question, too. It was the environmental racism and toxic dumping. How do we talk about the debilitating affects of that and disabling affects of that while also being respectful of autistic people and autistic community? That's something we often -- we talk about in disable spaces a lot. But the short answer is that, when impairment is caused by oppressive structures, we say that's not -- we condemn the oppressive structures that have caused the impairment, but we do not condemn the impairment. We have to separate the two from each other. Now, when we make certain arguments, we say that these oppressive structures caused an impairment and thus caused harm, but the impairment in it of itself is not the problem. It is the structures that caused the impairment because we don't have a society that supports impaired and disabled and debilitated people and only person groups of people experience that.

We don't have toxic dumps in suburbs. It's not a thing that happens. Thinking about disconnecting that and making sure that, when we use language -- when we're using our language, we're making a clear distinction between the cause that the oppression, that the systems, that the toxic dumping, that the capitalism, that all of those things, those are the things that are the problem, and they only produce impairment and deliberation in person groups of people, and we have no problem with impaired people. We have problem with

the forces that cause the impairment because it redistributes or distributes life chances unequally.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: This is literally what -- the conversation we have to be having about how part of how ableism and White Supremacy work is that environmental racism and racialized capitalism literally create and exacerbate disability. Like the example you're giving about. Toxic dump waste or waste dump. You know what I mean. Places of biohazard and how that literally mean. Disability is more prevalent in every marginalized and oppressed community compared to analogously privilege and resource community. Grace is --

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Grace had a question.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Hi, Grace.

>> Am I unmuted? I have to go soon because I have a meeting with the consumer. I can ask and you can answer it. I can watch it later. Thank you for being here, first of all. I was going to ask, earlier, you were talking about how it's good to pass things on. That is good. What if the person that you're sending them to doesn't want to be educating people all the time?

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: Oh, no, no. That makes sense. That makes sense. Let's nuance that. We don't send -- sending a power to a person, that requires the consent of the other person. No. We -- I am saying in that moment I refuse to be a representative for all Black people because I am a light skin Black person. My experiences are not the same. Therefore, if you want to have this conversation, you need to be attempting at least to having it with a group of people that are experiencing Blackness in a very different way than I am. I am not representative. So I'm not saying necessarily passing them on to my friend over here. I am saying I refuse to be your spokesperson for Blackness, and Black people who are dark skin should be the spokespeople for Blackness. First. My voice can be added to that conversation, but I am not -- I have too much privilege because I'm light skin for that to be an appropriate conversation.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: This is Lydia. I would add to that by saying, when we say send people to other people, I'm also very clear about for what and what type of consent is necessary. If a reporter contacts me which has happened and says can you please comment as an expert on this issue that pretty much only affects transwoman, I'm not a transwoman. I will give the names of public advocates who are transwoman because that is a different thing than saying here is a name of a transwoman who I personally know who is not necessarily doing any public work on issues that affect transwoman, may not be out as trans. I'm saying here are the names of people well known to the public, who do public work, and for whom advocacy is a general part of their life. You should contact them. Because this is a context of a media request, those particular people will know because this is work they do. If they don't have energy or time, they can ignore the media request or decline it should they so choose.

That is a specific example. If instead it's a personal conversation where someone is asking me, Lydia, can you explain to me how cerebral palsy works and I don't have that, I'm not going to say here are the names of the advocates who have cerebral palsy in the public who are not going to talk to people they have never met, I would say here are some websites if you want to learn more about this particular experience that I can't tell you much beyond basic information.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: I would add to that in the first category. We also send people to organizations that that is the work they do. Not necessarily just individuals. Because organizations have more resources and have people who are -- that is their job to have those conversations when those conversations are necessary. Then the second point stands as such. The other thing I would say about that is the important moment -- this is the example that I am trying to give here in using my own privilege. If I'm not saying this well, I am -- I apologize. It is the moment of refusal not to speak to something that doesn't affect you personally because Lydia is not a transwoman. I am a Black woman but not representative -- I'm not going to allow myself to be representative of Black experience because that's the move.

The move is to make people who look like me representative of Black experience in a way that is false. So I am refusing that moment. If someone wants to come and talk to me about other experiences that I have, that's fine. I refuse at that moment to be used to further hurt the Black community by being held up as representative. That is unacceptable to me. Therefore, I will pass those people on exactly as Lydia was saying to other resources, but I am the moment of refusal. That's what I'm advocating for.

>> LYDIA X. Z. BROWN: Just another example of that. How that shows up in my life is people might ask me to be respectful of all autistic people and focusing on the rights and communication access of nonspeaking autistic people. I'm not nonspeaking. Or the speak institutionalized like the example I shared earlier. Or representative of all Asian communities. I'm not. I am East Asian and representative of my experiences. If I'm the only present asked to be present, that is furthering the E ratio insure of darker Asians, southeast Asians, Asian who are poor, Asians of number of experiences that I don't. We always have to be very particular in what opportunities we are willing to participate in, where we need to pass the mic, and where we need to expand the table.

>> JESSICA HORVATH WILLIAMS: 100%.

>> PAIGE BUSSANICH: Wow. I really hate to cut this off, y'all, but I realized we're pass the hour mark. I'm feeling all of this and taking this in. I hope that others are as well. I know that I plan at least to go back and listen to the recording and really sit with your words. Thank you, both, for leaving us in this conversation and sharing. I'm really excited for our -- we have two more coffee talks coming up. One next week. Our final one specifically will offer the opportunity to interact with Jess and Lydia again through some dynamic breakout groups where we'll have the opportunity to -- where everyone can, again, sit with what we heard and listen to today but have the opportunity to think about how in our professional and personal lives how we can meaningfully evaluate the voices of autistic individuals. Not just during April. Throughout the year and in all settings.

I really hate to cut this off. This has been so wonderful. Thank you to Jess and to Lydia and to our wonderful captioner as well. Thank you to everyone who's here and for sticking around. Absolutely wonder. We'll follow-up with the recording so people can listen again. Thank you, all, so much. I hope everyone is feeling good and feeling balanced after this conversation. Thank you, all, so much. Bye.

[End]

