The Intersection of Disability, Race, and Special Education

WI FACETS

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Seena M. Skelton, Ph.D.

MIDWEST AND PLAINS EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTER (EAC) SERVES 13 STATES

A project of the Great Lakes Equity Center, we are one of four regional EACs funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. As the Region III EAC, we provide equity-focused technical assistance to state education agencies and public school districts in the areas of race, sex, national origin, and religion.

MAP CENTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

Educational Research and Resources

- Digital Print Resources
- Multimedia PL Resources
- Online Learning Opportunities
- Online Equity Library
- Equity Tools
- Research Products

Equity Learning Networks

- Equity Leaders Institute
- Learning Network Cohorts
- External Learning Events

Systemic Equity Partnerships

- Customized Partner-Specific Professional Learning
- Collaborative Consultation
- Facilitated Equity-Focused Planning

Continuous Improvement

- Regional Needs Sensing
- Data Summaries and Reports
- TA Partnership Narratives/Case Summaries

Outreach & Engagement

- Regional Outreach Activities
- Social Media

In my address I would like to share

The importance of applying an intersectional approach to supporting youth and adults with disabilities.

The disability community is the largest minoritized group in the country and because anyone at any time can become disabled, it is the most diverse community there is as well (S. Skelton, unpublished).

Diversity within the disability community

- **Race and Ethnic:** In terms of racial/ethnic diversity, only one and five adults with dis/abilities are White (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

- Eighty-six percent of students ages 3–21 served under the IDEA are children of color (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020).

- **LGBTQ+:** More than one-third of LGBTQ adults identify as having a disability (Respect Ability Retrieved from https://www.respectability.org/2018/06/lgbt-pride-month-2018/).

- **People Living in Economically Disinvested Communities:** Over 25 percent of people with disabilities live in poverty as compared to 11% of non-disabled people (Statista.com)

- **Female:** Twelve percent of people who identify as female are disabled (Disability Statistics Retrieved from https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm?statistic=1).

- My pronouns are She/Her/Hers

- I situate myself in this work as a Black, woman born with a disability, a product of public education and recipient of special education.

- Hometown is Detroit, Michigan

- Started my career as a school psychologist in Head Start programs in southwest Ohio and northern Kentucky and have worked in elementary and secondary school settings.

- 25 years as a practitioner in inclusive education and equity-focused school improvement

- Currently the Director of Operations for the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center located at IUPUI SOE

Inequities in Special Education Services from Early Childhood ....

White children ages 3 through 5 are more likely to be served under Part B than were Asian and Black or African American children (2020 Annual Report to Congress on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Babies from non-low-income backgrounds were 26% more likely to have a developmental screening than babies from low-income backgrounds (State of Babies Yearbook 2020).

Black children with developmental delays are 44% and Latinx children are 78% less likely to be identified and receive services (State of Babies Yearbook 2020).

Inequities in Special Education Services ... to School Age....

Among Black students served under IDEA who exited school in school year 2017–18, only **two thirds** graduated with a regular high school diploma, which was the lowest rate compared with students of other racial/ethnical groups. (National School Board Association Black Students in the Condition of Education 2020).

Among students with disabilities in the same income bracket, students of color have a higher probability of being placed in a substantially separate classroom than their White peers. This difference is of greater magnitude among non-low-income students, as was the case with identification (Grindal, et al, 2019).

Inequities in Special Education Services ... to Transition Services

Young adults with disabilities of color receive fewer vocational training opportunities, fewer college and university opportunities, and are less likely to be placed in competitive employment positions.

The availability of and eligibility standards for formal supports from Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, American Job Centers (also known as One-Stop Career Centers), and Independent Living Centers are often not shared with young adults of color and their families

VR counselors tend to support and train clients (e.g., how to interview for jobs, goal setting) in the same way regardless of race and ethnicity, and these approaches are often not appealing or relevant to clients of color.

Delman, 2019

Inequities in Special Education Services ... to Post-Secondary Outcomes

Over 30 years of transition research has demonstrated many youth with disabilities face additional, limited access to career opportunities associated with racial and gender biases and structural inequalities (Trainor et. al, 2018).

