

## Independent Living Research Utilization



*We create opportunities for independence for people with disabilities through research, education, and consultation*



**Independent Living Research Utilization**

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# IL-NET

CIL-NET · SILC-NET

## Liberation to Leadership: The Role of CILs in Transforming Communities

### *Oppression & Intersectionality Between “Isms”*

September 15, 2015

Berkeley, CA

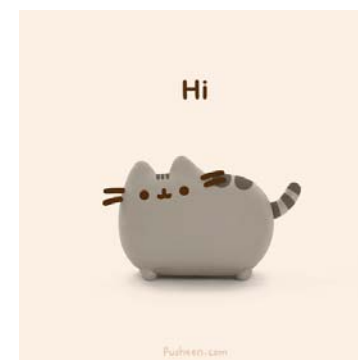
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## Take Care of Yourself

- We will be discussing **HEAVY** topics these next few days. It is common for feelings to arise.
- Please remember to take care of yourself.
- You will see a lot of cat photos – this is Stacey's practice of self care. 😊



## Be Mindful of Your Neighbor

- Often times, people want emotional support and do not ask for it. (*Who knows this better than people with disabilities?*)
- You can seek out support! You don't have to be a super hero.
- If you seek support, please do so consensually. Often times, people “unload” without asking. In this kind of environment, that can add to the intensity.



## Check In with Yourself

- If you can, check in with yourself. It is important. For example:
  - Why am I feeling so \_\_\_\_\_? What is that about? Maybe I feel \_\_\_\_\_. Is that feeling what my colleague is saying? If not, maybe that's "my own stuff." Let me go decompress.
  - Wow. This is so sad. There is so much oppression in this world. I am really, really sad and don't know what the point of all our work is when the world is so messed up.
- It's natural to have feelings. In anti-oppression work, it's better to acknowledge that than ignore.

## Be Aware of Power Dynamics in Room

- Step forward, step back
  - If you are someone who doesn't speak much, challenge yourself to do so. Your voice has value!
  - If you are someone who processes thoughts by speaking a lot, please challenge yourself to step back a bit. We trust that you share our value of everyone having time to talk.
- Please don't challenge people's experiences of oppression.
- Please practice active, compassionate listening.

# Oppression

**What is oppression?**

**When is a time that you witnessed  
oppression actively or inactively  
taking place?**

# Guidelines for Pair Discussion

## Practice Active Listening techniques

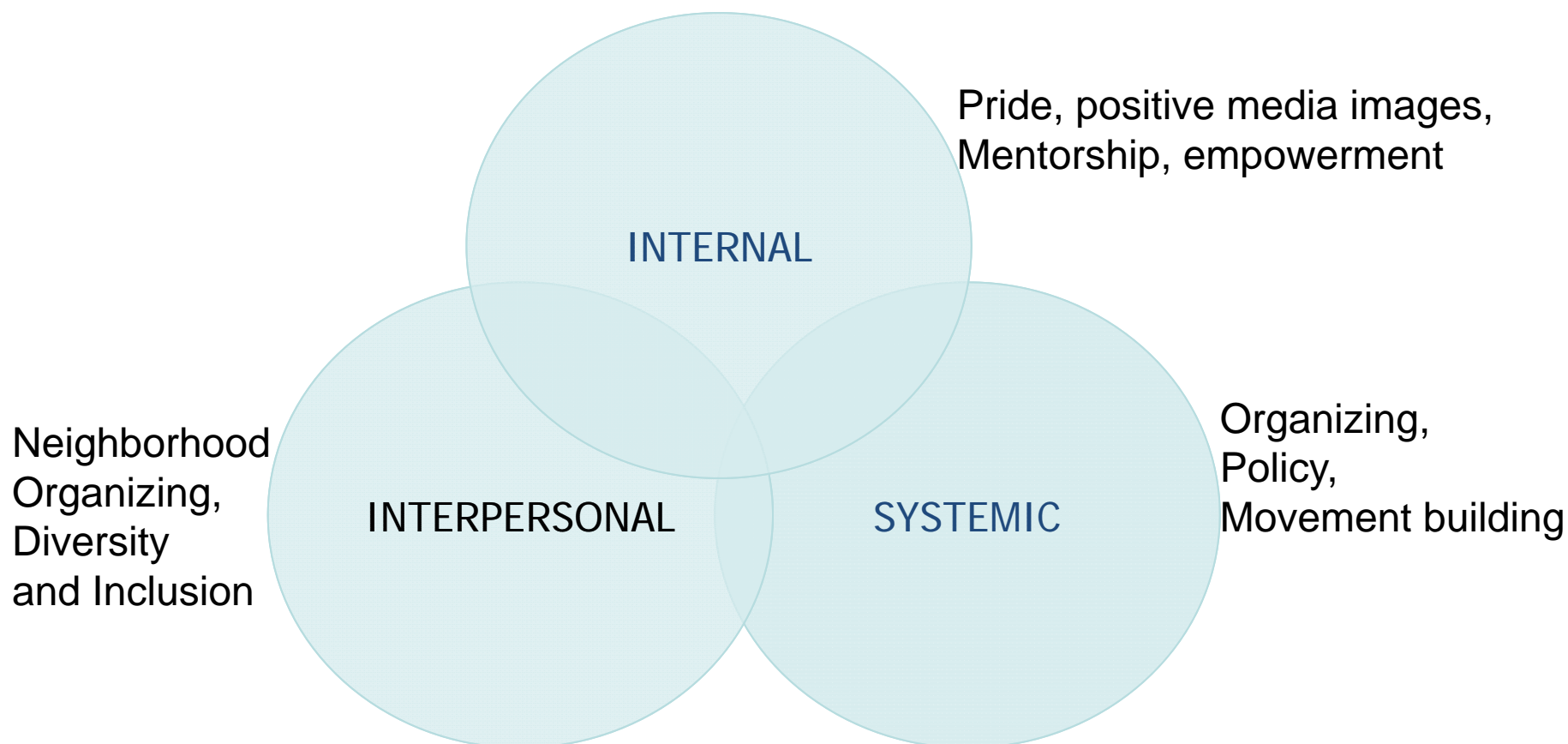
- Use your body and mind to be as present as possible for your partner's storytelling
  - If your mind wanders, do your best to come back.
  - If you start to have feelings in response, do your best to hold them.
  - Use your body to listen.
- Refrain from giving feedback. End by simply expressing gratitude.





# What is Oppression?

**Oppression:** The favoring of one group at the expense of another



## Oppression Outputs As...

- INTERNAL
  - Shame
  - Low expectations
  - It's WORK to build one's sense of self!
- INTERPERSONAL
  - Telling someone they can't do something
  - Paternalism
- SYSTEMIC
  - Lack of access
  - Inadequate education
  - Segregation

**Let's brainstorm more together....  
Out of respect, keep examples to communities you are a member of.**

## Definition

Power +  
Prejudice =  
-ism

## Reminder

- Often times, conversations focus on internal or interpersonal experience instead of systemic.
- Why can this be problematic?
- Do you have an example where someone (e.g. person, media, etc.) avoided discussing something systemic?

## Intersectionality

Theory = issues are all connected and interdependent.  
In social justice, this means that promoting a single issue politic will **not** lead to liberation...it will only help the group that benefits from that single issue.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING  
AS A SINGLE-ISSUE  
STRUGGLE BECAUSE  
WE DO NOT LIVE  
SINGLE-ISSUE LIVES.  
- AUDRE LORDE

## Examples of Intersectional Oppression

- Ableism, racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism – all the “isms” – work hand in hand with each other. They are not separate.
- Example: Slavery. African Americans considered “mentally inferior.” As a result, believed not capable to have self determination. Racism and ableism exploited people.
  - Sidenote: Harriet Tubman had disabilities, so town people avoided her. She would pretend like she was having an episode, and that was how she was able to scope out escape routes.

## Examples of Intersectional Oppression, cont'd.

- Eugenics\* – those most subject to it were low income people, “hysterical” women, and people of color. Justification was based on perceived and real disabilities
- “Choice” activism – it’s a privilege to focus on right to abortion when so many people (e.g. people with disabilities) don’t have a choice to keep children

\*“The social movement claiming to improve genetic features of human populations through selective breeding and sterilization, based on the idea that it is possible to distinguish between superior and inferior elements of society....” (Wikipedia)

# Told you this was heavy!

Everyone okay?  
Deep breaths!





## Example of Single Issue Responses

- Second wave feminists focused their efforts on the right to work. The movement did not seem relevant to women of color who did not have the luxury to stay home. In fact, women of color took care of white feminist's children for low wages so they could go to work... That's not liberation is it?
- And of course women with disabilities were not able to access work so it wasn't liberation for the disability community either.

## Example of Single Issue Responses, cont'd.

- Disability community often points out how people with disabilities are infantilized and not seen as sexual beings. This message often falls flat for many.
- Why? Analysis does not include:
  - Bodies of people of color with disabilities are hypersexualized. Hypersexualization = excuses for violence and lack of self determination
  - Lack of bodily autonomy, especially in medical context
  - When you don't have a right to your body, not being seen as sexual seems like a privileged complaint.

## Example of Single Issue Responses, cont'd. 2

- Disability community's advocacy re: segregated classrooms for students with disabilities
- Only recently started acknowledging that students experiencing this are primarily students of color
- Now the work can be bigger, deeper, richer....

## Example of Intersectional Responses

- Disability community's work that prioritizes leadership of youth of color (DAN-Y in Hayward), includes foster youth (DYP), and builds multi-movement leadership
- LGBT community's work around disability access
- Fat positive community's inclusiveness of mobility devices

## Group Discussion

**Discuss examples of an intersectional response to a problem at your table.**

For the debrief:

- Pick one positive example
- Pick one example that is an opportunity for growth

*Reminder: an intersectional response is different than a coalition response*

## CIL-NET Attribution

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