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Make the Library Loud: Removing Communication Barriers for Library Workers with Hearing Loss

by **MICHELLE KHUU**

Abstract

We, people of color with disabilities, work in libraries too. We find ourselves navigating embedded power structures that create communication barriers for all of us - patrons, library workers, and colleagues with hearing loss or other disabilities. Through this writing and knowledge, my intention is to provide tools and affirmations to use in our collective quest to build an intersectional, equitable workplace. It may also provide your library colleagues without hearing loss with tools to support the people and patrons around them.

Keywords: *disability, communication, inclusion, employees right*

Note from the author*: I acknowledge the living contributions of Indigenous people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and especially Native American Deaf communities. I write while working and living on the lands of the people of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa as well as the Menominee, Miami and Ho-Chunk nations. If you don't already know about [Plains Indian Sign Language](), I encourage you to learn more about its role and revitalization in Native American history, culture, and ways of life*.

"I exist, I am a real person behind these words and I deserve to be seen."
Keah Brown[1]

It's easy to relegate disability to a part of "the other". At our libraries, we help patrons with disabilities. We create "accessible" experiences for patrons. We see ourselves as saviors[2] and we help the patrons who need us.

This 'us/them' mindset works against us. We, people with disabilities, work in libraries, too. We find ourselves navigating embedded power structures that create communication barriers for all of us - patrons, library workers, and colleagues with hearing loss or other disabilities. And *we* hold the power and insight to create accessible experiences for people in libraries, including ourselves and our colleagues.

I speak to you from my perspective as a Teo Chew Australian based in Illinois who sometimes uses hearing aids. I was born like this, so I can't comment on what it's like to lose hearing later in life. These words do not reflect the experiences of people who are part of the Deaf community or use sign language.

Two out of fifteen of my identities make me similar to you. Like you, I am a person of color. Like you, I have a disability. If you also like knitting and Howl's Moving Castle, then I already know that we're going to be best friends.

I work at a library, and I hear less than the average person. Things I do not hear include: phones ringing, low pitched voices, the deep resonance of acoustic guitars, and people mumbling behind masks. Things I do hear include: my hearing aids beeping when it has low battery, the empty spaces

in awkward conversations, and the shame of losing face voiced by my immigrant parents behind closed doors.

It's time to wedge the door open.[3]

The difficulty of emerging from lockdown into the able-bodied world isn't just relearning how to act as a human - it's also relearning the feeling of being disabled. I've designed my own home around me, and it is a place where I do not feel my disability. Back out in the world, I forget to pack my hearing aids in my bag. I forget how to ask people to repeat things. I forget to speak up for myself. And then I remember the world—and libraries—aren't build for humans like us.

Through this writing and knowledge, my intention is to provide tools and affirmations to use in our collective quest to build an intersectional, equitable workplace. It may also provide your library colleagues without hearing loss with tools to support the people and patrons around them.

On the Design of Libraries

Four days a week, I put my bag in my bike basket, my mask in my pocket, and I ride to work. My workplace is a public institution and like other public places, it is built to accommodate the loudest voices at the "open" table. It is shelved neatly into a library system that is designed in a way that locks out people who are historically excluded[4] - especially for Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) with disabilities.

Think of the Carnegie Libraries, with their grandiose steps and their steeply vertical columns, created to awe, intimidate[5] and allow entry only to able-bodied white patrons. Beautiful, for sure, as long as your definition of beauty is locked in the colonialist, industrial age ideals of the 19th century.

The locked double doors aren't born solely from the architectural devotion to Classical Greek ideals.[6] There is an unspoken - but intentional - whiteness to library culture[7] which affects how disabled people of color move within the building.

Whiteness can be hard to define. How do we describe the uniqueness of something that feels so everyday and ordinary?[8]

In a different year and a different job, a colleague peered over the cubicle walls and told me that I was lucky to have a culture because white Australians like her didn't have one.

"You do," I said. "It's *Kath and Kim*." (or *Family Guy*, for American audiences.)[9]

In the library context, whiteness looks like Elle Woods, able-bodied, blonde and pretty in pink, using the library to study for her Law School Admission Test. It looks like school librarian Madam Irma Pince determinedly shushing students, pinched lips in a ghostly pale face contrasting with her stern black robes.

These popular culture images underpin the unwritten rules of how to use a library, which prevents both patrons from cultures with different expectations around libraries, and patrons with autism, from feeling welcome. They create the boundaries of what is considered acceptable behavior and what it means to look "professional", boundaries that exclude dark skin color and markers of visible disability.

Whiteness defines professionalism as speaking with impeccable North American English. This culture which derides African American Vernacular English as uncouth and classless in one breath and appropriates it in the next, is the same culture that punishes people with dyslexia, intellectual disabilities and acquired brain injuries, regardless of the value contained within the words.

Whiteness creates barriers that prevent people of color from entering librarianship. Earning a master's degree in library and information science requires time and money, and the institutional racism and ableism within tertiary education creates additional barriers for people of color with disabilities.

Whiteness is a series of intentional choices with the purpose of prioritizing budgets and deadlines over intentionality. These choices might include:
- doing what all American libraries have always done,
- copying another library because it seems cool, or
- following the instructions of the stakeholders with the most votes or the most money because they hold the most power.

To intervene in whiteness, our institutions and fellow library and information science practitioners, educators and researchers need to center the perspectives and lived experiences of disabled BIPOC. Human Centered Design, User Led Design, Universal Design and Design Justice can be used as tools to intervene.[10] They are design philosophies that inherently center disabled, BIPOC perspectives and experiences. Alas, the financial, time and intellectual cost of measured design means decision makers will name drop the buzzwords and proceed to ignore all the tenets.

On External Technology

Here is what I do to make my working environment work for me.

I like quiet environments. You'd think that libraries would be the perfect place to work, except that my workplace is filled with vocally excited children. I've asked for more sound absorbing panels[11] to be installed on the walls so that they can soak up the echoes of KEVA plank sculptures smashing to the ground. Minimizing background sound makes it easier to differentiate between meaningful words and meaningless noise. Fingers crossed it works!

One colleague finds that she gets more coherent responses from me if she backs up 6 feet and takes her mask off so I can lip read. Whether you like this or not will depend on your local positivity and vaccination rates, air circulation levels, risk tolerance and your lip reading skill.

I also like supplementing my hearing aids with transcription apps like Live Transcribe, Hearing Helper and Otter.ai and meeting people via video conferencing software with automated captions. Transcription systems are not perfect though. They're often not sensitive enough to pick up soft spoken people so I have to ask people to speak up. Sometimes the screen contributes a garble of written words to the conversation.

While speech and image recognition software are extremely helpful for people with disabilities, these technologies are designed under the same system of institutional racism and ableism as libraries.

In my first week after landing in the United States, I asked for some water at a restaurant.

"A coke?" the wait staff asked.

"Wor-tuh," I corrected.

"Say again?"

"Wahr-der," my husband said, injecting his general Australian accent with a cowboy drawl. "She's asking for wahrder."

"Ohhhh, you want water." All miscommunications cleared up, we got our glasses filled with icy water and had bowls of delicious pozole. 10/10 would go again.

Humans are allowed to misunderstand accents. We don't get much of an opportunity to listen to people outside of our geographical and cultural sphere. On the other hand, transcription apps, designed by multinational conglomerates, have no excuse. That doesn't stop them from spurting out lines of unintelligible text whenever someone without a Bay Area accent has something to say.