Disparities in outcomes are also evident in college enrollment and employment rates at the intersection of disability, race/ethnicity, and other identity markers. (Kena et al., 2014, 2015, 2016; McFarland et al., 2017; McFarland et al., 2018).
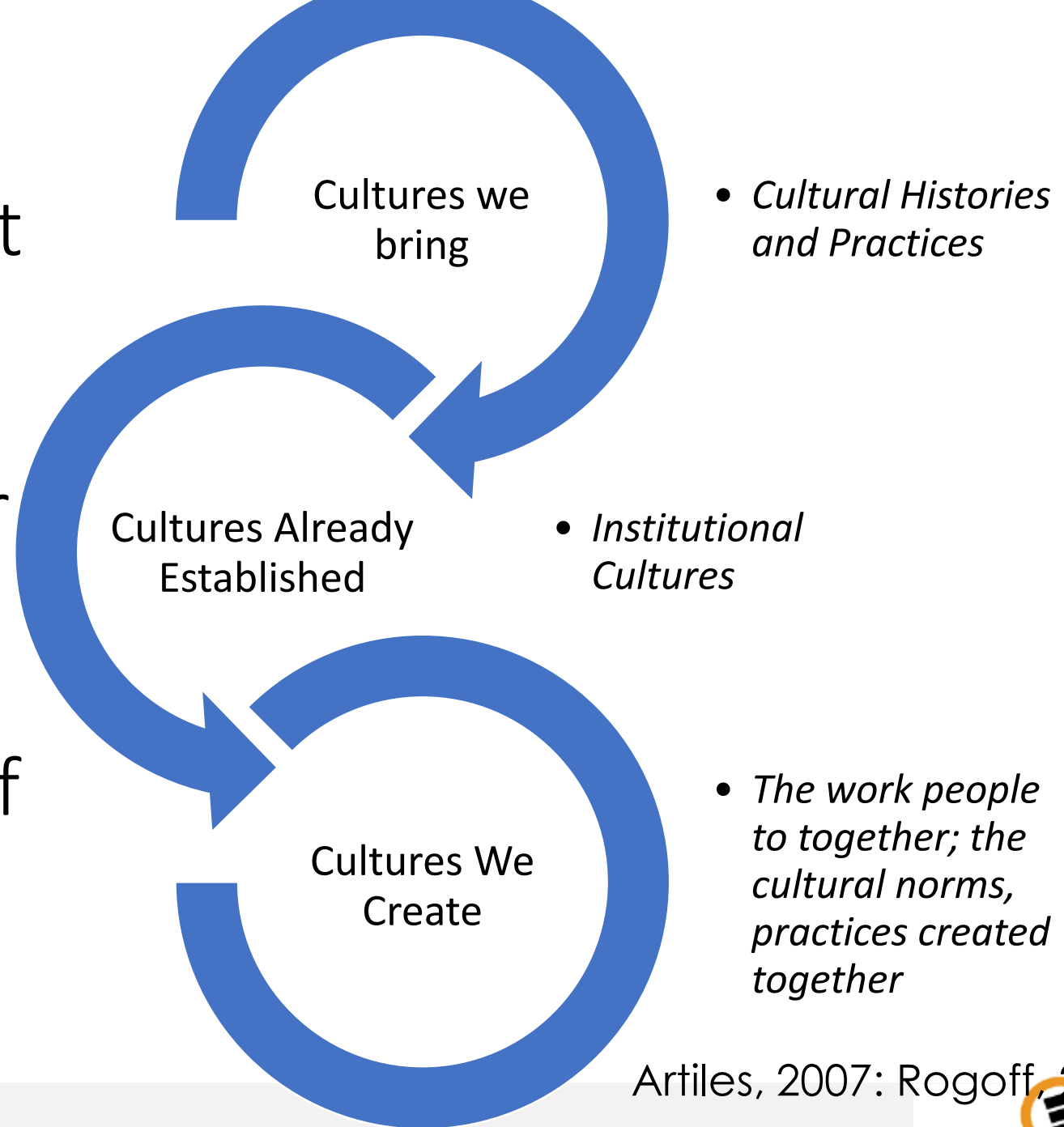
[Post secondary] educational outcomes reflect, in