

You First Podcast Episode 55: Neurodiversity in the Legal Field

Keith Casebonne (00:00:00):

You're listening to You First, the Disability Rights Florida Podcast. In this episode, we talk with AJ Link, Jalyn Radzinski, and Haley Moss about neurodiversity in the legal field.

(00:00:29):

Hey, everyone. I'm Keith.

Maddie Crowley (00:00:30):

I'm Maddie, and we're the hosts of You First. We have an awesome episode in store for you today. We talk with AJ, Jalyn, and Haley about, honestly-

Keith Casebonne (00:00:39):

So much.

Maddie Crowley (00:00:40):

... so much, but the main thread through this whole conversation is their experience as neurodivergent people or people with disabilities who are either actively going to law school or have gone to law school.

Keith Casebonne (00:00:55):

So here's a little background, really, a little background. There's a lot of background. So get comfy. We have some really qualified folks here and we want to tell you all about their qualifications. So here we go. First up is AJ Link is openly autistic. He received his Juris Doctorate from the George Washington University Law School and his LLM in Space Law at the University of Mississippi School of Law, which, by the way, I learned also what LLM means, which is a master of law. So I'd never known that before. So right off the bat, you're learning something, right?

Maddie Crowley (00:01:26):

Mm-hmm. I also didn't know Space Law was a thing.

Keith Casebonne (00:01:29):

I didn't either.

Maddie Crowley (00:01:29):

So it's just the beginning of very good conversation.

Keith Casebonne (00:01:33):

Space Law sounds like a series from the '70s or something, "Tune in for Space Law." He is the Inaugural Director of the Center for Air and Space Law Task Force on inclusion, diversity and equity in aerospace, and an adjunct professor of Space Law at Howard University School of Law. Also Impressive. Just every time I say space, I'm just like, "This is awesome."

(00:01:59):

AJ also works as a research director for the Jus Ad Astra project and previously served as the Communication Director for Astro Access. He's the Space Law and Policy Chair for Black in Astro and was the founding president of the National Disabled Law Students Association. He also helped found the National Disabled Legal Professionals Association and is a commissioner on the American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights. AJ is a policy analyst for the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network. He has been actively involved with disability advocacy in the Washington DC area and nationally within the United States. Next.

Maddie Crowley (00:02:37):

Literally just one of the coolest freaking people in the world.

Keith Casebonne (00:02:42):

Amazing. I love him. He's great.

Maddie Crowley (00:02:44):

All right. Next up, we have Jalyn. Jalyn Radziminski is a Black and Japanese activist from Fort Wayne, Indiana, who advocates for disability and racial justice, especially in the intersection of mental health. Jalyn is dedicated to breaking down barriers for BIPOC disabilities, including voting and civic engagement, and to lifting up community-based and anti-carceral solutions. Jalyn's work is informed by their lived experience as a student and a young professional with mental and physical disabilities navigating voter suppression and over eight years of experience doing advocacy at the intersection of race, mental health, and mass incarceration. Jalyn is the founder of Count Us In, the first Indiana-based non-partisan, nonprofit led by BIPOC and disability community members, which is so cool.

Keith Casebonne (00:03:35):

Oh, yeah.

Maddie Crowley (00:03:35):

They were part of the Access the Vote event that we recently just supported.

Keith Casebonne (00:03:42):

Oh, right, yeah. So cool.

Maddie Crowley (00:03:43):

The Count Us In organization not only increases but intentionally diversifies voter turnout and broader civic engagement through education, empowerment of the community members. Radziminski is also an elected commissioner and vice chair for Indiana Disability Rights Protection and Advocacy Services. Hey.

Keith Casebonne (00:04:08):

Wow.

Maddie Crowley (00:04:08):

Last but certainly not least, at the national level, Jalyn has served as the Director of Engagement for the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, through which they help lead community coalitions, call to action campaigns and grassroots organizing. Internationally, Jalyn has studied and worked in Japan, Germany, and the Netherlands to advocate and learn about human rights. Jalyn graduated from Emory and is pursuing their JD as an evening student at Fordham University School of Law, and most recently, Jalyn was named the 2023 Public Interest Student of the Year in Crowley Scholar in International Human Rights at Fordham Law. Jalyn has also spoken at the White House several times regarding issues surrounding disability, voting, racial justice, and mass incarceration.

Keith Casebonne (00:04:56):

Whew. Wow.

Maddie Crowley (00:04:56):

Literally like legend, like doing the damn thing.

Keith Casebonne (00:05:00):

When did these people have time to be on our podcast?

Maddie Crowley (00:05:03):

No, literally.

Keith Casebonne (00:05:04):

It's incredible. Well, one more, last but not certainly not least, we have Haley Moss. Haley Moss is a lawyer, neurodiversity expert, and the author of four books that guide neurodivergent individuals through professional and personal challenges. She's a consultant at top corporations and nonprofits who seek out her guidance in creating a diverse workplace. Haley is a sought after commentator on disability rights issues, who is best known also as Florida's first openly autistic attorney.

Maddie Crowley (00:05:35):

Whew.

Keith Casebonne (00:05:36):

Yes, indeed. Her latest books include *Great Minds Think Differently*, *Neurodiversity for Lawyers and Other Professionals*, and *The Young Autistic Adults Independence Handbook*. Haley's articles have appeared in media outlets such as the *Washington Post*, *Teen Vogue*, and *Fast Company*, and I think she was also just recently voted top 30 under 30 in *Forbes* for the Miami region. Congratulations on that one.

Maddie Crowley (00:05:58):

Another legend on the pod.

Keith Casebonne (00:06:00):

Indeed. Oh, yeah.

Maddie Crowley (00:06:01):

As y'all can tell, these folks are literally international leaders on disability law, intersectionality, all of these topics that we're going to get into, and we had such a good time talking with them about their experiences. I personally learned so much from them, and you will all love this conversation. So let's get into it. Here is AJ, Jalyn, and Hailey.

(00:06:31):

Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for being on the You First Podcast today. I am so incredibly excited to be talking with you all. If you would take a moment to introduce yourself, provide a visual description, pronouns, et cetera, as you're interested. Just tell us a little bit about you and how you came to where we are today.

AJ Link (00:06:54):

This is AJ. I am a Black dude with a beard. I'm finally getting a lot of gray, so that's cool. I've got on a black hat with pink accent. It shows the Seattle Mariners logo, and I've got on a black shirt and a gold necklace with Norma on it. That is my wife. Then there is a gallery behind me. One of the things is a sticker chart. It's one of the first things me and my wife did when we met each other was have a sticker chart to see who was better at doing things. I've been doing disability advocacy for a while now. I actually have known Haley and Jalyn for a while now. I got into doing self-advocacy stuff in law school. I helped found a few organizations, and I'm just really excited to be here and talk disability with some of my favorite homies.

Jalyn Radziminski (00:07:46):

I can go next. Hi, everyone. This is Jalyn Radziminski. They, them pronouns. I'm a Black and Asian person with light skin and I now have short, curly hair. A little tired of looking today because school is a lot. I'm a law student. I'm wearing a cozy sweater to stay comfy as I study and a long sleeve green shirt, and I'm just standing or sitting in front of a window and white wall background.

(00:08:14):

Again, I'm Jalyn, and I'm currently a law student at Fordham Law. I'm a second year evening student, which means that I work during the day and I go to school at night. So I've worked at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law for the past three years as the Director of Engagement, really just making sure peers in the disability communities' voices are heard and law and policy and just organizing as well in campaigns. I'm the founder of Count Us In, also known as Count Us Indiana, where it is the only, not only in Indiana, but in the US BIPOC femme disability led organization that focuses on not only increasing voter turnout and civic engagement, but also diversifying it to ensure that our voices are centered and heard.

(00:09:06):

You'll probably hear a lot more about me, but all of my work really intersects with human rights, disability justice, racial justice, and abolition type of work, and civic engagement, but that's me in a nutshell, and I'm just eager for the conversation today.

Haley Moss (00:09:22):

I guess that means I am the last of our panelists to introduce myself. This is Haley Moss. I am a White woman with red hair. I have bangs. I am wearing a black T-shirt, and I am in my dad's office and he has all sorts of cool hats and a traffic light and some guitars behind me as well. I am an attorney, an author, an artist, and I enjoy advocating and educating about neurodiversity, autism, and all that stuff. So if you didn't know, I'm very proudly autistic and I'm just excited for the conversation to have with everybody here and to see how we can continue to amplify, uplift, and make a bigger impact together.

(00:10:01):

I am also on the board of Disability Rights Florida and making sure that the voice of disabled folks is represented there whenever I can. It's something I take to heart. So it's really great to get to represent all sorts of different aspects of who I am while being here. So looking forward to a great conversation.

Keith Casebonne (00:10:17):

It's so great to meet all of you. I'm really looking forward to this wonderful conversation as well, and it's a real honor to have you all here on the podcast. So the topic today is neurodiversity, neurodivergence. There's many ways you can say it. There's many things it means, right? It means something different to everybody. Maybe let's just go around and each talk about what to you is neurodiversity and how do you connect and identify with it.

Jalyn Radziminski (00:10:42):

This is Jalyn. I could speak first on that. So just generally, I enter the community through disability justice lens. So you'll often hear me refer to myself as disabled, but I do understand neurodiversity. It's really just, at least to me, it's challenging the concept of neurodivergent and neurotypical, and it challenges the misconception that there's a dichotomy in that. So for me, I identify with neurodiverse community more so by identifying as disabled just because that is the way that I found the movement.

(00:11:20):

For me personally, have always had disabilities, but I also developed some over time, and I don't quite ... I know a lot of times people talk about neurodiversity through medical type of labels like ADHD, bipolar, dyslexia. I don't quite subscribe to using those titles for myself. However, I was giving medical labels in college, so I guess there's that, but I also understand people like myself usually don't get access to different support systems like accommodations until late college or they don't at all.

(00:11:56):

Again, I don't subscribe to those systems, but I've encountered them, and that's how I've entered the community with that in addition to just the disability justice space. I guess just for me in how I operate by saying disabled, I just process information differently and at different speeds. A lot of times people ask me, "How do you do all this stuff?" Honestly, some days my brain goes a thousand miles an hour and I can make all these cool concepts and ideas and activism events and another day it's just, "Nope, I'm tired now." So it shuts off. So that's just how I connect with the community, an example the way it manifests in my life and just acknowledging that disability and neurodiversity has an intersection there and everyone enters the community in different ways.

Haley Moss (00:12:45):

This is Haley, and I think that's a great point about how everybody gets to this community in a different way. I feel very privileged that I was identified as autistic as a child primarily because I was a late speaker. In the '90s, that is enough to be a cause for concern for my family and other families as well. So I very much recognize that privilege of that this is something I've known about myself, but I never really intended as a younger person to get involved in the community.

(00:13:12):

The way that I had learned about neurodivergence and autism in particular for me was this is something that you can share with people when you feel ready or that it's necessary in order to get support and accommodations, but I actually fell into autistic and later more broadly disability and neurodiverse advocacy.

(00:13:32):

As a teenager, I was invited by some of the folks that had originally identified me and worked with my family to speak at a conference. I was maybe 13. They wanted a young person's perspective and particularly this perspective of a young girl, and I was happy to do it. It was an excuse to go to Orlando. It was an excuse to go to Disney World, and it changed my perspective greatly because it was the first time I had connected with autistic college students with adults, and I got to recognize what might be possible.

(00:13:59):

Of course, my views on neurodiversity and autism and whatnot have changed from being in the community for so long. It's something that's very interesting for me. Having to reckon with the things that I thought as a teenager are not things that I believe as I am approaching

30 years old. That is something that comes with time, experience, and meeting people who have very different life experiences than you do, which is also why I am glad that this community is so intersectional and it really is something that we could approach from so many different lenses.

(00:14:28):

When I talk about neurodiversity more broadly, I always say that this is something that encompasses all of us, not just whether or not you are disabled or non-disabled. It's not that simple because every single one of us has a unique brain. We're not robots, we're not computers. The way that we experience the world from processing information to sensory experiences, to all these things is very different and wholly unique.

(00:14:51):

A lot of the times whenever I talk about how our brains are processing information, I talk about when we're all in the same room and there are people in that room who will always think it's very cold, and there are always people who will think it's very warm no matter what the temperature or the thermostat says. None of those people are right or wrong because that is exactly what their body and their brain is telling them is going on in that room, and you're just adapting based on the information you're receiving.

(00:15:14):

Yes, there are people who are neurodivergent and fall under these different labels and things like that and also, people, if your brain works outside of what we consider to be the tradition since societal expectations, you're probably neurodivergent is what I tell people since it's not meant to be a gatekeeping term or definition. So that's a little bit about my feelings on it and how I came to this.

AJ Link (00:15:36):

This is AJ, and I think Haley and Jalyn have both provided really good examples of how, I guess, complicated the relationship can be. I would describe my relationship with the neurodiversity movement as complicated. I think, to Haley's point, neurodiversity is everyone. I think sometimes the language gets thrown around like neurodiversity means that you are not neurotypical. Similar to Jalyn, I come at it from a perspective of disability justice and identifying as autistic and disabled.

(00:16:12):

For me, it's really frustrating seeing how people have latched on to neurodiversity as a phrase that's almost been used as a substitute for talking about disability. I know that not every neurodivergent person identifies as disabled, which is a whole another complicating factor. A lot of people who maybe fall under the neurodivergent umbrella for whatever reason or self-identify that way oftentimes push back against being identified as disabled, and they use being neurodivergent and the neurodiversity movement to separate themselves out from other disabled folks, which, again, is really complicated.

(00:16:54):

So for me, it's always difficult as someone who gets almost siloed into doing neurodiversity talks, and I'm sure both Haley and Jalyn both experienced this, being the neurodivergent person on the neurodiversity panel when they want to talk just about neurodiversity and neurodivergence, but I'm sitting there wanting to talk about disability justice as a whole because it's all interconnected and our collective access and collective liberation is all bundled together.

(00:17:27):

So for me, I really appreciate the neurodiversity movement. I appreciate all the advocates that are making sure that neurodivergent inclusion is a thing, especially for folks who have mental disabilities, cognitive disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, all the kinds of brain disabilities, I guess. I still just have really complicated feelings about how a lot of people both outside and inside the movement are using neurodiversity as a way to separate out other disabled folks and people in the disabled community and not have to do the work of really inclusive disability justice.

Maddie Crowley (00:18:08):

This is Maddie, and I really appreciate y'all sharing your perspectives here. I was curious if we could take a pause and ask y'all to speak a little bit more to that because I think as y'all laid out, when you're talking about neurodiversity, it's not necessarily, like you said, AJ, people that just identify with having autism or ADHD or whatever it may be. It's the fact that everybody has a different mind and way of processing things. I'm curious if y'all could speak a little bit to what you're talking about as far as how there is some separation or between the neurodiversity movement or disability justice, et cetera, and how those ... I don't know. I feel like the disability community has this tendency of and beyond the disability community of creating these categories of who fits into what circle of identity. I think broader disability justice accepts everybody into that community and into that movement towards disability justice. So I'm curious if y'all could take a moment to further explain what you mean through talking about this.

Haley Moss (00:19:27):

This is Haley. I'm happy to chat a little bit about this complicated relationship and even touching on something that AJ mentioned about how a lot of neurodivergent people might not also identify as disabled in the way that we silo those communities like you were saying, Maddie. I think that's really interesting. I think there's two major things at play here. I think there is what happens with well-meaning allies who do the work in things like neurodiversity and employment. I also think there's a whole silo of internalized ableism that neurodivergent people experience as to why they feel uncomfortable perhaps identifying with disability or why that people fall into what is sometimes known as neurodiversity lite or why the disability community and the neurodiversity community might be sometimes very separated.

(00:20:11):

So I get to do a lot of corporate education, and something that comes up a lot is the way that neurodiversity and neurodivergence is talked about as it's always reduced simply to autistic people with less support needs or that are perceived as having fewer needs, ADHD and learning disabilities, because they're the ones that are viewed as desirable in some way because they have superpowers or because they're going to be super productive, they're going to be hyperfocused on everything, they're going to be inherently loyal to the company and whatnot is we're touting all these benefits that sometimes forget and ignore the humanity of neurodivergent people.

(00:20:48):

I say every time, if you're just going for the super productive, super loyal person, you're forgetting this person has feelings and also they are human. If you expect me to be at that level of performance, I'm going to burn out. It's that simple, just like any other person if you're expecting that level from them. It also creates more stigma when this happens for people who have mental health disabilities, psychiatric conditions, people with intellectual disabilities who simply don't get the same opportunities.

(00:21:14):

Each of us on this panel has been to or is currently in law school, and that's an immense privilege of itself that's so often denied to our neuro kin and other disabled folks, especially with intellectual disabilities, even getting through things like the bar admissions process with a mental health disability. We could be here all day long talking about the different roadblocks just in that. So a lot of the times that happens with that privilege.

(00:21:38):

Then there's the internalized ableism of that people, I think, especially if they do have the ability to mask or pass or anything like that, that they fall into disabled but not really or neurodivergent but I can pass as neurotypical, therefore it's okay. I say this very openly because that's something that I felt a lot of pressure to do in my life and something I used to identify very greatly with as a younger person before I met people within my community.

(00:22:05):

As a young teenager, I often thought, "Oh, autistic but not really," because the images of autism I had didn't sound or look or feel like me. They didn't feel like people I knew because of what my limited experience at the time was. That was a form of internalized ableism is, "Oh, I can't identify with this experience," and now I know I have so much more in common with people who do have intellectual disabilities who might also have a co-occurring seizure disorder, who might be non-speaking than I ever would've thought that I would have when I was 13 years old.

(00:22:38):

I say that very openly because, again, this is a learning process for all of us. Not all of us come to disability rights and disability justice out the door knowing everything. It's disingenuous to say that we do, but this internalized ableism thing of I'm not disabled enough or that being disabled is for people who have more needs or whatnot is something that I think is very much embedded into the community in some way, and it's also things

that I think that we've learned throughout our lives from the non-disabled people around us because you are somehow praised or somehow expected to assimilate at such a high level, especially if you're entering a field like law.

(00:23:17):

I'm not sure if it's as coherent as I want it to be when I try to say this out loud, but I hope that it makes sense where I'm trying to go with this, but just some of my feelings on this topic while we are having this discussion.

AJ Link (00:23:30):

This is AJ. I think ... I'm just laughing because just a lot of the advocacy I do is following Haley, which is so amazing. I love being able to ride Haley's amazing coattails. I think it's really complicated because you don't want to tell people they can't identify in a certain way or self-identify. I think to the question about silos and marking and having demarcations of what is and isn't disabled or what kind of disability is, to Jalyn's point about diagnoses and pathologization, still remnants of a real medical model of disability. We don't want to erase or not acknowledge that everyone's body mind is different. That's part of neurodiversity, but understanding that we are not fully, our medical diagnosis, the way we are pathologized into being disabled, this disability from an identity perspective is so much more complicated than that.

(00:24:39):

I think Haley touched on it, and Jalyn touched on it when they were talking about their experience in college and higher education. The way you identify as disabled is deeply impacted by the way the world treats you and the way that you interact with the world. So when you talk about neurodiversity lite or not disabled enough, that means that it's the world impacting how you view yourself. It's really empowering, at least it was for me, to understand that I can take control of how I describe my relationship with everything else, and that for me is how I found my identity as an autistic person and as a disabled person because that is my relationship to the world.

(00:25:26):

A lot of people, because I've been to law school because I do so many different things, and Haley and Jalyn have both talked about this, they don't view you as disabled, but my disability is in relationship to what happens when I'm not doing podcasts and presentations and conferences and how all of that deeply impacts me when no one else is around. I joke about it a lot, and my wife giggles when this happens because sometimes it happens when she's around when people say, "I'm not that disabled," or, "I'm not that autistic," because she's at home with me every day when I very much am, and she has to experience that.

(00:26:08):

So her perspective on how I navigate the world as an autistic person has been shaped by her ability to be around me more. So when people project their connotations or stereotypes of what it means to be autistic, to Haley's point, just like a super computer

White dude, that is them enforcing their view of disability on me, and for a lot of disabled folks, they internalize that ableism.

(00:26:36):

Again, for me, it's just really empowering to realize that I can push back against that, that I can declare what my own relationship to disability is and what to autism is and what neurodivergence is, and I can own those relationships and those identities. For me, that's been really empowering. I think if you get really into disability justice and disability theory, that's centric to it, being able to fully embody and express your wholeness as a person and your relationship to the rest of the world.

Jalyn Radziminski (00:27:07):

I really love, and this is Jalyn speaking, I really love everything that AJ and Haley shared because I resonate with it a lot, and it's things that I've had to navigate as well just like the contentions of internalized ableism and masking and the fact that society and the media pushes down your throat some prototype of what disability, what neurodiversity is supposed to look like, and because we're all individual human beings, even if people are, the medical model pushes a certain label on someone, people with that same label could be experiencing the world in so many different ways.

(00:27:44):

I think for me, I think the different dichotomies that have impacted me most personally and I often think about outside of these talks, like AJ noted, I love that point as well, is just the internalized ableism pressure in that career that I'm pursuing like the law. I did not get access to accommodations and healthcare for what I was navigating for such a long time because as a Black Japanese person in society, I already was programmed to force myself to try to fit in as much as I could over time, and a lot of things were hidden. People didn't know certain things that I was experiencing and constantly having to power through to overcome.

(00:28:26):

I think that creates a lot of difficulties of just getting access to support and really more importantly, access to the community because I feel like finding community like this is very validating. For me, I think another complication is how we were explaining how we found community in different ways. At first, I sought out the mental health community, but then there still is people try to separate mental health and those type of conditions from disability. The whole notion that Haley and AJ was explaining, the concept that you could possibly not be disabled enough, it's a lot of unpacking there, I think, but also even finding disability rights, I quickly figured out people who look like me are not included in those.

(00:29:16):

So that's how I ended up landing in the disability justice community because it acknowledges Black and other indigenous people of color. It acknowledges queerness and it acknowledges the impacts of immigration. So that's how I ended up navigating those complications just because there's so many barriers already for people to find the

community in general, especially if you're not a cis White person, I felt the most safe trying to pursue disability justice communities, quite honestly. Even in some disability spaces, you could share an experience that is very much a disability experience, and some people will deny you just because of the fact that you're not a White person experiencing this. That's part of it was a lot of just seeking out community, and a lot of it was just doors being shut to me, but those are some of the nuances I feel like that some people also have to navigate when finding disability and neurodiverse spaces.

Keith Casebonne (00:30:15):

Thanks for all those really great insights and perspectives on this. One of the things that I kept thinking about during somebody else's answers was, God forbid, someone learns what, quote, "autism" is from a movie where it's portrayed because it's never portrayed accurately, and that's one subtype. That's one very narrow possibility of what that means to be on the spectrum. So I was thinking about when I was younger and the movie Rainman came out and then suddenly everybody thought, "Oh, is that what autism is?" No, no, no, it's not. That is a really awful single-sided perspective of that, but unfortunately, that's where so many people get these perspectives from and certainly colors people's opinions in very much the wrong way and expect something from an individual who identifies as having autism in a very limited fashion. So just some extra thoughts there. So let's turn our attention to the fact that all three of you are either studying law, practicing law, and/or have a law degree. So let's talk a little bit about your experiences. What is the experience like for you as it relates to your disability or neurodiversity, and how do your identities even benefit you maybe in your profession?

AJ Link (00:31:33):

This is AJ. I'll go because I think I'm the only one who's never going to practice law amongst the three of us. So law school was really important for me in helping me develop into an advocate. I never wanted to be a practicing attorney. I went to law school to be an advocate and a lobbyist, which is what I do now. For me, it was a chance to learn how to navigate hierarchy and bureaucracy and become better at doing advocacy work, and it gave me the opportunity to figure out who I wanted to be as an advocate.

(00:32:09):

For me, the law school experience, I came in not with that fully formed, but with the beginnings of that outlook was really fun and amazing and cool. I tell people this all the time, especially people who talk about how stressful law school was, for me, it wasn't any of those things because I didn't care about my grades. I didn't care about getting jobs or internships because I was doing other things and working on other projects, and that's super privileged and fortunate, I will acknowledge that, but it was so much fun getting to get the administration to care about disability, to start a disability focus group, to get to create a disability nonprofit focused on disabled law.

(00:32:52):

All of that shit was so fun and cool for me, and I thought it was beautiful. I really try to encourage people to understand that just being neurodivergent doesn't mean one thing. Attending law school doesn't mean one thing either. You don't have to be the person who's in the library for however many hours people stay in there. I could probably count the number of times I went into the library on a couple fingers. Mostly I went to the library for the free scanning.

(00:33:19):

I think for me, understanding systemic ableism from a legal perspective, understanding how the law has historically been used to harm and hurt disabled people so much more than it has been used to help disabled people, I know that we often celebrate section 504, which is the 50th anniversary this year, section 504, the Rehabilitation Act or the ADA Amendments, we celebrate those things or even Olmstead and RIP to ... Oh, man, I'm blanking on it. Louis, Louis, I can never remember her name. Jalyn, please.

Jalyn Radziminski (00:33:54):

Lois Curtis. I got you.

AJ Link (00:33:55):

Lois Curtis. I was going to say Louis Curtis. Lois Curtis. Those are all amazing, but usually, the law has been used to sterilize disabled folks, to institutionalize disabled folks, to murder disabled folks, and learning that history really solidified that. I appreciate the disability rights movement. I appreciate the tools that I have that come from the disability rights movement. I appreciate that I'm able to navigate disability rights and do that professionally, but it really solidified that I wanted to do disability justice and disability rights work was not for me. That's not where my heart is, where my soul is, where my passion is. So all that's to say my law school experience was really important in formulating that outlook on how I do my advocacy now.

Haley Moss (00:34:38):

This is Haley. So I did go to law school. I think I was the first group to graduate. So my law school experience was a little bit different than AJ's because his organizations did not exist while I was in law school, which I am upset about because when we wanted to have disability anything, it was shot down, and I didn't know many disabled or neurodivergent students when I was in law school, that immediately there was this navigating the system that felt very daunting.

(00:35:10):

I remember my first year of law school, there was a blind student in my section, and everyone was always in a bad mood about this student because they were always late. I realized later on when I thought about it, they were probably late because things weren't accessible. Of course, the student ended up dropping out by the end of the first semester or second semester.

(00:35:35):

The more I thought about this, I was like, "This isn't the student's fault. This is how much is inaccessible here at my law school." I had inaccessible things in law school. So I was denied any accommodation I applied for because you never seem to have enough documentation even if you had a childhood diagnosis. I know a lot of us talk about what a privilege that is. That's something that was never quite enough to have something from the age of three to the age of 20 because you didn't have something when you turned 21. It was just a wild experience.

(00:36:03):

So you're knuckling your way through, you're fighting this systemic ableism that AJ mentioned as best you can, and at the same time, all your peers think you're getting any accommodation under the sun that's possible and that you have an unfair advantage while you're navigating law school trying to survive. So my law school experience is a little bit of that, that I was extremely privileged and grateful for the experiences that I've had while also having a deep criticism of how inaccessible law school and the legal profession as a whole is to disabled and neurodivergent students or prospective students or former students for that matter.

