



## ***Highlighting the work of The Indiana Disability Justice (IDJ) DVAM 2021***

Domestic violence awareness month offers us an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the Indiana Disability Justice to prevent multiple forms of violence, including intimate partner violence. Indiana Disability Justice (IDJ) is a coalition led by six neurodiverse and disabled survivors of multiple forms of violence who collaborate to centralize the voices and needs of Disabled people and people with disabilities in Indiana's prevention strategies and practices. Our vision is to create and support a state free of violence against Disabled people and people with disabilities where people with disabilities and Disabled people are supported in their independence, included in society, and recognized as a valuable part of society.

Part of supporting this vision is using the language community members prefer us to use to refer to Disabled people (identity first language) or people with disabilities (person first language). Some people prefer to use identity-first language, "I am a disabled person," to centralize and destigmatize their experience and identity as disabled. However, there are also people who prefer to use person-first language, "I am a person with a disability," to emphasize their humanity above other identities.

Language use and identity are deeply personal and both phrases are used in this blog to support the diverse ways that Disabled people/people with disabilities choose to identify. To learn more about language use in the disability community and why it is so important to be intentional, watch a [recent discussion](#) among people with disabilities and Disabled people, including IDJ co-founder Cierra Olivia Thomas-Williams, hosted by the Vera Institute of Justice. If you prefer to read about language use, please visit Autistic Hoya to [read the work](#) of Lydia X. Z. Brown. Ultimately, our language choices offer us a genuine opportunity to connect with other people.

Connectedness and social support are key protections against child maltreatment, youth violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence,

and suicide. Over the last three years, IDJ has hosted and collaborated to provide [22 webinars](#) featuring people with disabilities and Disabled people on a range of topics including neurodiversity, survivorship, budgeting for inclusion, guardianship, disability justice and more. **On October 21, 2021, the IDJ will host a panel discussion of disabled survivors/survivors with disabilities to discuss sexual wellness.** You can register for that webinar [here](#).

In addition to the webinar series, IDJ offers a robust online disability justice and violence prevention [resource hub](#) showcasing artwork, editorial, and creative writing by disabled writers and artists/writers and artists with disabilities. The hub also houses accessible evaluation tools, such as [protocols](#) for focus groups, key informant interviews, and participatory social mapping, and a sexual violence prevention community engagement [toolkit](#) written by Kelsey Cowley, a woman with multiple disabilities, including cognitive and developmental disabilities.

In June, the IDJ released a community strengths and [needs assessment](#) (CSNA) to shed light on the magnitude of healthful and harmful experiences people with disabilities/Disabled people in Indiana are experiencing, especially in regard to sexual and romantic wellness. IDJ will work with an advisory council and people with disabilities/Disabled people to develop strategies to address identified needs and enhance the strengths shared by Disabled Hoosiers and Hoosiers with disabilities about their communities. IDJ would like to hear from 100 people, and you can help us reach our goal. [Click here](#) more information about the survey, who can take the survey, and participation options. [Click here](#) to respond to the survey.

IDJ is working to create a world free from violence, where Disabled people and people with disabilities can be their fullest selves. Won't you join us? [Subscribe](#) to the hub to receive updates and links to our work. If you have questions for IDJ, our email address is INdisabilityjustice@gmail.com.

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