part, an accumulation of education opportunities. Many people with disabilities and other marginalized identities face obstacles and structural barriers to educational opportunities that have existed throughout the history of U.S. public schools (Trainor et. al, 2018).
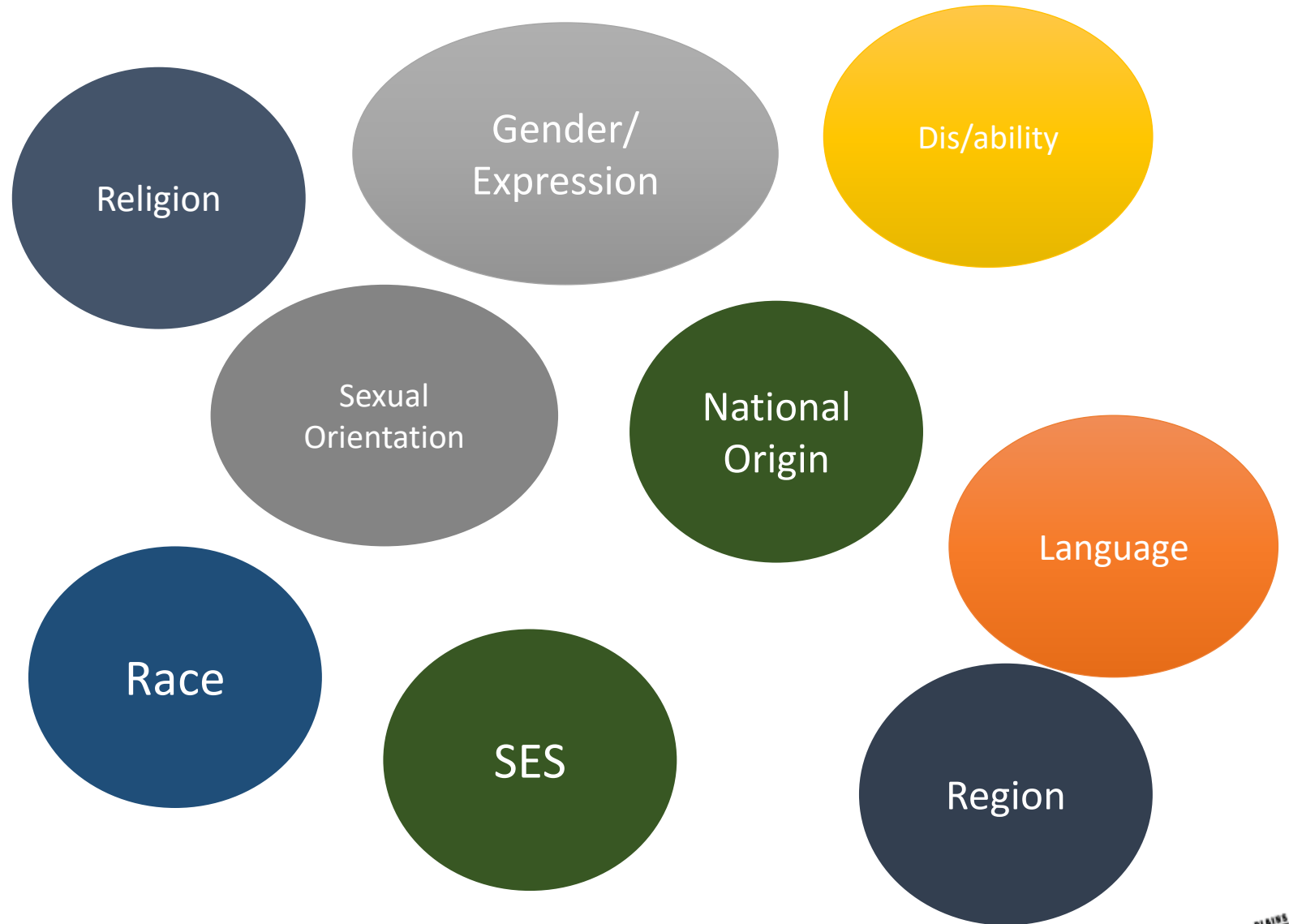
(Trainor, Kim & Skelton, 2020).

Ensuring a future where all students and families benefit from Special Education Begins with accounting for and appreciating the multiple and dynamic cultures of our education systems

Cultures we bring

- *Cultural Histories and Practices*

Cultures Already Established

- *Institutional Cultures*

Cultures We Create

- *The work people to together; the cultural norms, practices created together*

Artiles, 2007: Rogoff, 2003

Intersectional Identities & Intersectionality

Religion

Gender/ Expression

Dis/ability

Sexual Orientation

National Origin

Language

Race

SES

Region

Intersectionality

The social, economic and political ways in which identity-based systems of oppression connect, overlap and influence one another.
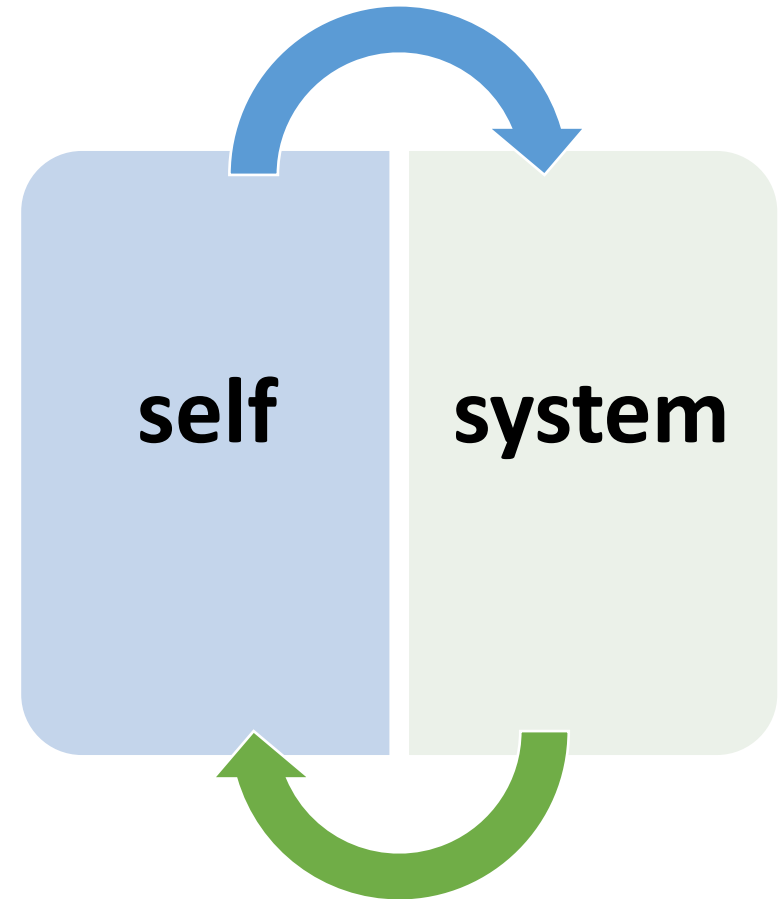
(Crenshaw, 1989)

Racism

Sexism

Classism

Ableism

Linguicism

Heterosexism

BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY

Demonstrating critical consciousness

Cultivates a culture of critical inquiry of both:

self   system

(Hatcher et al. 2010; Rogoff, 2003; Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013)

