

Video transcript

Uncomfortable Truths: Unpacking Bias and Intersecting Identities

Guest speaker: Sarah Napoli

Sarah Napoli: My name is Sarah Napoli, and I'm coming to you from Edgewater, New Jersey, right on the Hudson. And so, hello, to all of you around the state. I'm currently a project officer within the people and culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion team at Open Society Foundations, which is a global philanthropy. We're in 40-plus countries, and I mostly do the disability inclusion training and learning development for the global network, which is no easy task. And I'm so excited to be here, but I have to acknowledge that we are together for 60 minutes, and there's only so much we can do in a short amount of time. I really like doing highly interactive sessions, and I don't like talking at people too much, but because of the shortness of our session the engagement is going to be a little less. I am going to be talking at you more than I'd like, but I am going to find ways to sort of bring you into the conversation in little bits here and there throughout the session. But I just highly encourage you to seek out more opportunities for learning. I will make sure you have my email before I leave today if you want to continue the dialogue.

And I will say I see a lot of people off camera, and that's totally fine. I'm gonna talk a little bit about how to be comfortable for the next hour, and I also recognize it's your lunch break so I understand that people might want to be eating during this time, too. Wow, I see someone that just drops in the chat that they do hip-hop fundamentals. I used to write hip-hop history curriculum, so we should, we should chat. I worked at the Schomburg Center for a while so that's another life long ago, but it's been really interesting to see another person in Bergen County, Paramus, nice, Mercer County, some folks in Philly, oh, exciting, okay, good to see you all here.

So if you just joined us, I'm just asking people to drop their names, location, and organizations in the chat if you feel comfortable just so we can get — um, yeah, I don't rap, I used to dance, but that would be a fun creative activity to figure out how to rap what we're doing. Alright, I'm gonna share my screen and get started, but thank you. Please keep continuing to drop your information in the chat because it lets us continue the network after we've ended today. Let me share my presentation. Great. I'm assuming everyone can see this.

Alright, so just in case you don't know where you're at, you're in Uncomfortable Truths: Unpacking Bias and Intersecting Identities. And just a few quick guidelines for our dialogue today: This is a dialogue. We're not here to have a debate. There is enough debate in the world right now, so we're here just to have a conversation and learn together. Please be respectful of each others' thoughts, ideas, emotions. Whenever I talk about stuff regarding bias or diversity, equity, and inclusion-related topics, there is the chance that it can be upsetting or maybe someone says something that you don't agree with, so please for the next 60 minutes try to be

present and make sure you take care of yourself. And that's where I talk about participating at your own comfort level. So make sure you're comfortable, feel free to get up, move around, get beverages as you need, make sure that you're able to participate where you feel most able to be present.

Rebecca Martin: Sarah, before you begin I just wanted to let everyone know that we do have an ASL interpreter available today, so if you look at look for the guest interpreter Andrew and you can pin him on your screen if that's needed. And again you can turn on live transcription from the "more" option in the top of Teams. Thank you.

Sarah Napoli: Thank you, Rebecca, thank you for saying that. I'm someone who highly uses captions and so I just appreciate having access in the space today, so thank you so much Rebecca. Also this last point of brave space, so I understand that a lot of you probably heard the terminology of safe space. I've really kind of switched over to the idea of brave space because it's really hard to ensure that everybody feels safe in a session especially since so many of us are coming into this dialogue from different points, different understandings, different cultural contextual backgrounds, and so instead of using the terminology of safe space I always say it's a brave space. So, please, when I do sort of invite folks to share and contribute and engage, feel brave in sharing and also understand it's a challenge by choice so you don't have to share anything you're not comfortable with. And really quick on the chat box, I know people are probably still introducing themselves. I don't have the chat box now on my screen so I can't see, but I am going to prompt you to use the chat box at certain times during the next 60 minutes, and so I just wanted to let you know that that's available. But I'm just going to ask you not to use it when not prompted because it can be a bit distracting for folks and for a range of abilities and reasons that it might be difficult to focus on a chat and the presentation at the same time. So those are our guidelines for conversation.

Today we're going to try to do these things in the short time that we have. We're going to try to define implicit unconscious bias. Those terms really are interchangeable. We're going to explore your own socialization and social identity, and how it connects to how you interact with difference. For today we're going to really focus on disability, but obviously I think the concept is good for any interaction. We're going to begin — I say begin very intentionally — to understand intersectional identity and also disability justice and how those ideas play into one another. I did say that you're gonna walk away with one tool. So the tool we're going to talk about is a ladder of inference towards the end as something that can help you create that action plan to combat inner scripts that may perpetuate ableism which we will also talk about.

That's the goal today. So I'm gonna turn my screen. I'm gonna stop sharing just for a second so I could see people especially if they're if they're on camera or also the chats. So I'm gonna ask you who here today considers themselves to be a multicultural person. So if you're on camera you could raise your hand and say I'm a multicultural person or you can in the chat. Just say like plus one or me or yes. If you consider yourself to be a multicultural person.

Anybody.

Okay, I got one hand raised. Awesome. Anyone else? Okay, yep, got a couple. Alright. Who else? Who else? Keep it going. Keep the hands raising. Very honest. I like that, never thought about it. Oh, there's a reason I'm not defining it yet, so good question. Alright, this is a good. Okay, so if you are raising your hand or if you said yes, you are correct. You've passed today's class. You get an A plus. Yes, you are all multicultural beings, and we're going to talk really soon about what is culture and what is the definition of culture. But a lot of times when we say multiculturalism or just the terms culture a lot of people are thinking specifically about race and ethnic background and they're not thinking about the vast definition of culture to embed even disability, with people with disabilities, our disability identity. I live with several invisible disabilities including being partially deaf, and I consider myself to be a multicultural being because we all sort of approach the world very differently and that's really important to recognize. So everyone gets an A for today. And then I'm gonna share my screen again and talk a little bit more about why that's important.

So the reason why I share this slide is because I think sometimes we forget that this work is so vital, that we have these continuing conversations and dialogues because our global community is multicultural, and you are constantly going to have Intercultural experiences and intercultural conflict, and so today we're going to spend a lot of time on self-reflecting. Because it is a short session, we don't have a lot of time for engagement. The piece about self-reflection is really important. Asking these questions of yourself, thinking about it, maybe having a way to sort of collect your thoughts, however you take notes, because it's vital if you're ever going to reach any type of competency, and I will say that culture is constantly shifting and changing even amongst, you know, very sort of minor parts of our cultural being.

I'll say like 30 years ago in the disability world people were really sort of embracing the language of persons with disabilities was very common and it continues to be very common in the U.S to say person-first language when talking about disability. Disabled and identifying as disabled — I like to say I'm a proud disabled woman — has become much more common in our lexicon in the last like decade to 15 years or so as a really embracing the social model of disability which I'm not going to get into today but again that's just one example of how culture is constantly shifting and how we need to continually sort of engage in these in these activities and these reflective processes and dialogue so that we can be sort of up with the times and how things are being talked about in the in the present day. So I just think you can never have enough training. I've been doing this kind of training for about 20 years, and I guess I keep saying 20 years but it's actually been over 20 years now. I am starting to feel very old, but that sort of, I've been doing this for many years and I just don't think you can ever have enough so thank you for participating. Alright, so now I'm gonna switch over to Mentimeter. I'm going to ask you some questions. How many people have used a Mentimeter in the past? Does it sound familiar? It's a polling. Cool. So I'm gonna share that. You'll see it as soon as I pull it up. So you will need access to either your laptop, another window, or your phone. You can also use your phone to do this. Alright. So Rebecca I can see you. You can see the screen, right? Okay, so what you're gonna do is you're going to go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and you're going to type in the code that's

right there —32319930 — and it will prompt you to answer this question. So my question to all of you is what is unconscious bias?

I believe you can put several answers here. It can be a phrase. It could be a couple words. It could be a full definition. But I would like it to be in your own words.

Is everyone able to access it?

Nice.

Maybe we'll start getting some more now too.

Anyone else?

Oh, nice, here they come. So I see blind spots, prejudice without knowing, learn from society, create judgment of someone, assumptions, obliviousness. That's hard to say, obliviousness. Habits of thoughts, harmful, insidious. These are great. Conclusions that we draw. Hidden cultural teachings. Oh, that's a good one. Perceptions of others, difficult to be aware of. Nice, yes. Dehumanizing, judgment, harmful. Alright, these are great. I'm gonna move to the next one. You can you could still keep answering for a few more seconds. Unrealized thoughts. Okay. Easy way out. Oh, I like that one.

Alright, the next one is related. So it's another question: What is unintended ableism? And again if it's ... you could just use words, phrases. This one's going to look a little bit different on the screen. And I believe I can share. I can save your answers, and I will make sure that you have access to them. After the sessions you can come back and see how everyone answered.

What is unintended ableism?

Assumptions on disability from uninformed perceptions. Making conclusion about a person's disability that can be harmful or hurtful. Thanks. Assumption that non-disabled is normal. Yes, another use of the word normal, assuming there's a normal way of being human. Not considering the needs of all participants. Yes. Designing experiences which unknowingly marginalize people. Yes. You can always tell when disabled folks are not in the planning process of an event. I attended a conference recently that was the most inaccessible conference I think I've ever attended, and, yes, I had some I had some good feedback for them regarding that experience.

Sometimes have good intentions but are uninformed. I think that's really important. If it's unintended — for today we're focusing on unintended, right — but there are obviously intended assumptions that are made — but so in this case, yeah, I think that's a really good shout. Sometimes you have good intentions but are uninformed so again it goes into these other ideas of designing experiences which unknowingly marginalize people. Assumptions. Lack

of exposure and awareness. Alright, great, this was wonderful. Thank you so much for sharing. Like I said I'm going to try to save these so that you can have access to them after the session.

Rebecca Martin: Sarah, I'm so sorry to interrupt but interpreter if you can hear me your screen is not on. Just wanted to let you know. Thank you.

Sarah Napoli: Alright, so for the sake of today I think you all, you know, hit the, hit the concept right on. But here's how I decided to define unconscious and implicit bias. And unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside of their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing. And that last bit is really important because when I start to talk about the tool that I want to provide you with at the end of the session the idea that we often, when we meet someone who is different than us or, you know, just a different lived experience than us, we tend to try to immediately categorize them. It's like a psychological default, right. And so it's important to recognize when that's happening.

And then ableism is discrimination against disabled people. Pretty simple. It can be intentional or unintentional. And this last bit is what I wanted to really focus on. So it's often in the form of small aggressions that show up in our everyday speech, and I really think that you all got to that point when you, when I asked that question in the Mentimeter poll. That it's, it's usually unintentional and it usually sort of comes just from the, you know, uninformed or obliviousness of the acts.

And so the big question is, you know, how do these show up at work in everyday situations? If you're a student, how do they show up in class or at the dinner table or with family over the holidays? How did these things show up in the language that we use? And so in order to really dive into this in a reflective way, I'm going to do a little activity with you that is just going to help you check for some of your biases that you may unintentionally be holding. So we're going to switch over to the Google documents. So, Rebecca, if you want to go ahead and like drop that Google doc link, or do you want me to drop it?

Rebecca Martin: I can put the, it's already in the chat, but I'll put it back in the chat.

Sarah Napoli: Oh, it's in the chat so if it's already there. I can share it on my screen as well. Here we go.

Rebecca Martin: That's to the main folder and then it's within.

Sarah Napoli: So can everyone access this on their own computers as well? I'm sharing it live, but it might be useful if you also open it up yourself either on your phone or on your computer in another window because that way you can really look at it fully. So this is an article — I put the link here because I think the whole article is really really useful — and these questions are questions to ask yourself and kind of check what you're thinking is on these questions. So I

highlighted a few of the questions. There's these general questions about disability. So, for example, number two: Do you think disabled is a negative word? If so, which words should be used instead? I thought that one was really interesting. And then if you scroll down there's some questions on very specific disabilities. Do you think all blind individuals read Braille?

Do you view individuals with intellectual disabilities as being dependent on others to care for them, vulnerable, kind, etc? So these are just questions to ask yourself that sort of, I think, to check your understanding and check your bias and check sort of the first thing that pops in your head when you ask the question of yourself. So we're just going to spend like a few minutes looking at these questions. And if you ... I'll kind of slowly scroll as well ... but you can also open it on your own computer or on your phone so you can like look at all of them if you want. But we don't have time to go through every single one so just sort of spending a few minutes looking at this.

Kind of slowly bring us back to hopefully a quick conversation about these. The one I'm gonna kick off with first, that I was happy to see on the list, was number 14. Would you describe individuals with disabilities as exceptional, brave, courageous, inspirational, superhuman, and heroic for living with their disabilities? And this one was especially resonant for me because I recently was at a party for my mother — we had a surprise birthday party for my 70-year-old mom, a gay mom — and somebody was asking me what I did for a living. And I said, oh, well, I'm really honored that as a disabled person I'm able to create disability inclusion globally across and help people define and understand disability. And as I was talking the person I was talking to interrupted me and said, "Well, let me stop you right there. You're not disabled. You are capable. You're highly capable, and then he went on to describe me as exceptional and that I must have like superhuman senses because I'm 75 percent deaf so I must have other sensory experiences that are superhuman.

And so right away, I really, I think he that was falling into this assumption or this sort of bias or understanding of disabilities that I ... Yeah, it was really jarring for me. And I had to sort of help him understand that disabled to me is personally how I identified it has nothing to do with being capable, and I certainly didn't find it to be inspirational, or and I'm not a superhero, although I'm still trying, you know, but I didn't, you know, I just thought it was a very interesting assumption that that person was making.

So I'm gonna stop sharing here because I would like to just hear if anyone has any questions or comments regarding those questions that they were reading or any thoughts on those questions. So you can either unmute because if we do have a few minutes, or you could just put it in the chat box or if any question like really struck you as especially interesting or you had strong feelings about.

Rebecca Martin: There was a question in the chat. It says I have heard the term "differently abled." Is this something that is used and acceptable?

Sarah Napoli: Wonderful question um I would say that whatever term a person with a disability decides to use is acceptable, right. So if somebody says to you I identify as differently abled, and that's the language I use, I think it's acceptable, but I would also argue that not everybody identifies with differently abled because it's sort of centering able-bodiedness as the norm. Whereas, because I subscribe to the social model of disability, which is saying that the world I live in is disabling, I personally identify as disabled.

So I think it depends on how people personally identify. I think that's really important, and I also think that just asking people. that's like my one big takeaway of today is don't be afraid to have the conversation and don't be afraid to make mistakes. So, you know, jump into it and if you say, you know, something and the person corrects you, and then you know how that person identifies, right, and just respect the wishes of the individual. And I will say, like, person-first language is very popular in the United States. In the UK, where I lived for a while, disabled is the norm. And so sometimes it's cultural regional as well, and sometimes people don't identify with disability at all even though they may hold a legal defined disability, right. They identify with being neurodivergent, or they identify with deaf culture, or they identify ... You know, so I think it really is a personal choice. "Person with a disability" is usually the safest bet to start with I would say. Sorry, that's a long answer

Any other questions about the bias check? Was it interesting? Was it useful? You'll be able to take it with you so.

Mark? Did I get the name right?

Mark: I'm on mute. Hi, everyone. I'm very happy to be a part of this session today and thank you guys for providing this opportunity for us to educate ourselves on this subject. I as a dancer have been thinking very recently about teaching a blind person, hopefully a leader, to dance Latin dances. That's my area of expertise. And I've been thinking about doing that a whole lot. It's something that I've kind of like been ... an idea I want to say I've been pregnant with ... and I kind of haven't run into the right person to bring that to fruition yet, but my question is this: Is there or are there any particular terms or is there any particular language of inclusion that we can begin to adopt in our teaching practices as teaching artists that will help us to be less unconsciously biased towards, you know, people with disabilities? Are, you know, like is there a glossary of terms, or is there a language that we can begin to adopt terminology. You know, just like in some circles there are certainly accepted terms, and in many circles those things keep changing, you know. But what's salient right now?

Sarah Napoli: Well, that would require probably its own session. I think that's an amazing um ... but I do have some resources ... we actually internally at my organization we created a disability inclusion language guide that everybody has found exceptionally useful, and we do sort of also break down like within certain specific disabilities some language that's more ... you can utilize ... like I said, culture is always shifting and changing, and there's also so much culture within disability, right. So a lot of you probably heard about deaf culture, and deaf culture is such a unique, specific, has its own set of norms and understanding that it would probably require its

own language guide really. But I do think there's some resources. So I will after the session, because I think that's a big question, I will try to make sure Rebecca has a list. Also the Google doc I've been adding to as I've been going and developing it, so I also put some resources there. I'll also see like what I can share with you from what I've created already. My organization is very protective of its resources, but I think I could probably figure out how to share a version of it which I think would be a really great place to start. So sorry I didn't give you a complete answer, but I just think it's a it's such a big question, but I think I do have something to get you started on that journey.

Thanks and I have your email now. Perfect. Karen, did you have a question? Oh, I've placed this question in community ... is it, are we good?

Karen Alexander: Yeah, we want to ask the question can you give some examples of microaggressions towards people with disabilities, and I put that in the Q and A and we have another question in the Q and A as well for you.

Sarah Napoli: Okay, oh, there's okay, oh, Q and A, I see. I've never used that tool. Okay, great, thank you. Yes, I have it. I have one that I get all the time that might be interesting. Whenever I tell people that I'm partially deaf I always get, you don't look deaf, which I find to be the most amusing thing to say because I don't know what ... I always say, what do deaf people look like? And I think ... what I think what people are actually trying to say is that I don't sound deaf. I don't have a deaf accent, right. I started going deaf about a decade ago. I live with a lot of autoimmune stuff, I'll say, and one of them that has caused me to start going deaf especially in one ear, so the uniqueness of my deafness is it's unique to say the least, but also it's ... it's ... I could still hear myself for the most part so my, my, I don't have a deaf accent.

Also people always say I'm too young to be deaf, so there are just these under ... like the odd understanding of what disability looks like, you know, who is disabled. I also live with intense chronic pain. I'm like always in pain, and I always say if you're familiar with Marvel or superhero like the Hulk. The Hulk is like his his big thing is he's always angry. I'm just like I'm always in pain so that's why it doesn't look like I'm in pain, right. So it's ... but people when you say that they don't believe you because you appear to be living and moving in the world as they do.

So I think that's, for me, I consider those microaggressions because I feel like it's diminishing my lived experience. But, yeah, they come in all shapes or forms. I think another microaggression is people assume that if you're disabled you need help and so people will immediately like assist in opening doors or getting things for you when instead they could just ask, like, do you want some help with that instead of just immediately assuming the person might be helpless, right. So those are just a couple that I, okay, I popped in my head. I do want to get on to the rest of the content, but we probably have like a couple ... because I was gonna do questions at the end so I feel like this is a nice question time, things are coming up, so does anyone else have any big questions? I see another one in the ...

Mark, I see your hand is raised. Go ahead.

Mark: Yeah, so, in returning to this question number 14, "Do you describe individuals with disabilities as exceptional, brave, courageous?" I mean, speaking plainly, I'm just hearing your story and I think that's quite inspirational that you can navigate the same world as me but you have very different circumstances So I do think that's inspirational, but I also don't want to romanticize or come into a conversation like, oh my gosh, you are so brave, when really we're just people so it's a it's a it feels like sometimes it should be a balancing act between I want to uplift voices that are that might not always be heard but I don't want to over romanticize anybody especially in the teaching artist context. You know what I mean? Maybe you could speak on that a little bit?

Sarah Napoli: Yeah, that's a good ... yeah, I mean, I think, there's a really great TED Talk that Stella Young does on I'm not your inspiration. It's a brilliant 10 minutes of your time, and I think she really sums this up a lot better than I can. But what, the way I think about it is, like, if you were born deaf you move through the world with what you've been given, right, so you're you're not necessarily exceptional. It's just always been your norm, right, so you're kind of creating as you go. I mean my my interaction with deafness has obviously been different I think going through a lived experience of fully hearing and then not fully hearing. I've also always lived in pain so like since I was a kid I've been in and out of the hospital. So like that's my lived experience and while I appreciate and I think it's like really generous and acknowledging, like, "yeah, you move through the world differently than mine," it's more if you accept the social model that the world is disabling, you know, so like the world is not created for people that are disabled, right. So in that regard, like, we are I would say that disabled folks are the biggest untapped talent pool for jobs because we're exceptionally flexible ,we're adaptable, we create things out of nothing, we create spaces where there is no space for us, and so I do think in that regard it is, it is something to be honored and uplifted, and so I think the piece that I would pull out the most is making sure that those voices are heard and acknowledged more than the, like, in Stella's 10 minutes she talks about, like, getting an award for being disabled but like she said all I did was lay in bed and watch TV. Like, I don't understand why I'm getting an award. So instead of, like, so it's not like valuing the disability, valuing the, you know, what the outputs are and what people are creating and making sure that they're heard and valued and that the input is taken into consideration.

Oh, I see Rebecca, thank you for putting the link in the chat. Yeah, it is a great 10 minutes of your time, so I I would I would highly recommend watching it.

I'm gonna dive back into my presentation which I'm sure we're not going to have time to get through, but that's okay because if this is really good and this stuff is really important so I appreciate the questions. But we might not have time for questions at the end so I will make sure that you have my contact info and that we can keep the conversation going. This is my life's work, having these dialogues, so happy to keep having them outside of this presentation. So I hope you all can see that.

And then, alright, so we're not gonna have time to like fully fill this in so this is going to be more again like a bit of a reflective exercise. So a lot of you probably have heard of the cultural iceberg. You Google it, you're gonna get like a hundred examples of the cultural Iceberg. And so I wanted to sort of look at this as the disability world, right. So when you encounter someone who's disabled or maybe disabled differently than you are, or they move through the space differently than you are, there are particular things that you see and then things that you don't see, right. And so to focus on like what that might be, so like what is it that you actually see when you encounter someone that's different than you? What — and I'm asking this in a bit of a rhetorical sense here so we can get through the content — but having like a thought to yourself like what is it that you actually see, right. And then what is it that you don't visibly see, you know, or that you can't like maybe see, touch, hear, smell, right? Something like that you can't actually interact with. And obviously the example here is very telling. There's only a little bit above the surface, and there's a whole lot below the surface that we don't engage with when we interact with difference, right.

So again, going back to unintended ableism, going back to unconscious bias, it's impossible to know everything under the surface and if you look at this one example that I found that I kind of liked, and I don't necessarily agree with everything on here, and I'll and I'll explain that in a minute, but you can see that like what you're interacting with is so superficial, right, it's so tip of the iceberg so to speak, right. I would argue that you do not see race. I would argue that you definitely see skin color, but you don't see race, right. So I've put race actually below the surface. I would argue that you don't actually see gender. You see gender expression, right. And so I would argue to put that underneath the iceberg as well. Age. Again, do we really see age? I get misaged all the time. People think I'm a lot younger than I am, so I would put that under the water probably too.

So really when it comes down to it you're only interacting with exceptionally superficial things above the surface, right, and that's why we have unintended ableism and that's why we have so much unconscious bias in our, in our, in our minds because we're not interacting with the full person, right. And this is meant to be overwhelming, so you're not gonna like get a book that says this is how you interact with a disabled person. There's no book. That book does not exist, so obviously we do as best we can. We learn as much as we can, but this iceberg is difficult to fully like break, right. You're never gonna fully get the picture because there's so much, so much to understand and so many, so much of what we're interacting with is life experiences, right, is our own personal journeys, and especially for disability that's going to be super nuanced depending on where we come from, how our family interacted with disability, what our cultural background is, because something I am challenged in every day at work is that I'm trying to figure out how we talk about disability in Tunisia, how we talk about disability in Malaysia, how we talk about disability in Colombia. I mean these are going to be super impactful of how we have those dialogues and conversations, so this is meant to be a little overwhelming because we have to understand that we're coming at it from our own identities.

And so one way to look at this — and if we had more time, I would do this very awesome interactive activity around social identities with all of you — but because we don't what I want

you to do again is have a think about how you personally identify within these categories, right. So these identities are the most common that we socially put people in as a culture, especially Western cultures. Now obviously I identify strongly with being a geek and being part of geek culture or being part of hip-hop culture. Those aren't on here. So I'm not I'm not like just valuing them. Those are super important, but these are the most common identities that we put people in when we meet them for the first time. So how do we identify our gender, our race and ethnic background, our sexual orientation? Do we associate ourselves with religion? Able-bodied, disability, disabled? All these kind of sum up, like, who we are as an individual, right. And we're all these things at once so depending on how we identify with each of these categories it's going to determine how we interact with other people.

So a lot of times I tell people this is really hard to navigate. This is really hard to tackle. But what you can do is do your own reflection on who you are, what you bring to the table, what you bring to dialogues, how you identify within these categories, and how that might impact your interaction with others. Because you can control that, right. You can control your own stuff. You can't necessarily control how others are coming to you, right. So I always try to get people in the mindset of thinking about this And the way that you can think about this — and you will have these slides post sessions so I don't expect you all to finish the activity now — but you know really taking some time about which identities do you think about the most, which ones do you not think about at all. If you're not thinking about something at all that might impact how you interact with others if that's the prime identity that they're recognizing.

So for me I often think about disability all the time, especially when I wake up in the morning because it depends ... it's going to determine how my day goes. My hearing is so nuanced and odd that I'm ... sometimes I'm very stressed about presentations like this because I don't know the captions are gonna help, am I gonna be able to hear everyone, is my room quiet, are they mowing the lawn outside. Like, there's all these things that can impact the way I'm hearing, and so that's something I think about all the time and that might create stress. And then somebody tries to tell me some bad news and I can't handle it, right, because it's my own my own stuff that I need to recognize. So how does that impact your day-to-day interactions and especially how does it impact your work with the disabled community, right? Especially if you're potential able-bodied, right. If you're working, you're moving through the world as an able-bodied individual, and then you're working with primarily disabled folks, that's probably some reflective ... reflections you need to do on like ensuring that you're not — again those microaggressions or unintended ableism might be happening — because we haven't done the reflective work.

So that was a lot of information. And again you're going to have these slides so you can definitely go back and answer some of these questions. And this is just really just to understand why I'm talking about identity within the disability conversation. The idea of disability justice really is its own entity. It does get interchanged with disability rights, disability inclusion. I'm primarily in the disability inclusion sphere in my work, like creating that inclusive space. Disability rights we're talking about like ADA legislature, you know, lobbying and all that sort of bureaucratic work that goes into creating policies and and

laws. But disability justice is really talking about the intersectional of all those identities I talked about and the way that diverse systems of oppression amplify and reinforce one another.

And I'm going to show you a quick video soon that I think highlights the importance of recognizing how disability is part of that identity spectrum and how they play into each other's movements and how you can use them to talk about, you know, how to approach ideas of justice and equity and inclusion when you kind of center the, you know, the most historically excluded groups and such as women, people of color, immigrants, and people who identify as LGBTQ plus.

And so I wanted to just give you that little framework because I think it plays into this idea again if you're doing some work on your own intersections of identity it'll help you understand the disability justice movement and how to have those conversations with with folks at work or people in the world. And so I just want to show you this quick video. It's only a few minutes long. If you're familiar with the Ford Foundation, they have a great video series on #DisabilityDemandsJustice. And so there's probably like 10 or 20 videos that I think are pretty incredible, but we're just gonna watch this quick one today towards the end. So Rebecca if you could just let me know for sure that the volume is working. I think I didn't share with volume. One second I have to make sure I did that. Yep, there it goes. I got it. Alright.

[Video plays]

Keri Gary: My name is Keri Gray. Keri Gray is a black, disabled woman, and there's power behind that.

[on-screen graphic: Intersectionality & Disability]

In the United States, one in four in the black community have some type of disability, whether that's visible or invisible. Historically speaking, organizations and institutions have shown us that they want to identify with one thing and build power around that, build influence and access. And I get it, right? So, this idea that you have disability rights, you have women's rights, you have LGBTQ rights, and those kind of different pockets are really building a strong narrative.

But the thing that I find to be harmful is when we're not building in coalition, because the reality is, is that you have people like myself, who are black, disabled, and women, and so many other things. And when you live at the intersections of all three of those, then you can't split your political and social dynamics between these different groups. It doesn't produce real results of freedom and it doesn't produce real results of access to employment and other opportunities that you're looking for.

I'll give one example on this. So the Black Lives Matter movement. When it was created, it was created in conjunction mostly with a lot of young folks. What was unique about this particular movement was the intersectional philosophy that was built upon, the folks getting up and

saying, "We are not just fighting for one narrative, but we are specifically fighting for folks who are on the margins. We are fighting for black folks who are also LGBTQ, who are women, who are fem, who are trans, who are disabled."

They named it. They saw their people across the country and said, "I'm fighting for all of you. Not just some of you. Not just the ones that have traditionally gained power and access." And that gives me a lot of hope. Because no one wants to be left behind.

[on-screen graphic: There Is No Justice without Disability]

[End of video]

Sarah Napoli: So thank you. Again I think I popped the link in that on Google Docs. You'll be able to find that and probably find the rest of the videos as well. There's quite a few in that series that I think are quite powerful.

So what do you do with all this? It's sort of like, okay, Sarah you just gave me a lot of information, a lot to think about, but again I think this is going back to some of the questions I was answering earlier on, you know, what are examples of microaggressions how can I be using better language in my work And there's no real like light switch answer to that, right. There's not just something you can do and then click you get it. Like I said this stuff is constantly changing and weaving and sort of looking like something different every day. But again what I try to come back to is focusing on your own stuff, right. Doing your own work because that you do have control over and you can make an effort on every day. This is the ladder of inference, and there's a great little five minute video that I popped in that Google doc as well that I think will sum up the tool really well. It's a little cartoon, so it's a lot of fun to watch, but I'm going to try to briefly talk about it.

So basically it's a ladder and people climb a ladder, right, so you are, we are constantly climbing ladders all the time every day, every moment we are observing the world, we're observing everything around us, and we're selecting data to really focus on, right. So there might be something I've said over the past hour that you really focused on for whatever reason based on your own lived experiences. And you make meaning out of that. And so you notice how you're climbing then, right, so you're selecting something to focus on, you're adding some meaning based on your own lived experiences and contexts and cultural backgrounds and lived experiences, and then you start to make assumptions, right, and then you're going to draw some conclusions, and really at the top of the ladder that's when you've taken that small piece of data, and then you start to believe things about the world. You start to take actions based on those beliefs and so forth, right. And again we're doing this all the time, right. And some of it is so ingrained and socialized, right, so you know maybe when you were younger somebody with a green jacket was mean to you, and so now someone wears a green jacket and you've never met them, you immediately think that person is mean. And that's a very like elementary example, but it does go to show that like sometimes we don't ... we're doing this unconsciously, right. And so the only way to sort of interrupt that is to recognize you're climbing the ladder.

So when I used to run these huge sessions — I used to run like three and a half, four hour, or sometimes daylong sessions where we sort of really went into each of these topics I was talking to you about today, and we spent like probably an hour on the ladder — I would give people like a printout of the ladder and I said, "okay, now put this on your refrigerator, put it at your desk and so you could be reminded that when you feel like you might be climbing the ladder you can interrupt it, because the only way to interrupt the latter is to know it exists, right.

So I'm putting the ladder into your hands now, and so that when you are sort of creating content or or maybe you know at meetings or in experiences where you might think to yourself, "is this true, is this fully accurate, and do I have all the information, or am I climbing the ladder, right?" So that's just like one simple tool um you could use. I would encourage you to sort of, you know, put it at your desk somewhere to remind you that it exists and that you do have the power to interrupt the ladder. And like I said, there is a video that I sent to you that I think you'll be able to get a lot more out of it, and they go much more in depth with each rung of the ladder and much more thorough into how I explained it.

But again, just in our last few minutes together mostly focusing on that last bullet, just some more questions for you to think about when you have some time in your day, either sometime today or tomorrow or maybe this week, you know, recognizing how does acknowledging unconscious bias allow you to work more effectively especially with the disabled community and what about this work matters when you're just working in your day-to-day like with family and friends or your co-workers? Because again I think sometimes we use sort of able-bodied language as the norm. So how could we maybe change that so that we're being more inclusive and in everything that we do, not just when we're intentionally working with the disabled community.

And the last one I would love is if you can all just share just at least one action that you can do like right now, like within the next 24 hours, to try to work towards some of these goals or work some toward these changes. So you can use the chat. We also have probably, I don't know, two minutes or so. Let's see if anybody wants to sort of share something out loud. Or also, yeah, I mean again it's only two minutes, but I would, if you have like a quick question. I'm doing a speaking engagement at the top of the next hour — National Disability Employment Month — so I'm, yeah, I can't stay very long after the hour, but, yeah, I'm here for you ...

[audio drops out]

I was needed. I can listen. I can listen to how people describe themselves to make sure I'm describing them the same way.

Anyone else?

And Mark, I really discovered that that works best when there's modeling involved like when you're modeling how you talk about yourself. I've noticed that also creates ... because there's a

vulnerable, vulnerability to sharing, right, so some people might not feel 100 percent ready to share all of themselves.

I just read an interesting article in the New York Times about bringing your whole selves to work because I use that language all the time because I want people to really acknowledge disability in working environments. But then there's people that are like I'm never bringing my whole self to work. So there could be some sort of pushback, right. But I've noticed that the more I talk about myself as a disabled person, the more people have come to identify with that in the workplace. So modeling is always ... as long as you feel comfortable sometimes others will also become comfortable.

Nice. Watch the Stella Young TED Talk. Yes. that's a good one. Ten minutes of your day today. I highly encourage it. You won't be sorry.

That's my cue telling me I need to leave. Any other final thoughts. I mean, like I said, I don't expect you all to like process everything I've told you right in the space, so I hope that you'll take the time to look at the questions later, that you'll send me questions over email. I'm really happy to keep the conversation going. Rebecca, any other final thoughts?

Rebecca Martin: Well, I just want to thank you Sarah for this wonderful presentation. I think you gave us a lot to think about, and contemplate, and grow from. So thank you so much for your time for that. For everyone on the presentation, I'm going to send out the materials again just so that you'll have them, and I'll include the links to the different things that Sarah referenced, very easily accessible.

And then also I just want to once again thank the New Jersey Division of Disability Services for providing us with the opportunity to provide this training, and thank you all for attending. It's been a really lovely experience, so thank you.