



February 2020

(The electronic version is available for download under Social Justice Publications at bctf.ca.)

Spotlight on Disability Justice

By Nichelle Penney, Committee for Action on Social Justice, Disability Justice Action Group

At the 2019 BCTF AGM, the membership passed a motion creating the newest Action Group on the Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ): Disability Justice (DJ). The committee members, comprised of Lee, Leah Kelley, Nichelle Penney, and Heather Sallows, were selected in August of 2019 and the first official meeting of the committee was held a month later in September. Immediately, the group began to work to develop a mandate for the Action Group (see below) and to lobby CASJ to pass the following two motions as advice for the BCTF Executive Committee:

- *That the BCTF resolve accessibility issues by updating online application processes for committees, positions, and other opportunities, allowing members to save, edit, and repurpose files and providing alternatives to online applications.*
- *That the BCTF designate accessible visitor parking for members with same-floor access to the elevators.*

The first motion grew out of the understanding that the BCTF was moving towards an eco-friendly model of reducing paper usage. However, DJ was also looking to ensure that accessibility did not become an issue in moving to an online model only. People process and express information differently and therefore, should have the opportunity to participate in the manner that best suits their needs. The second motion was to ensure that all members and visitors to the BCTF building have equitable access to the building. Visitor parking is currently housed at the bottom level, with no immediate elevator access—the closest spot located roughly a 150-metre walk away or two sets of stairs.

Both motions were presented to the October Executive Committee Meeting and passed. The BCTF is working to ensure that access is made equitable by giving multiple options for the application process, as well as bringing some of the visitor parking stalls to the same level as the elevator. With this momentum set in motion, DJ has already been in discussions about possible actions for the next set of meetings including a new workshop on Ableism.

Disability Justice Action Group Mandate

- **Disability justice promotes the understanding that full access and participation is impacted by systemic and intersectional barriers experienced by people with disabilities/disabled people and seeks to improve the conditions that compound including being marginalized based upon racism, status of women, LGBTQ2S+, economic injustice, environment and geographical location.**
- **To promote authentic inclusion for diverse learners in public education** by providing or creating resources that support the development of pride in identity, the history of the disability rights movement, a sense of belonging in community, and an understanding of advocacy and self-determination that is essential for disabled people to thrive.
- **To examine current and existing policies that present as barriers to accessibility (including the BCTF)** and take action regarding ableism that may be inherent in attitudes, systems, and even the language used to discuss disability.
- **To eliminate ableism**—with a goal of addressing and acknowledging discrimination against disabled people (ableism) and supporting and aligning the work of BCTF with the history and work of the disability rights movement
- **To promote the awareness and understanding that disability rights are human rights.**
- **To promote the understanding that not all disabilities are visible, and that disability and access needs may shift and fluctuate.**

BCTF Social Justice Program Calendar of Events



February is Black History Month

- **February 6:** International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
- **February 17–21:** BC Heritage Week
- **February 20:** United Nations Social Justice Day
- **February 23–March 1:** Freedom to Read Week
- **February 26:** Pink Shirt Day

The [BCTF Social Justice Calendar of Events](#) lists many important dates to remember each month of the year. (English and French)

Resources



Disability Justice



On the [BCTF website](#) there are links to the following resources:

[Submission to the B.C. Government on Accessibility Legislation](#) [Broadbent Institute](#)

Persons with disabilities

- [4 Ways to be an Ally to People with Invisible Disabilities](#)
- [6 Forms of Ableism We Need to Retire Immediately](#)
- [10 Tips to Tackle Disablist Language-Based Bullying in School \(National Education Union\)](#)
- [10 Ways to Avoid Everyday Ableism](#)
- [15 Common Phrases that are Way More Ableist than You May Realize](#)
- [Casual Ableist Language](#)
- [Disability Sensitivity Training Video](#)
- [Doing Social Justice: 10 Reasons to Give Up Ableist Language](#)
- [Online Resources for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Unboxing Ableism](#)
- [Why we Need to Stop Comparing Mental Illness to Physical Illness](#)

Workshops



Disability Justice



Workshops for Disability Justice

The BCTF is in the process of reviewing and developing Disability Justice workshop(s). Please stay tuned.

Equity and Inclusion



Disability Justice



Black History Month (Resources)

Every year, Canadians are invited to take part in the festivities and events that honour the legacy of black Canadians, past and present, during Black History Month.

This is a time to celebrate the many achievements and contributions of black Canadians who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate, and prosperous nation we know today. It is also an opportunity for the majority of Canadians to learn about the experiences of black Canadians in our society, and the vital role this community has played throughout our shared history.

Opportunities for Members



It will soon be time to check in on the BCTF website for upcoming [opportunities for members](#). Every Spring, positions open up for Social Justice Facilitators and for positions on the advisory Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ). Please check in occasionally for updates.

2019–20 Regional Social Justice Conferences



There are [two Regional Social Justice Conferences](#) happening in the 2019–20 school year made possible in part by [grants](#) from the BCTF.

- **South Island, February 13–14, 2020**
Tapestry—Climate Justice: Climate justice strand at the Tapestry Conference
- **Metro/Fraser Valley, February 29, 2020**
Solidarity in the Face of the Climate Crisis in Cascadia: Intersectional decolonizing and climate change. See call for presenters below.

Grants



Awards



To learn about additional grants, visit the [Social Justice Grants and Funds web page](#) for more details and application forms. There are still limited Local SJ Grants and Ed May Funds available.

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