(00:36:37):

When I got to practice, I think the most interesting thing is I had the opposite experience of so many that I know. I had found the best allies in practice to be parents of disabled and neurodivergent kids, most of the people that I've worked for or have worked closely with or had good relationships with or people who had personal experience somehow. Maybe it was rooted in wanting to do good. Maybe it was tokenism. Maybe it was just wanting to make the world a better place for their children down the line.

(00:37:06):

Either way, I was extremely grateful for this because it meant that I was working with people who wanted to do the right thing. It meant that they were often granting me accommodations and different things that I didn't want or need, which was definitely interesting not having to advocate for myself constantly. It was a nice break from it, but it also meant that I was being stereotyped and pigeonholed in ways I didn't always feel comfortable with.

(00:37:26):

I also realized, for different reasons than AJ, that disability rights law wasn't the thing that I wanted to do. I thought that was what I wanted to do at first, and I had the opposite problem. So I worked in it very briefly during one of my summer internships, and I realized I had felt too empathetic. I know a lot of the times when we talk about autism and stereotypes, we talk about how people are just very apathetic, they don't care. I cared too much about the people whose cases I would work on, and I wouldn't be able to sleep at night. I wouldn't have a work-life balance. I wouldn't have anything, really, because I'd just be concerned. I'd be thinking, "Oh, my gosh. Is this client who's getting evicted? Is she sleeping at night? Is she having a seizure? Is she okay?" I'm still thinking about some of these folks years later, and that's not a healthy balance for me.

(00:38:14):

So of course, I did the complete opposite when I did get to practice and I went to go represent corporations and hospitals and whatnot because I don't care what they do after 5:00, which was my take on it is you know what? I know that if you've gone to law school, you've already heard that corporations are people too, but they're not people the same way that a living, breathing human being is that you're worried about their health, their mental health, their wellbeing, their living situation, all sorts of other factors.

(00:38:37):

So that was something I always thought about when it came to figure out what I wanted to do. Then I realized I was better suited to do advocacy and education. It's something I found a lot more enjoyable, and that made more of an impact than representing hospital systems or doing some really cool anti-terrorism work that I really enjoyed as well, but there's so many different obstacles within practice, whether it's getting involved with your bar association, whether it's proving that you're competent to do the same work as others.

(00:39:04):

It's just a very difficult system to navigate, and there's a reason that I always tell and point out to lawyers in particular why the rates of disclosure for lawyers with disabilities are historically as low as they are, and that doesn't even sort by different subtypes of disability or neurodiversity or anything, but historically, our disclosure rates are much lower than the general population or anything else, and people always go, "Why?" I'm like, "Do you want to unpack this because we could be here all day just talking about why lawyers with disabilities simply do not get the support they need, nor are they even disclosing, especially if they're going into private practice?"

(00:39:39):

Just a lot to unpack here, but I am extremely grateful to have a legal education to be able to approach things from a legal standpoint, but I understand how difficult that is and how much privilege it takes just to even survive that.

Jalyn Radziminski (00:39:54):

This is Jalyn. I thought of this question before joining you all today, and I think it still triggers the response of this is such a stressful question because I'm currently in the midst of trying to survive law school as a second year. What AJ and Haley said is very accurate. I'm actually in the process of fighting for my accommodations now, and I resonate a lot to what Haley said too because I had accommodations, like I explained earlier, throughout undergrad, and I guess I'm not a traditional student, so my experience is probably niche as well because I took a few years after undergrad to work, and my background is in community organizing and activism. So I had quite a few years to do that.

(00:40:46):

Then now I'm in law school but as an evening student. So I work full-time for a disability rights organization, and part-time, I do a lot of movement building around that intersection with voting and civic engagement. So balancing a job and a half while going to school, and

it's really ... I don't want to sound negative, but I just want to be honest, it can be a really soul-crushing experience even if you have all these resources. Jalyn, you work for a discipline organization, why don't you have accommodations? I'm like, "Y'all, this isn't possible." I had these things that can prove for the past almost 10 years now, but no, it's outdated now. I don't believe you anymore. You have to go pay thousands of dollars to prove your disability. So it's a lot. It's a lot to juggle. It's a very demanding space and it triggers flareups for me, honestly, but I stick with it because I'm 80% sure I don't really want to touch litigation. Everyone tells me to try it at least once. So I might maybe, I don't know.

(00:41:54):

I really am here just to improve my advocacy, honestly, and be able to better understand these oppressive systems like how legislation works, how policies work, how this bureaucracy works, just like how AJ was describing because, honestly, I was just sick and tired of all the shenanigans going on in the world, and just as a grassroots organizer, I was really trying to figure out how to better sharpen my toolbox and strategies because the laws and policies were written without us in the room, and also to oppress a lot of people.

(00:42:29):

So just every day I grapple with that every day I'm in the classroom and having to debate our very existence to peers who have no stake and do not identify with any race or disability minority at all, just saying really ableist and racist arguments. So there's a lot of angles where when you're coming into law school with this lens and these little experiences and this advocacy and organizing experience, it can be hard the day-to-day of just arguing for my simple existence to just having accents to actually survive the classroom.

(00:43:06):

I think Haley alluded to it too, but just why a lot of people don't even either give up trying to get accommodations because it's impossible or they don't want them because when it's time to take up the bar and people have discouraged me now, I don't think I will be the type that can survive without accommodations, which is why I'm even trying, but some people say, "Don't do it," because then they'll mark your record and then you won't be able to practice even if you pass the bar because you won't be healthy and fit enough to do this type of work.

(00:43:33):

So there's a lot. It's a complicated space. It's a challenging space, but because I'm hardheaded and stubborn and want to advocate for people, I'm trying to just figure it out day by day. It just shows if they're trying this hard to keep us out, we must really be needed here. So that's my unfiltered thoughts as someone who is currently stressed in law school figuring it out.

Maddie Crowley (00:43:57):

This is Maddie. I have so many thoughts listening to y'all talk about this, and I'm so fired up by y'all's investment in your advocacy and dedication towards disability justice and taking

care of your community. Truthfully, until right now, I've always, this is just bringing my personal life into it as I identify with both disability and neurodiversity too, I'm like, "What is on the horizon?" I didn't even know you could go to law school without taking the bar. I'm like, "I'm never doing that," and now y'all unlock stuff things. Y'all really unlock stuff things, so stay tuned, but no, I really cherish everything that y'all just shared. I think just the value of doing things to better your advocacy and what y'all named as far as how you went to law school knowing you weren't going to practice law or went to law school thinking you're going to practice law and then decided not to or not do litigation, whatever it was.

(00:45:10):

I think talking about that is really important because I think when people think about law school, especially folks with disabilities like Jalyn, like you said, the idea of going back to school for me and the amount of flareups that I would have is just simply unimaginable. Again, there is that investment in the community of passing the baton and taking up that, I don't know, responsibility and love for your community.

(00:45:36):

Just the second thing that I was really sitting with is how I'm so excited to make everybody within the NDRN, which is the National Disability Rights Network, listen to this episode because I think there's a lot of folks like y'all talked about, even well-meaning people who get into disability law may not even recognize the barriers that exist for students or folks within the law profession who have disabilities or experience neurodiversity in a way that wouldn't allow them accommodations or anything. So I think it's also accountability for groups that do disability related law to make sure that they're not enforcing the same stereotypes and barriers for folks interested in this work.

(00:46:28):

Anyways, y'all really got me fired up and I really, really appreciate everything that you shared. So much value in that 10 minutes, anyway, the whole episode, but in that vein, like you said, and you named issues with accommodations, barriers, if you do want to practice law to being on this blacklist of people knowing that you have a disability, if you use accommodations for the bar who even if you do pass, you're known as not being, quote, unquote, "fit" to do the job. There's a lot of barriers and stigma that I think people are trying to assess maybe if they go into this work. If you could give advice to yourself, your younger self, other young disabled and neurodivergent folks that are maybe interested in law or similar professions, what would you tell them and what encouragement or advice would you offer them?

Haley Moss (00:47:26):

This is Haley. I'm happy to talk about this, especially because we brought up the bar. I took the bar exam and you brought up a really great point, and I know Jalyn did too about how the accommodations thing. So I only went against accommodations on the bar because I didn't have the history because my law school denied me and I was like, "Great, I don't want to go through this and have to appeal this and then I'll never take the bar." I also had it

very deeply ingrained in me is, "You're taking the bar because you went through three years of this. You're finishing the job."S

(00:47:52):

So I do understand, especially now, something that's really strange that happens is people ask how many times it took me to pass the bar, and I say one because it's true. I feel very fortunate. Then people try to invalidate that by asking if I got accommodations, and here's the funny thing about the bar, and this is the thing that I wish I had known from the beginning. Not everybody passes it right away. There are many reasons why because the bar doesn't really measure if you're going to be a good lawyer. It is something that was born out of sexism and racism and classism and all the things and essentially does not belong.

(00:48:25):

So I have lots of feelings about the bar and I wish I had known that going into it of, "Hey, this is not the thing that determines your worth. It is not the thing that determines whether or not you're going to be good and belong in this profession." I also want young prospective and current law students to know especially is there is a place in this profession or this industry for you somewhere. It does not have to be in litigation. It can be transactional. It could be in lobbying like AJ or community organizing like Jalyn. There's so many great places or you can just be transactional and not have to interact with people all that much.

(00:48:58):

There's so much great stuff that happens and the amount of doors and privilege that a law degree carries and opens is something that I'm extremely grateful for. Having gone into law school as a young person, I went in right when I turned 21. I have a very different take, and looking back I wish I had been kinder to 21-year-old me, and it's very unfair that you were expected to advocate for yourself the way a lawyer will do when you are a student who is learning how to do and develop some of those advocacy skills. It's just presumed as a young disabled person that you already have them, that you know how to fight every system, that you know how to advocate for yourself better than lawyers who've been practicing for longer than you've been alive have been doing.

(00:49:41):

You don't have to have all the answers, and it's okay if you don't have all the answers, and don't be afraid to find community. Like I said, I'm still very bitter in my own way, but also very grateful that things like the National Disabled Law Students Association did not exist when I was in law school. I wish it did because it would've been very nice to have some community. I feel lucky that the community and support that I had came from home. It came from my family, but I know that's not the case for everybody. So finding community when you're in law school or looking to do that is huge. Don't be afraid to ask the difficult questions of admissions departments and administrations of if they are doing anything for their disabled students, what they have available to them, how connected even they are to the undergraduate and other graduate programs and campuses and their work in disability, right to justice, and disability resources because in my law school, it was separate from the undergrad campus and that was big because the law school disability coordinator was not as well-informed perhaps as the undergrad might've been.

(00:50:39):

My undergraduate institution had a very robust disability resource center and programming, while my law school did not in the same vein. So it's things that I wish we didn't have to ask these questions and we didn't have to think about it so thoroughly, but that's the advice that I would give and just be kind to yourself because this stuff is hard. I'm not saying that it's not hard for everybody because anyone who's gone to law school or is going to law school will tell you that it's its own brand of challenging and it will challenge you both personally, professionally, and as a human being, but for disabled and neurodivergent students, there's just those extra layers of challenges that is hard no matter what, but this is just you are dealing with stuff that you shouldn't have to deal with and please be kind to yourself in that process.

AJ Link (00:51:24):

This is AJ. I love going after Haley because Haley is so much more polished than me. It's a good balance. I would tell anyone to not be afraid to just completely <censored> shit up. I would tell myself that and do it even more and not care about the consequences. I know a lot of times in the legal profession, especially, students are threatened with professional consequences and you're going to have this on your record, the administration's going to prevent you from getting admission to the bar, all these different types of things, and I would say not really that they hold these things over your head as if they're the arbiters of who you get to be in your career and in your life, and it's simply not true.

(00:52:08):

I think for me, it's been so empowering to realize that the more advocacy that I do and the more that I push against people, even board of law examiners who aren't giving accommodations, calling them out, having meetings with them, writing advocacy letters, and putting them on blast for the things that they're doing to students, and test takers, the more you do that, the more people you will have reach out to you to say, "Thank you," to say, "You have inspired me to do this," to build the movement, to push for a more equitable and accessible legal profession.

(00:52:41):

I think a lot of times students, and it is totally okay, students are just like, "I want to go to class. I want to get the best grade possible and I want to get out and take the bar." Again, I would just say you don't have to do it that way. It's not required. It's not mandatory, obligatory. Those are the words I was looking for. You can do your law school career and your professional career however you want. Just because most people don't do it that way or it hasn't been done that way or whatever doesn't mean that you can't do it, and to not be afraid of that.

(00:53:13):

I know a lot of people are afraid of not having the security of a job right when you graduate or having the best internship, your 1L or 2L summer. I think that's completely legitimate. I would just like to be the voice that says it's okay if you don't do any of those things and you can do something amazing and fantastic and different, and that's okay, and you'll almost

always find support for what you do because there are other people who feel just like you and they aren't represented and they don't have a voice or they don't feel senior or whatever other body centric analogy that I want to use, which is something I'm trying to work on myself, but I would say that. Don't be afraid to be different, to be unique, and to do it the way that you want to do it.

Jalyn Radziminski (00:53:54):

My brain's spinning because I was like, "Oh, what good advice I'm taking from these two as well?" This is Jalyn speaking. I guess one would be the same way where Haley was saying that the bar doesn't indicate how great of a lawyer you'll be. I'll also say your grades. I'll talk to people who are also perfectionistic like me because when someone goes, "Grades aren't everything," I'm like, "Whatever, dude. I'm about to go get all A's." See, that's the point you go to this school, you're like, "Oh, this is unaccessible." Go ahead, Haley.

Haley Moss (00:54:27):

That was me as well, that you're like, "Yeah, it's not that important, but also I need to do exceptional," especially I think as students with disabilities, you have this thing ingrained in you that you have to be exceptional no matter what and transcend it. So I feel that in my soul go off.

Jalyn Radziminski (00:54:42):

Yes. So I'm speaking to the other perfectionists. You really don't have to get all As. Don't do that to yourself because the thing is I've had some classes where I've tried to read everything and I got nine an A. I won't put myself out there too much. I'm still a little bit of a perfectionist, but just the things I see people go through, the ways they really make their health deteriorate on purpose. It's just like, "Why don't you go to bed? Dude, why don't you eat?" So don't do that. It's not cute. Take care of yourself if you decide to go to law school. Honestly, some grades that I got that were below an A, I've spoken through my job, I've spoken to people who work in the Office of Civil Rights at some point in their lifetime, Department of Justice, and that's a big federal agency, and I'm talking to them about cases like, "Oh, wow. You know lot." I'm like, "Really? My grades don't look like I do, but maybe I did learn something great."

(00:55:35):

AJ said <censored> shit up. I agree. After undergrad, I was like, "Let me just absorb things and be an empath and be a healer and organizer in the movement," but I think it's okay if law school brings a different part of your activism out of you. People sometimes may get sick of you, but I think just coming in with this critical perspective is so important because there's not that many of us who openly identify and do work in this space, whether it's student groups or in classroom. I'm like, "Have we considered not making attendance district because people have disabilities or emergencies?" and just some of the things I say I don't even realize are radical, but they are to them.

(00:56:18):

So I just lean into it to really try to make every space that I can as accessible as possible because my school has a disability law association, but even my school is just a few years old, which is still astonishing to me. I really thought it was a more natural established thing, and I'm realizing how decent it is. I would just say don't make grades everything. Really get what you want out of your experience. Really just keep your eyes on the prize. Do what you need to do, but don't be afraid to do advocacy where you can and have capacity to.

(00:56:58):

Other things I would say, the Coelho Center for Disability Law, they have a really dope fellowship that was starting when I was applying to school. I didn't match up with that timeline perfectly, but that's a really cool thing for people who identify in a disability community to check out because that's a pre-law pipeline program that's going to prepare you for a lot of stuff that we're talking about and give you sample classes to see if you want to participate in the shenanigans of law school at all in this career.

(00:57:26):

Something that I wish I did better, I wish I applied for the law school. It's the LSAT. It's an examination you have to take to apply to law school. I wish I did that stuff a year before I took that test and I wish I started this law school accommodations process while I was doing my applications, which can be ridiculous because law school applications itself is already hard, but if you're already considering it and just coming in understanding that the bar is so much higher than I would say workplace accommodations and undergrad accommodations. So just making sure if you can try to budget time and money or scholarship money for that just if you can because I'm about to be halfway through my law school experience without accommodations and there's impacts to that.

(00:58:17):

So just try to set yourself up to try to navigate. Just think about the challenges that we're speaking about to just try to figure out how you could put yourself in the best position possible to navigate those things and just literally get what you want out of that experience.

Keith Casebonne (00:58:34):

This is Keith. Just a few thoughts based on some of the things you guys have said. I love the idea of how everyone just do this stuff at your own pace. Do it the way it's best for you, and don't worry about what the societal norms or media or anything else says about what the experience of law school is supposed to be like. Again, that's the stereotype and it's not what everyone goes through. I love that that a lot of the overall thought here is just do what works for you, do what's best for you, take care of yourself, and the things that they say are important aren't always what's really important. I think that's powerful information.

(00:59:16):

So leading through the thought process on this as far as working with others, dealing with those professors and whatnot when you're in school and you're dealing with their misconceptions, what are some of the elements of accessibility and inclusion that maybe some of these educators, other professionals you work with, people in this field are not

thinking of that you really want to tell them about, you want them to know and not just know, but act on, put into use?

AJ Link (00:59:44):

This is AJ. Jalyn's answer was so amazing and I'm so glad they provided personal perspectives. I think in terms of educating other people, my things to tell people, it's not that serious. So I do Space Law, so I work in galaxy, universe, and we're all really insignificant and small things. I know we think we're the most important people ever, and the thing that we're working on is the most important thing that has to be done right now, but at the end of the day, we're just floating on a massive space of rock really fast and to infinity.

(01:00:18):

So the concepts of professionalism, I don't believe in professionalism, but we'll talk about the people who do. Maybe you can relax those standards. Maybe you can relax your dress codes. I know we've talked about the bar a little bit. Virginia is a state that requires you to dress in professional business attire to take the bar exam, which is just, I can't even comprehend that. Obviously, like Haley said, it's classist, it's ableist, it's all those things. The only ism we support is autism. It's something that I've just read.

(01:00:51):

Anyway, it's not that serious, and we can allow for accommodations. We can allow for access and flexibility. Lots of people who do disability work have talked about this since the COVID pandemic began. Lots of people are really comfortable doing video calls, non-video calls, flexible attendance in office, out of office. There are lots of things that disabled folks have been begging for for decades to the detriment of their employment, to the exclusion of their participation in the workforce. Now, people are doing those things because it impacts able body minded folks.

(01:01:24):

So it's not that serious. Accommodations are okay. It's not cheating. You don't have to gatekeep everything. I know lawyers, attorneys, people in legal profession really do want to gatekeep because they feel special and people tell them they're special like, "Oh, you went to law school. That's amazing. You're so special. Oh, you're an attorney. That's amazing. You're so special." We're all just people. It's not that serious. If someone needs an accommodation or request an accommodation or has an access need, at least attempt to accommodate them before shutting it down. A lot of times it's not that serious. It's not that expensive. The data's really old, but it says under \$500 for most accommodations if you have to pay it all and allow people to be the productive and fulfilling person that they are without as many barriers to prevent that so that they form or fit into the box of professionalism that has been erected to exclude so many people.

Jalyn Radziminski (01:02:20):

This is Jalyn. I was processing what AJ said and I'm just feeling, "Oh, I wish I was going to school with AJ," because it can be really ... A lot of people don't think that way and it can be

isolating at times, but really, it's not that serious. I think just letting educators, faculty and staff just to really be able to eliminate that to them is important because many times when I share those type of perspectives, they say like, "Oh, well, we appreciate your radical compassion, but we have a standard to uphold," or, "but ..." this or that. I just hope that people who may have employees who are in the discipline community, students, et cetera, this isn't about radical compassion. This is about basic accommodations. This is about civil and human rights, have access to a field of work that needs us, and just recognizing that this shouldn't be a radical thing.

(01:03:17):

This culture should be normal. It should be accessible for people to have access to. So that's one thing I would say, and just making space, just having more space to unpack these barriers that are within the legal field structure itself, but also just intellectually have spaces in more groups and in the classroom as well because a lot of times when people create these spaces, they promote neutrality and freedom and speech, but it's often done in ways that could be very harmful to students in the room that are in the discipline community or different races and backgrounds.

(01:03:55):

So I would just say also being mindful and understanding that not every time we're going to feel comfortable. Being the one person in the room to defend the disability community, being the one person in the room to defend Black civil rights shouldn't be a burden on us every time. So just sometimes ensuring that the space is having that critical analysis as well so we're not emboldening people who are also studying with us in the classroom to carry ableist and discriminatory and racist perspectives back out there in the world because the worst thing we need is more lawyers who interpret things that way. Those would be my two big things.

Haley Moss (01:04:36):

I have nothing that that I feel like I can add other than, this is Hailey, that doesn't just detract from the awesomeness of Jalyn and AJ. So thank you both for just being you.

Maddie Crowley (01:04:49):

I'm really just sitting with such gratitude that y'all are one here talking with us and making the time to talk with us, but that y'all are really helping others, just literally anybody with or without disabilities. Everybody benefits from accessibility and accommodations and taking things less seriously, being more chill about professionalism, all of these things. This is really important work and I'm just sitting with a lot of gratitude that y'all are leading the way in these conversations and ensuring that this continues to become more accessible and become more well-known so that law schools and hopefully the law profession writ large can think of disability in a better light and think of disabled lawyers in a better light.

(01:05:53):

So again, just a lot of gratitude and I wanted to leave space if there's anything else that y'all wanted to mention. I appreciate, Jalyn, you highlighting the Coelho Law Center program. Were there any other resources or thoughts or anything that y'all would like to highlight?

AJ Link (01:06:15):

This is AJ. I think I'm obligated to talk about the National Disabled Law Students Association and the National Disabled Legal Professionals Association, which are there for folks who are looking for community, have questions, looking for help or advocacy or anything like that. They can reach out to those folks on their different platforms, emails, website, all those things.

Haley Moss (01:06:36):

This is Haley. I was going to plug all of AJ's stuff if he didn't do it. So thank you, AJ, for speaking out again, and keep in mind, depending on where you go to law school, your university or school probably has a chapter of NDLSA. So that's exciting or you can go start one. Also, I am remiss if I don't plug my own stuff. So I am the author of *Great Minds Think Differently: Neurodiversity for Lawyers and Other Professionals*, which was with the American Bar Association, which is super cool that they actually let me write a whole book about this stuff. So that is a little bit. Of course, I want to say that I am here to connect with folks as well as an ally, a colleague, a mentor, a friend if that is something that's of interest. I know a lot of us are busy. I admit that I'm not great with my inbox, but I try to be here for other folks who are fighting the good fight.

Jalyn Radziminski (01:07:26):

I would say for Black folks in the disability community to also seek out other intersectional resources as well. So the National HBCU Pre-Law Conference, they're really great connection with a lot of peers and mentors navigating the space. So I would just always want to plug that, and just generally, there's so many different groups out there. Just start to seek mentorship now to get advice from people who identify with your culture, as well as maybe are in the disability community and the queer community. Just seek out as much voices and mentorship as you can to set yourself up in the best way possible.

(01:08:05):

Just for listeners to know whether they're considering going to law or they're in law school or practicing now, just affirming that there should be nothing about us without us, as we always say, and that people can study disability rights and these issues for years, but we are experts, we are informed because we live this stuff every single day of our life. So please don't let anyone invalidate the fact that things that you're worthy and that you are deserving of a great career, a great education, just a great fulfilling life. So I just wanted people to be reminded of that because sometimes I need to be reminded of that too.

Keith Casebonne (01:08:43):

Well, and thank you all for sharing your expertise with us and all of our listeners today. Really appreciate your time, your interest, your experiences and knowledge that you've shared. Thanks so much. We really appreciate you guys being our guest on the podcast today.

AJ Link (01:08:59):

This is AJ. Thank you so much for having us. I guess Haley said folks can reach out to her, so I will also offer that. I guess I didn't before. Folks are welcome to find me wherever. I guess also you should do Space Law because I think Space Law is cool and more people should do it. So I'll plug that.

Jalyn Radziminski (01:09:16):

This is Jalyn. Feel free to reach out to me as well. Just thank you both so much for having us stay. This conversation has been really motivating for me as well, and I hope for the audience it is too.

Haley Moss (01:09:32):

This is Haley, and I just wanted to, again, thank you both for having us and thankful for having this platform with Disability Rights Florida and the work that we do as an organization. So just a note of gratitude and, of course, one last plug of overall just about disabled and neurodivergent joy since I think so much of our experiences as we talk about the things that are difficult and the things that we've had to overcome and fight through, but I do want to have a quick last moment and on a note of celebrating our joy.

Keith Casebonne (01:09:59):

Thanks again to AJ, Jalyn, and Haley for being on today's episode.

Maddie Crowley (01:10:03):

Yes, thank you so much, and for those who are interested, they provided their contact information, so please feel free to contact them, connect with them, follow their social media accounts and ways that they shared. All of that will be listed in the show notes. Please keep up with all the great work they're doing, support their work and their investment in making legal advocacy, disability advocacy, all of these different spaces they're a part of, please support their work they're doing because it is truly, honestly revolutionary and so formative to what's come in the coming decades.

Keith Casebonne (01:10:40):

Oh, yeah, for sure. If you like what they said on the podcast, you're going to love all the stuff they say on social media and various works that they put out. Just keep up with them. You'll be glad you did.

(01:10:50):

So we will be back in two weeks with a very important episode with Dr. William Bronston and the National Disability Rights Network's Executive Director, Marlene Sallo, on the history of Willowbrook and the future of disability rights work.

Maddie Crowley (01:11:05):

We have had this thing cooking, brewing, getting ready for you all for a couple months now, and we've put a lot of love and labor into that episode. We really think every single person, no matter what your identities are, will have something to learn from that and learn this darker side of American history, disability history.

Keith Casebonne (01:11:26):

If you think you know the Willowbrook story-

Maddie Crowley (01:11:28):

You don't.

Keith Casebonne (01:11:28):

... you're going to realize you don't really know the full story.

Maddie Crowley (01:11:31):

It just really is the depth of the corruption, the depth of the violence at Willowbrook is just truly insidious, and there's really no other way to spin it. We'll definitely be giving a content warning before that episode to make sure that everybody's safe while listening to it, but it's a really important listen, and we hope you tune in.

(01:11:56):

So with that being said, make sure you subscribe to the podcast wherever you're listening to this right now, so you'll get notifications about new episodes when they drop. We are on all of the podcast platforms, whether that's Apple Podcast, Spotify, Google, Amazon. You can watch us on YouTube and more. You can also listen or read the transcript of each episode on our website at disabilityrightsflorida.org/podcast.

Keith Casebonne (01:12:22):

Yes, indeed, and thank you for listening, and as always, please email any feedback, questions or ideas about the show to podcast@disabilityrightsflorida.org. We'll see y'all in two weeks.

Announcer (01:12:33):

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