Bugs infest the artificial intelligence that underpins speech and image recognition software. The Gender Shades Project found that facial recognition products performed better on faces that were classified as male and light skinned. As Joy Buolamwini says, "they reflect the priorities, preferences, and prejudices of those who have the power to mold artificial intelligence."[12] Buolamwini's paper was published more than three years ago, but the passage of time didn't stop Bogdan Kulynych from telling Twitter that their facial cropping algorithm was biased towards faces that appear slimmer, younger and lighter skinned.[13] Kulynych also pointed out that "a lot of harmful tech is harmful not because of accidents, unintended mistakes, but rather by design."[14]

In this pestilential environment, we adapt. Using Google products has worked for me because it transcribes Chicago accents reasonably accurately. This finding is backed by the Washington Post, where researchers found that Google did well with Midwestern accents whereas Amazon did better with Southern accents.[15] Unfortunately, both performed terribly with non-American accents so they fail to serve a large proportion of my workplace and library community.

Transcription accuracy is only one issue. Automated captions and transcription apps require a high level of reading literacy. This isn't an issue for someone who grew up watching subtitled British quiz shows, but will definitely be an issue if English was not your first language, if you read slowly or have difficulty reading.

If that is the case, you might find microphones to be a better option for you. You may have seen some cafes install plexiglass screens with a round black speaker in the middle. These are window intercom systems, also known as speech transfer systems. They have microphones on both the staff and patron sides and a speaker in the middle. The intercom system transmits sound to help both the staff members and the customers communicate more clearly.

These options are already in use in the public sphere, which means that libraries absolutely have the ability to install microphones and speakers to facilitate louder and clearer communication between staff and patrons. If it can be considered a reasonable adjustment for pandemic purposes, it can also become a reasonable adjustment for a staff member with a disability.

The primary downside of microphones is that it relies on sound to communicate meaning. If you are someone who requires more than sound to understand what someone else is saying, then microphones may only be of partial help. Another downside is that microphones are not portable, so their use is limited.

As library staff, we serve patrons from all walks of life. We put in the effort to be flexible and patient, because all patrons deserve to be treated equitably.[16] But we too come from all walks of life, and we too deserve to have an equitable working experience.

What equitable looks and feels like for you will depend on your own personal circumstances. Did you lose your hearing later in life? Did you start wearing hearing aids as a baby? Is American Sign Language your first language? Or maybe it's a completely different sign language and you struggle to fingerspell in ASL? There's more to communication than just hearing, and there's more to hearing than the ears on either side of your head.

On Being a Cyborg

Hooray for technology, which has created tiny microphones and speakers that can fit into our ear canals. Zero cheers for whoever gave it the decidedly unsexy name: hearing aid.

"Ableism stigmatizes the tools that help disabled people do more," says Charis Hill.[17] Ableism, both internal and external, is very effective at telling us that disability is a source of shame, and that assistive devices are a form of public humiliation. Hearing aids in specific have a stigma associated with aging and loss of function.

Let's take some time to address the stigma around wearing hearing aids. Firstly, there's nothing wrong with being older, unless you feel comfortable with keeping ageism in your own personal list of biases. Secondly, our bodies will do as they will. Mine has decided that I no longer have a teen-aged metabolism. It happens, and to make my life easier, I will spend the payment from writing this article on elastic waisted pants.[18]

My hearing falls on the left hand side of the bell curve. It happens, and to make life easier, I put on hearing aids.

Thinking positively about hearing aids is a mindset change, so it will take a while to get there. Don't beat yourself up if you catch yourself looking at your aids as a straitjacket instead of the equivalent of a pair of glasses.

If you decide that hearing aids are the right choice for you, then there are ways to make them work better for you. Unlike glasses or elasticized clothing, hearing aids are not "set and forget". Programming hearing aids can be a lengthy back and forth process between you and the audiologist. You tell them what has and has not been working, they tweak the settings, and you test the new settings in the outside world for several weeks before revisiting the audiologist for more tweaks. You can also ask the audiologist to program a mask setting or a directional hearing setting into the hearing aid. If this sounds terribly tedious to you, you can look for a user programmable hearing aid and do the entire customization process yourself.

Beyond the aid itself, there are various accessories that can be used to increase the hearing range of the hearing aid from 6 feet all the way to 80 feet away. These devices include the Phonak Roger Pen

or the Resound Multi Mic, and they allow you to place the microphone closer to the source of the sound but still have it transferred through your hearing aids.

I don't use any of these devices because they are not compatible across company lines. Once, I tried using the Siemens MiniTek bluetooth remote control to link my Siemens Signia hearing aids with the Phonak Roger Pen, but then my colleague complained that I was changing the setting on her hearing aids with the remote control, so I gave up on that. Nor can I use hearing loops, because more and more hearing aids are being sold without tele-coils. It really makes me wonder about how much user-led design goes on within the hearing aid industry.[19]

These are all minor quibbles compared to the biggest barrier to obtaining hearing aids - the financial cost. To get hearing aids in the United States, you have to have access to health care, and several thousand dollars of disposable cash. There are [organizations out there](#) that can provide financial assistance towards getting hearing aids, although the application process can be quite tiring and dehumanizing.

Alternatively, Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAPs) like Bose earbuds, Apple Airpods and Nuheara IQbuds exist. These devices also have noise cancelling and directional sound technology, and can be obtained without having to go through a doctor and an audiologist. According to the hearing aid industry, they are not a replacement for hearing aids, probably because PSAPs are intruding into their profit margins. I'd rather listen to Alice Wong who, in conversation with Lateef McCloud, says that technology like Siri and Alexa can blur the line between popular technology and assistive devices.[20] This increases the availability and affordability of assistive technology and decreases the medicalization and stigma around it.

Life is expensive, but there are other things in life that are free.

On the Free Things in Life

At an equity diversity and inclusion committee meeting a few months ago, my fellow committee members bemoaned the lack of connection they felt over the past year. It's not the same, they said. It's tough not being in the same room.

I didn't agree. Never before have I felt so connected to people.

My favorite part of Zoom meetings over the past year hasn't been the ability to hide all the funny faces I make behind the excuse of sluggish internet, or the ability to meet my coworkers' pets and children. It's the ability, granted by automated captions, to follow the conversation in its entirety instead of feeling left out and alone in my own thoughts.

Reasonable accommodations in the workplace don't just include technological bits and bobs. They can include environmental changes and behavioural changes from the people around you. You are allowed to insist that conversations be held in quiet environments so you can focus on the words being said. If you lipread, you can try meeting outdoors so unmasking becomes an option. If you use captions, asking for conversations to be held over video conferencing is totally okay.

I celebrated when Zoom announced that they were introducing automated captions. It was long overdue - Microsoft Teams and Google Meet had long been doing it and we were already several months into the pandemic. But this wasn't the end of the struggle. I could send instructions for setting up closed captions in advance. I could have high hopes for meetings with people who had heard me campaign for captions for months. I could set up meetings with accessibility experts and diversity consultants. And yet, I would still spend the first 15 minutes of the meeting helping the meeting host figure out how to enable the captions.

There's only so much labor I am willing to take on for the (in)actions of other people.

Unfortunately, there are libraries and other workplaces where asking for reasonable adjustments come with repercussions. These include the emotional toll of spending months fighting to access reasonable accommodations, social isolation in the workplace, being accused of faking disability or job loss. This is where self advocacy can take different forms. Maybe it looks like finding support from networks, whether that be BIPOC networks like We Here, local affinity groups or disability networks. Maybe it looks like joining your local labor union, where you will find solidarity with other workers in similar boats who are willing to fight for your rights.

Guess who successfully campaigned for my workplace to subscribe to Otter.ai before Zoom came out with live transcriptions, and who managed to get Hearing Helper installed on the roving tablets? It wasn't me. I gave up after the first "we'll look into the feasibility of it". It was my non-disabled

colleagues (aka fellow union members) who had the tenacity and perseverance to keep pushing for accessibility and inclusion for both me and the patrons we serve.

Maybe, if you have the resources, it means moving to a new workplace that values you enough to budge over and make space for you.

Even though Nikole Hannah-Jones has a different story to live, what she said resonates: "I also get to decide what battles I continue to fight."[21]

On the Cost of Free Things

Advocacy is tough**.** It's not easy to be heard in a world that is designed without your voice in it. Consider that disability communities can be racist,[22] and BIPOC communities can be ableist. Consider also that people with intersectional identities cannot claim whiteness nor ability as property to leverage[23] during self advocacy. That's a lot of additional labor in having to do two types of advocacy within two different spaces with less resources, and having to put up with twice the amount of microaggressions.

Just as there is a cost to being seen, so too is there a cost for staying hidden. Hearing loss and deafness can be considered an invisible disability. This can be a boon if you feel you need to "pass" as a tax paying productive member of society, especially in one that equates human worth, particularly the worth of immigrant lives, with the ability to produce monetary value.[24] For people from historically excluded cultures, this means hiding disability - especially when intelligence levels and perceived "laziness" have been used as an excuse to discriminate against Native American and Black people.[25] This is, of course, also a massive burden.

For me, passing meant that I didn't start wearing hearing aids regularly until after I moved out of my childhood home. I was very well versed in the art of nonsensical conversations. I didn't start learning sign language and experiencing the warmth of the disability community until I was well into adulthood.

Hiding who you are takes a lot of effort, regardless of whether you are hiding from yourself or from the world around you. The emotions that come with this - shame, fear, sadness - they are all real. They're

exceedingly normal, but I want to emphasize that normal is not a synonym for good. They're understandable given the circumstances of the world, and you have permission to forgive yourself for having negative feelings about your life.

Just as there is a cost to being heard, so too is there a cost for hearing others. Listening takes a lot of effort. We strain our cochleas to collect as much sound as possible, we glue our eyeballs to the source of sound so we can gather other clues, and we bring our brains into full gear so we can piece the puzzle together to figure out what is being said. All of this culminates in something called listening fatigue. Listening fatigue happens to everyone - ever heard a classmate complain after a two hour long lecture? But it will happen faster if you expend more energy *while* listening.[26]

This means that it becomes even more useful to understand where your boundaries lie and carve out time to rest.

On Other People

"I want us to not only be able to be part of spaces, but for us to be able to fully engage in spaces. I don't just want us to get a seat at someone else's table, I want us to be able to build something more magnificent than a table, together with our accomplices…. I want this for us and I also want this from us. Because the moment we acknowledge intersectionality, it also means we must acknowledge and face ourselves."

–Mia Mingus[27]

Hearing loss is a communication disability - it restricts our access to information that is spoken out loud into the world. It manifests as a plexiglass window, blocking connections from being made with the community around us. At the same time, librarianship is about providing and facilitating access to information. What does that mean for how our libraries should be serving community members with hearing disabilities?

When it comes to library programming, patrons with disabilities have a dual need - there is a role for programs that are explicitly designed for people with specific interests linked to their disabilities, but there is also a role for accessibility and integration in mainstream programs. People with disabilities deserve to take part in the community instead of being treated as a fringe outlier.

You and me, we understand that because we know what it's like to float on the edges. The value we bring - our lived experiences of disability - means we see inaccessibility and know what inaccessibility feels like wherever we go, and we see solutions to the barriers. We notice the heavy doors, the backless bar stools, the decision to put the braille books in storage, and we know what harms they cause.

(A person somewhere just asked, "Wait, what's wrong with those things?")

Disability is visible to us, and we have the power to make disability visible to others. This is only a small part of the value we bring. I also know that there is so much more to you than your ears and so much more between them.

We're disabled and we're here.[28]

Acknowledgements

Endnotes and Citations

1. Keah Brown, Nurturing Black Disabled Joy, [Disability Visibility: First Person Stories from the 21st Century](#), 2020.

2. "If librarians are priests then their primary job duty is to educate and to save." Fobazi Ettarh, [*Vocational Awe And Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves*](#), 2018.

3. "The easiest change would be using a door stop to prop your door open to make it feel welcoming because that's your first point of contact." Michele Lee in conversation with Michelle Khuu, [Chronic Inaccessibility Part 1](#), Guest Check Magazine, 2021.

4. "Motion to replace "underrepresented" with "historically excluded". Precision matters; the former is a consequence of the latter. Let's not forget." Dr. Kelebogile Zvobgo, Twitter, 2021.

5. Someone told me that the tall flight of steps and marble columns of the [Victorian State Parliament House](#) were intended to intimidate ordinary citizens away from attending the "open" parliament sessions. However, I can't find any sources to back up this apocryphal story.

6. Much like their ancestors in the European Renaissance, Greek Revival architecture placed classical Greece and Rome on the pedestal of intellectual and cultural superiority. Imagine if we had our own renaissance that modeled itself off Tang Dynasty China, the Abbasid Caliphate and the Mali Empire.

7. "...whiteness has played such a fundamental role in the profession from the start. Public libraries in the U.S. developed initially as sites of cultural assimilation and "Americanization" of immigrants needing to learn the mores of white society." April Hathcock, [White Librarianship In Blackface: Diversity Initiatives In LIS](#), 2015.

8. "Constructs of invisible whiteness aid the idea that our libraries and our profession are somehow neutral, where neutrality is equated with whiteness." Jennifer Brown, Jennifer Ferretti, Sofia Leung, Marisa Méndez-Brady, [We Here: Speaking Our Truth](#), 2018.

9. If I could redo this conversation, I'd add that white Australia is part of my culture, too. I still sing along to Delta Goodrem's Born to Try (she's sort of like Demi Lovato) when it comes up on shuffle, and if I had ready access to proper meat pies here in the US, I would absolutely drown it in tomato sauce. (Tomato sauce, translated from Australian to American, is ketchup, not marinara.)

10. "Each design choice is an opportunity to send a message of inclusion." Amanda Roth, Gayatri Singh, Dominique Turnbow, [Equitable But Not Diverse: Universal Design For Learning Is Not Enough](), 2021.

11. [Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels](), Job Accommodation Network.

12. "Automated systems are not inherently neutral. They reflect the priorities, preferences, and prejudices - the coded gaze - of those who have the power to mold artificial intelligence." Joy Buolamwini, [Gender Shades Project](), 2018.

13. Bogdan Kulynych, [Saliency Bias](), 2021.

14. "First, algorithmic harms are not only "bugs". Crucially, a lot of harmful tech is harmful not because of accidents, unintended mistakes, but rather by design. This comes from maximization of engagement and, in general, profit externalizing the costs to others." Bogdan Kulynych, [Twitter](), 2021.

15. "People with Southern accents, for instance, were 3 percent less likely to get accurate responses from a Google Home device than those with Western accents. And Alexa understood Midwest accents 2 percent less than those from along the East Coast. People with nonnative accents, however, faced the biggest setbacks. In one study that compared what Alexa thought it heard versus what the test group actually said, the system showed that speech from that group showed about 30 percent more inaccuracies." The Washington Post, [The Accent Gap](), 2018.

16. This is a two way relationship - I put forth effort and patience and in return I get cute drawings addressed to me and sticky vinyl cut outs of Australia. I would hate for casual ableism to get in between this good thing we have here.

17. Charis Hill, [*Finding Myself in an Ableist World: The Advocacy Issue I Didn't Know I Needed to Fight For*](), creakyjoints blog, 2021.

18. Please share recommendations for ethical and sustainable elastic waisted pants to #expensive_genes on We Here Slack.

19. "Very rarely are these kinds of technology and devices created by disabled people." Lateef McLeod and Alice Wong, Gaining Power Through Communication Access, [Disability Visibility: First Person Stories from the 21st Century](), 2020.

20. Lateef McLeod and Alice Wong, Gaining Power Through Communication Access, [Disability Visibility: First Person Stories from the 21st Century](#), 2020.

21. [Nikole Hannah-Jones Issues Statement on Decision to Decline Tenure Offer at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and to Accept Knight Chair Appointment at Howard University](#), NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 2021.

22. "The [disability advocacy] organisation failed to even acknowledge the resignations of the only two senior members of colour and failed to investigate the issues in a transparent manner. This is not an isolated example; many organisations fail to address similar issues properly." Primal Fernando, [Primal Fear to Deal with Discrimination - The Uncomfortable Truth](#), 2021.

23. "In ways so embedded that it is rarely apparent, the set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany the status of being white have become a valuable asset that whites sought to protect and that those who passed sought to attain." Cheryl L Harris, [Whiteness as Property](#), Harvard Law Review, 1993.

24. "Immigrants and refugees, especially those who are undocumented, are placed in a unique situation, since they must constantly prove their economic productivity to society in order to be accepted as people." Mahtab L., [Respectability Politics Don't Protect Us](#).

25. "Starting in the 17th century, colonizers did not just call native Americans racially inferior. They call them physically and mentally incapable of adapting to so-called civilization. And they went on to use this ableist framework to rationalize enslavement, forced removal and genocide. Well into the 19th century, slaveholders use racist ableist ideas about black people, supposedly mental inferiority to justify slavery." Ibram X. Kendi and Rebecca Cokley, [Ableism & Racism: Roots of The Same Tree](#), Be Antiracist Podcast.

26. These days, the backs of my ears have to put up with the combined pressure of glasses, hearing aids and masks, so I add earlobe pain to my list of ailments.

27. Mia Mingus, [_"Disability Justice" is Simply Another Term for Love_](#), 2018.

28. "We Here™ seeks to provide a safe and supportive community for Black and Indigenous folks, and People of Color (BIPOC) in library and information science (LIS) professions and educational programs." [We Here](#).

Additional Resources

You may have noticed that this article cites heavily from [Disability Visibility: First Person Stories from the 21st Century](). The nature of racism in disability advocacy spaces and of ableism in BIPOC spaces means that resources written from an intersectional perspective are hard to come by. Disability Visibility is a refreshing exception and points towards a future with a more nuanced discussion of what genuine inclusion looks like.

Having said that, the following resources are also useful explorations into different aspects of equity and transformation of libraries and other spaces.

- JJ Pionke explores different aspects of disability as it relates to libraries as a public space and as a workplace in *[Beyond ADA Compliance: The Library as a Place for All](),* 2017, *[The Impact of Disbelief: On Being a Library Employee with a Disability](),* 2019, and *[Library Employee Views Of Disability And Accessibility](),* 2020.

- Stephen Frazier bemoans the disappearance of useful technology in hearing systems in *[What's Going On? More Loops and Fewer Telecoils](),* The Hearing Review, 2020.

- Alice at the Terptree blog asks people to send her a drawing of what 'deaf' looks like in *[Deafness As An Invisible Disability]().*

- Kafi D. Kumasi reports that youth of color report feeling like outsiders in libraries. [Roses in the Concrete: A Critical Race Perspective on Urban Youth and School Libraries](), 2012.

- Kirsten Thorpe says, "Our major cultural and collecting institutions also hold evidence of Australia's history of colonization – genocide, dispossession, and forced control over the lives of Indigenous Australian people, families, and children." [Transformative Praxis – Building Spaces For Indigenous Self-determination In Libraries And Archives](), 2019.

- Amelia Gibson, Kristen Bowen and Dana Hanson in [We Need To Talk About How We Talk About Disability: A Critical Quasi-systematic Review](), 2021.