

Too Intersectional

What Black Feminism and Disability Studies Can Build Together

Black feminism has always been interested in supporting marginalized people. Annamma investigates how Black feminism and disability critical race theory (DisCrit) can center Black disabled girls and women. The intersectionality of disabled Black girls and women should encourage Black feminist sociology (BFS) to reimagine how we can listen to, support, and bring Black disabled girls and women towards justice.

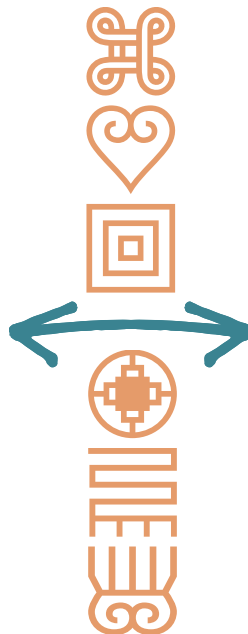


Disability studies asserts that "disability is not a problem to be fixed," rather ableism creates negative attitudes about the differences that constitute disability (p. 277). Influenced by Black feminist theory, DisCrit deviates from the common white-centrism of disability studies. DisCrit understands that intersectional analyses are interested in how oppressions converge and challenges racism, sexism, classism, and ableism.

Black disabled girls are presumed to be "both superhuman and out of control" which creates a "master narrative" that attempts to justify violence against them. While detailing a few cases of violence against Black disabled girls in schools, Annamma elaborates on the systemic violence and punishment of Black girls in schools. For example in Washington, DC during the 2015-2016 school year, every student that was punished with restraint (physical immobilization) or seclusion (forced solitary confinement) was a person of color, over two-thirds of these students were disabled (p. 281).

What Black feminism can share :

Black feminist theory encourages anchoring theory and social activism in "the *material realities* that result from... oppressed identities" (p. 284, emphasis added). Historical and legal legacies of oppression continue to be wielded against Black women; Black feminist praxis is built upon liberation and love for one another. Black feminists have experience building coalitions to broaden the scope of social movements which can jumpstart more action for disabled Black girls and women.



What DisCrit can share:

DisCrit can show BFS how conversations can simultaneously focus on ableism and racism. Oppressions of gender, class, race, and ability status intersect to "label, surveil, and punish Black girls" (p. 284). Because Blackness has historically been associated with being less capable and intelligent, many Black people refuse disabled labels. DisCrit illuminates how racism and ableism interact and how communities can support Black disabled people.

Citation: