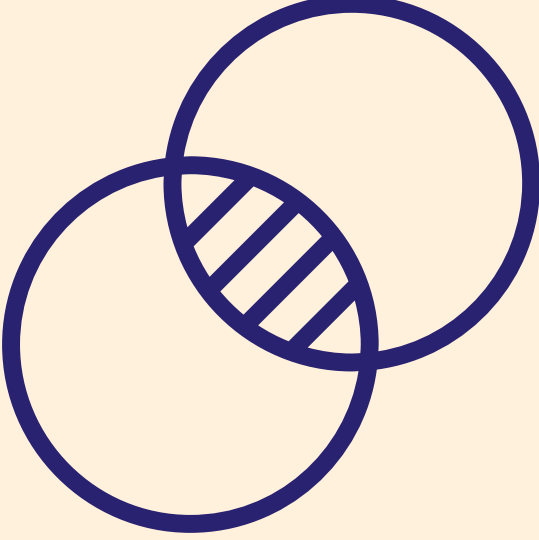
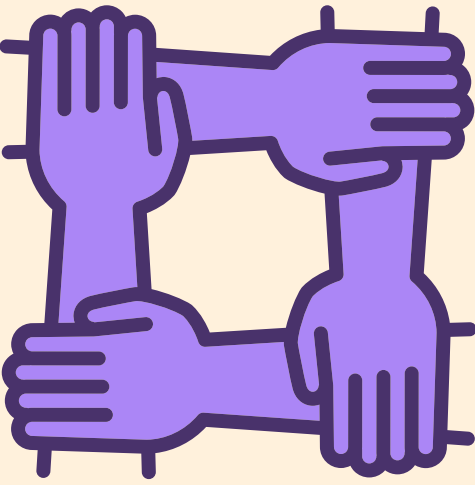



# The Arc Minnesota Disability Justice Principles

The disability justice collective, **Sins Invalid**, made principles that guide their work. Staff and self-advocate leaders with The Arc Minnesota made plain language definitions, to help more people understand how this fits with what we do.

Principle	Sins Invalid Definition	Plain Language Definition
<p><b>Intersectionality</b></p> 	<p>Simply put, this principle says that we are many things, and they all impact us.</p> <p>We are not only disabled, we are also each coming from a specific experience of race, class, sexuality, age, religious background, geographical location, immigration status, and more. Depending on context, we all have areas where we experience privilege, as well as areas of oppression.</p> <p>The term “intersectionality” was first introduced by feminist theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe the experiences of Black women, who experience both racism and sexism in specific ways.</p> <p>We gratefully embrace the nuance that this principle brings to our lived experiences, and the ways it shapes the perspectives we offer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lives of people who have disabilities are shaped by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ their race</li> <li>◦ gender expression</li> <li>◦ where they live</li> <li>◦ our time in history</li> <li>◦ and more</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All of these parts of a person’s life make up their identity.</li> <li>• Sometimes, people are treated unjustly because of their identities. The way that people experience oppression because of their identities is called “intersectionality”. Kimberle Crenshaw was the first person to use that term.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership of those most impacted</b></p> 	<p>When we talk about ableism, racism, sexism &amp; transmisogyny, colonization, police violence, etc., we are not looking to academics and experts to tell us what’s what – we are lifting up, listening to, reading, following, and highlighting the perspectives of those who are most impacted by the systems we fight against.</p> <p>By centering the leadership of those most impacted, we keep ourselves grounded in real-world problems and find creative strategies for resistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership of people who have disabilities is powerful. Together, they can take on and break down barriers while learning from each other and building community.</li> <li>• The disability justice movement is led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who have disabilities. Some leaders are lesbian, gay, transgender, and more.</li> <li>• Learning from and being led by diverse people who have disabilities is important. They are experts who have experience that must be respected.</li> <li>• People who have disabilities must lead change in systems and society because they have power and know what is best for them. When people who have disabilities lead and share their own stories, other people understand it is possible for them, too.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anti-Capitalist Politics</b></p> 	<p>Capitalism depends on wealth accumulation for some (the white ruling class), at the expense of others, and encourages competition as a means of survival.</p> <p>The nature of our disabled bodyminds means that we resist conforming to “normative” levels of productivity in a capitalist culture, and our labor is often invisible to a system that defines labor by able-bodied, white supremacist, gender normative standards.</p> <p>Our worth is not dependent on what and how much we can produce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people have more money than others. Having more money often gives people more power.</li> <li>• Many people who have disabilities do not have much money, because our system is set up in a way that does not value who they are and what they can do. This leads to low wages and less opportunity for people who have disabilities.</li> <li>• The value and worth of people who have disabilities is not connected to how much money they make, whether they work, and how much they can “get done”. We need to reimagine a world where their power, value, and worth is respected.</li> </ul>

## Principle

## Sins Invalid Definition

## Plain Language Definition

### Commitment to Cross-Movement Solidarity



Disability justice can only grow into its potential as a movement by aligning itself with racial justice, reproductive justice, queer and trans liberation, prison abolition, environmental justice, anti-police terror, Deaf activism, fat liberation, and other movements working for justice and liberation.

This means challenging white disability communities around racism and challenging other movements to confront ableism. Through cross-movement solidarity, we create a united front.

- People who have disabilities have not always been included in the fight for justice. People who have disabilities have been left out of the fight for:
  - lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights
  - racial justice
  - environmental justice
  - and other work to end oppression
- People who have disabilities need to be included as leaders of all justice movements. Disability justice also needs to include all other types of work to create positive change in society. This is called “cross-movement solidarity”.
- Movements have to be “intersectional” to make sure that all parts of people’s lives are honored and respected.
- We have to work to change many systems at the same time to address the different challenges and barriers that people experience. White people who have disabilities need to:
  - work to end ableism and racism
  - advocate for freedom for all people

### Recognizing Wholeness



Each person is full of history and life experience.

Each person has an internal experience composed of our own thoughts, sensations, emotions, sexual fantasies, perceptions, and quirks.

Disabled people are whole people.

- It is important to accept everyone for who they are on the inside and outside, without judgement.
- People who have disabilities must be respected and valued for all of who they are. It is important to honor and embrace disability as part of a person’s identity that gives them power.
- Leaders in the disability justice movement use the word “bodymind” as a way to show that our bodies and our minds are connected. Our body and our mind can’t be separated. The bodyminds of people who have disabilities are whole, valued, and worthy.

### Sustainability



We learn to pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long-term.

We value the teachings of our bodies and experiences, and use them as a critical guide and reference point to help us move away from urgency and into a deep, slow, transformative, unstoppable wave of justice and liberation.

- Advocating for ourselves and others will help create real change in our communities.
- Change can be hard and does not happen overnight. It can take a long time.
- We need to make sure we have energy, drive, and patience. We need to work for change and advocate for disability justice, no matter how long it takes.

### Commitment to Cross-Disability Solidarity



We value and honor the insights and participation of all of our community members, even and especially those who are most often left out of political conversations.

We are building a movement that breaks down isolation between people with physical impairments, people who are sick or chronically ill, psych survivors and people with mental health disabilities, neurodiverse people, people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, Deaf people, Blind people, people with environmental injuries and chemical sensitivities, and all others who experience ableism and isolation that undermines our collective liberation.

- Each person, no matter their disability, must have the option to be part of the disability justice movement.
- When people who have different disabilities work together, nothing can stop us from creating change.

Principle	Sins Invalid Definition	Plain Language Definition
<p><b>Interdependence</b></p> 	<p>Before the massive colonial project of Western European expansion, we understood the nature of interdependence within our communities.</p> <p>We see the liberation of all living systems and the land as integral to the liberation of our own communities, as we all share one planet.</p> <p>We work to meet each other's needs as we build toward liberation, without always reaching for state solutions which inevitably extend state control further into our lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone needs support sometimes.</li> <li>• We must work together to meet each other's needs. We must create a community that helps one another. This is called "interdependence".</li> <li>• People who have disabilities must be able to choose the types of support they need and want.</li> <li>• People should have lots of options for how they get support - not just what is offered by the government.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collective Access</b></p> 	<p>As Black and brown and queer Crips, we bring flexibility and creative nuance to our engagement with each other.</p> <p>We create and explore ways of doing things that go beyond able-bodied and neurotypical norms. Access needs aren't shameful – we all function differently depending on context and environment. Access needs can be articulated and met privately, through a collective, or in community, depending upon an individual's needs, desires, and the capacity of the group.</p> <p>We can share responsibility for our access needs, we can ask that our needs be met without compromising our integrity, we can balance autonomy while being in community, we can be unafraid of our vulnerabilities, knowing our strengths are respected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each person's bodymind works differently.</li> <li>• Everyone must be included in ways that are accessible for them.</li> <li>• Access needs are part of life and must be respected.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collective Liberation</b></p> 	<p>We move together as people with mixed abilities, multiracial, multi-gendered, mixed class, across the sexual spectrum, with a vision that leaves no bodymind behind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders of the disability justice movement are working to build a world where every bodymind is free, respected, and valued for exactly who they are. This is called "collective liberation".</li> <li>• It is our responsibility to make sure everyone has a chance to live the life they want. We must make sure that no one is left behind.</li> </ul>

**The Arc Minnesota believes that systems and social change must be:**

- led by people who have disabilities - especially those who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
- focused on freeing people who have disabilities from discrimination
- connected to all other movements for freedom and justice

**We will:**

- learn from people who have diverse lived experience
- challenge ourselves and others to confront racism and ableism
- be allies in disability & racial justice movements led by people who have disabilities
- fight for justice in society and systems
- fight injustice within and across communities