Considering intersectional approaches in supporting students and families

Intersectional Analysis

Intersectional Advocacy

Intersectional Interventions
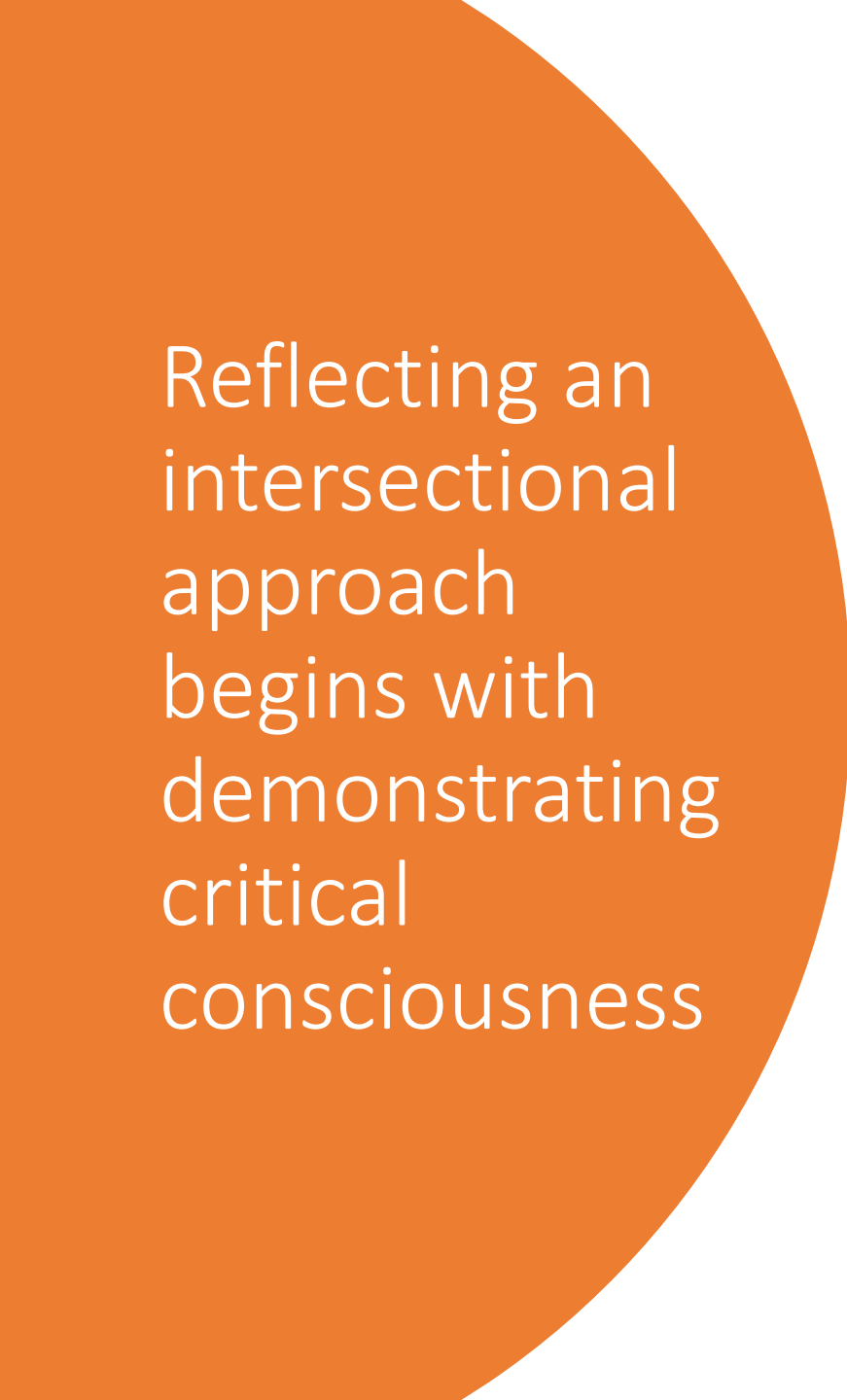
Three strategies to apply an intersectional lens

Intersectional Analysis

- Collaboratively identify and discuss anticipated barriers that may interfere with students' and families' success in school or workplace including making friends/getting to know co-workers, completing assigned responsibilities etc.

Intersectional Advocacy

- If concerns are expressed related to access to needed supports and resources or the violation of students' civil rights as well as disability rights support their advocacy for equitable treatment

Intersectional Interventions

- Supporting supports, training, mentoring and networking opportunities that address multiple identities and issues that maybe common across multiple identities.

Reflecting an intersectional approach begins with demonstrating critical consciousness

- the ability to critically analyze social conditions, including ways in which people who possess multiple and intersecting marginalized identities experience compounding effects of marginalization on both an individual and systemic level.

The following practices demonstrate critical consciousness.

- The ability to examine and explore one's own culture (including family background and professional program), and identify stereotypes, biases, belief and value systems that are representative of the dominant culture in the United States.

- An understanding of how one's own biases and belief system may subtly influence the provision of rehabilitation or educational services and

- The ability to empathize and care for participants from diverse racial/ethnic groups, as well as other marginalized groups.

- Demonstrate flexibility, responsiveness with others, and the willingness to learn from others.

- Exhibit "cultural humility," the ability to regard clients and students as cultural informants.

What does it mean to apply an intersectional?

It means recognizing the whole person!

Multiple identities
Unique lived experiences
Assets, strengths
Barriers to navigate
Risks
Cultural practices and histories
Dynamic and evolving

As a practitioner, where do I start?

Cultivate and demonstrate critical consciousness by acknowledging and being responsive to students'/families' multiple intersecting identities and lived experiences

Recognize there are differences in risk associated with students'/families' intersecting identities

Seek information regarding student/family concerns and challenges related to their disability and their other social identities

Assist students/families in finding resources to address intersecting barriers to access and opportunity related to their disability, race, gender, religious practices, sexuality etc.

Thank you!

Seena M. Skelton
smskelto@iupui.edu

A PROJECT OF GREAT LAKES EQUITY CENTER

glec@iupui.edu
greatlakesequity.org
317-278-3493

IUPUI
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Indianapolis

MIDWEST & PLAINS EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTER