Hello all!

name mine Sebastian and disability does speech mine affect: me am the access, accommodations and disability point person for our time here in St Louis.

Welcome! Me wish begin by our attention bringing the Disability and anti-ableism statement of intent to; featured the NFG website, conference App on and program book yours within - to anchor us that intentionality within.

In organizing Raise Up we held strongly to a goal to create a space in St Louis where Disabled/chronically ill and Deaf folks shouldn’t need to pass as being able-bodied, healthy or from hearing culture, in order to be present or participate fully.

We arrived at this goal knowing that Disability surrounds us all, is in many ways what is most familiar to us; bodies and minds with differences, chronic illness and Deafness.

Ableism lives and breathes at the hub of racism, poverty, displacement, violence, incarceration, mysogigny, state control and more; we chose to begin the work of re-centering Disability into our analysis and anti-ableism into our practice We are determined in our attempt to create a gathering informed by the truth that all lose when Disabled/ill voices and politics are not present.

We are clear that the embedding of Disability politics and anti-ableism as issues of racial, economic, Trans, Sovereignty, gender and immigration justice, requires time, exposure, political will and persistence - this is our beginning.

We have a long way to go, yet wanted to start here and now with Raise Up seeking to be a place where passing as able-bodied is not required for credibility and participation, or value not dependent upon able-bodied assimilation.

We are excited to extend this invitation to join us, as we lean into Disability and build intentionally towards anti-ableism as a core value and implemented principle of action.

To launch us from this statement of intent into specific attainable action, we invite you as active participants and curators this collective space of engage the following disability home manners and access guidelines.

The following are far from exhaustive, instead they seek to trace a route forward, outline a map, provide a means to engage with and be informed by the practice of anti-ableism in the here and now. A outline that over time should you wish, can and will be nuanced by detail, definition and depth These are they:

1. In respect of people who utilize wheelchairs, walkers, canes, other mobility supports; for those of use who are large or who move with gaits and limps, alongside others who navigate the world with no or low vision we ask please, keep aisles and pathways free of the variety-pack of flotsam we often carry with us - we can have what we need, yet

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still keep stuff of the floor, create enough space for folks to move and have doorways and entrances free of clutter.

2. When it’s time for those much needed group photos and selfies if you are in a public space, or do not know your group well, and are using the flash function on your camera, please announce it ahead of time to give folks a chance to take the precautions they need….simply shout “flash coming” ..and yes you’re right we know this may seem not the easiest thing to say out loud… at volume.....outside of your home! Yet have confidence and abiding faith that we can all manage “flash coming” with a certain panache and indeed poise: and those of us with seizures, migraines along with the custer of people with vision, mental health, autism spectrum, autoimunie and cognitive disabilities – will be less impacted by the necessary wonder of photo documenting all of our resitent splendor, and so doing frequently.

3. There are designated low / no scent areas in all plenary sessions please do not sit here if you are wearing, cologne, perfume, essential oils or other heavily fragranced products. If you are somebody who has a low scent life please do sit amongst us - this companionship can and will help offset the isolation and stigma that experienced is by folks who need fragrance-free space in order to not have cognition impaired, asthma inflamed or autoimmune illness aggravated.

4. Do ignore assistance and service dogs at all times They are working hard not engage with you, nor be distracted by your dog friendly selves. Inquiring about their name, breed or commenting on their presence is engagement 😊 They are highly attune to human behaviour and over the span of the conference the accumulation these inquiries repeated, exposes them to exhaustion and increases burnout.

5. As many disabilities and chronic illness are simply not apparent consistently, if at all, please be active in creating a climate where people feel supported in the request and use of accommodations they need without providing justification, navigating critique, questions, unsolicited advice or intrusion.

6. We encourage you to be mindful of language; often words used to perpetuate ableism are subtle while still causing harm that real is. For example the inaccurate use of “Lame, Blind, Deaf, Crazy, Retarded, Diseased, Crippled” etc. At best these are nouns, used superfliously describe a lived reality about a disabled person’s body, mind or both. When they are used negatively however to describe the quality, essence or character of something, they fuel deep seated fear and prejudice about disability and illness; undermining the existence, legitimacy and necessity of disability activists’ ongoing struggle for credibility and complete self determination. These

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words have echoed down generations to underscore notions our inherent inferiority and moral corruptness of. The use of them even this way in, even unwittingly directly compounds a belief of the unworthy, useless and dangerous nature of all disabled peoples......and any individual or community that can be so labeled.

As with all privileged behavior, unlearning ableism takes time, commitment, a willingness to make mistakes and keep trying. Within this practice lies the crux of all anti-oppression work, community organizing and radical philanthropy – reconnecting with deep generational intuition and a drive for equity: to away turn from the benefactors of supremacy systems, all of who collectively compend their gains if we continue to remain uninformed about ableism as a issue of social justice. When unacknowledged and unaddressed ableism distances and disempowers us from attaining whole, just collaborations not only disability community members with, but with any and all marginalized and oppressed peoples.

We thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this beginning particular, in the shifting ourselves of and space this away from able-bodied culture and thinking, nudging us closer toward a reconnection to the validity and glory of disability communities and the piercingly, clarifying force of a disability justice analysis.

Thank you all tremendously Enjoy your conference!