

**Proud and Powerful Strategies**  
*Recommended by the Proud and Powerful Ad Hoc Committee*  
April 17, 2007

**Issue:**

People with disabilities often lack a sense of pride and do not feel that they can be powerful within their community. Disability organizations and generic leadership organizations often times can fall into the trap of not viewing people with disabilities as proud and powerful people. The Proud and Powerful Ad Hoc Committee recommends that CCL take action to assist people with disabilities in feeling proud and powerful. Without these actions, people may not access CCL because they do not see themselves as leaders. At the same time, generic leadership organizations may not work toward including people with disabilities because they do not see people with disabilities as leaders.

**Strategies:**

The Proud and Powerful Ad Hoc Committee identified 4 main target populations that need to receive proud and powerful messages:

- People with disabilities
- CONNECT participants/College Students with Disabilities
- Generic Leadership Organizations
- Disability Organizations

For each target group, the committee answered the following questions:

- What messages do they currently receive?
- What messages do we want them to receive?
- How do we get them to receive our messages?

We then brainstormed the enclosed recommended strategies for each of these target groups. We ask for your feedback and for you to look at the following:

- Are we missing any strategies?
- Which strategies can we fit into existing CCL operations?
- Which strategies are feasible to implement taking into consideration staff time, funding, interest, etc.?
- What are the top 1-3 strategies for each target group?

We have also included the definitions of disability pride and self-empowerment that were approved by the CCL Steering Committee in January.

## Definitions

### Self-Empowerment

Knowing and feeling one's pride and applying our unique voice, skills, and actions with energy and confidence to achieve a vision (of full citizenship in all places: personal relationships, home, school, work, community, institutions, etc.)

- Includes the commitment to provide personal and institutional support for people with disabilities who are seeking to claim their full and rightful place, power, and pride.
- Knowing, practicing, and using the skills to make changes.
- Is expressed when disability communities protest discrimination and celebrate disability culture, heritage, and history.

### Disability Pride

Accepting and honoring our uniqueness and seeing it as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity. Pride comes from celebrating our own heritage, culture, unique experiences and contributions.

- *Disability Pride* recognizes the power we have to make change.
- *Disability Pride* results when we challenge and ultimately undo the negative beliefs, attitudes, and feelings and systematic oppression that come from the dominate groups' thinking that there is something wrong with our identify or our disabilities.
- *Disability Pride* rejects shame and the need to "blend in"
- *Disability Pride* is self acceptance and validation of our uniqueness.
- *Disability Pride* results in making choices based on the respect for interdependence, accommodations, and creativity.
- *Disability Pride* is the feeling of strong connection with a community of other people.
- *Disability Pride* recognizes that it is our uniqueness that will transform all people and institutions (society).

**Target Group:** People with Disabilities

**Recommended Strategies:**

- Having a proud and powerful corner of the CCL newsletter that would include things like:
  - Disability culture quiz
  - Poems about proud and powerful written by people with disabilities
  - Update on what we are doing around proud and powerful
  - Proud and powerful quotes
- Create a group of people with disabilities that come together via conference calls. They could meet monthly to have discussions and also have speakers, etc. on the conference calls. Similar to National Youth Leadership Network.
- Plan trips to take people with disabilities to Chicago to be in the heart of the movement. They can meet disability activists, view disability art and culture. This could be an issue because of funding. However, if we have a hidden leadership component, the people with disabilities can gain leadership skills by having to raise their own money to go, find sponsors, arrange transportation, etc.
- Currently in Chicago, Mike Erwin is involved with a group doing a disability culture event each month. Maybe we could model something like that here.
- Hold social gatherings with pizza, get to know each other, have little structure to get the ball rolling. Once the group is going well, then start having speakers on proud and powerful. The gatherings could be regional.
- Person to person contact is always a strategy. If we know people with disabilities that we want to feel proud and powerful, talk to them, then get them to the CCL website or brochure, and then have them sign up right then and there to be a member. Then they can become involved in leadership development activities that increases pride and powerfulness or they can attend any proud and powerful events the CCL does.
- Have CONNECT students go and speak to high school students with disabilities. They can work closely with the Intermediate School Districts.
- We could piggy back on Matrix Theater who just got a grant for disability inclusion. May be a way to help people feel proud and powerful without having to have money or as much money.
- We could have MYLF reunions. Bill has some funding. It would be a two day event. Past participants of MYLF would come together and this event would be about what to do now. You got all this information at MYLF, now how do we implement what we learned. These would be regional. Basically, in order for Bill to fund it, it would have to be educational and fit certain criteria, but then they would become CCL members. This event would serve as a transition between MYLF and CCL.
- Have an interactive website with a forum. It could ask people to post about things that relate to proud and powerful. Example: What did you do this year that you didn't do last year that you are proud of or that made you feel powerful?
- Work with the RICCS to put on events and we would support them to implement these strategies.
- Provide support for college groups to implement some strategies.

- Use the CONNECT retreat and Disability Activists retreat at Leaven as ways to get people feeling proud and powerful.
- Introduce people with disabilities to other disability groups that leave people feeling proud and powerful such as ADAPT.

## **Target Group:** Generic Leadership Opportunities

### **Recommended Strategies:**

- Leadership seminars like the ones we hold now, but adapted more for generic leadership opportunities
- Having a proud and powerful corner of the CCL newsletter that would include things like:
  - a. Disability culture quiz
  - b. Poems about proud and powerful written by people with disabilities
  - c. Update on what we are doing around proud and powerful
  - d. Proud and powerful quotes
- Mentoring
  - a. If organization is interested in creating an inclusive program they could be connected to other organizations that do this well.
  - b. Could be a coaching/mentoring network, (people you can turn too) who could support you in your program.
  - c. See if the programs that we are working with currently (ask them if they would than mentor the next generic leadership program).
- Building authentic relationships with generic leadership organizations.
  - a. CONNECT participants could support the generic leadership organizations in their communities and on their campuses
  - b. CCL staff make an effort to keep continuous contact with generic leadership organizations that are partners
  - c. Connect the generic leadership organizations with the local CIL in that area
- Set up online forum, or discussion online that these organizations could use to discuss inclusion, accessibility, etc.
- Provide resources
  - a. Etiquette lists
  - b. History of disability-that is diverse history. Not just a white perspective.
  - c. Pamphlet on how to hold an accessible event.
  - d. ADA resources.
  - e. Assessment tools to determine the level of inclusion and awareness of their organization
  - f. Handbook- for generic leadership groups with the assessment, include quotes, stories that PWD have about going to an accessible event, or event that is not inclusive.
  - g. Good tools (not overwhelming) that will help people teach staff.

**Target Group:** CONNECT Participants/College Students with Disabilities

**Recommended Strategies:**

- Ally/Anti-Ableism workshops (Educate the college campus)
  - a. Able-bodied privilege
  - b. How to be an ally
  - c. What is ablesim
- Connecting college students throughout Michigan
  - a. CONNECT events include proud and powerful messages
  - b. Social events – i.e. Ferris Ball
  - c. At the events, try to light the flame that shows the power of colleges coming together
  - d. Students can share their experiences with disability pride and power
- Encourage students to host panels about disability issues on their campuses
- Online networking for college students
  - a. Get a chat room for student groups to network
  - b. Facebook page
  - c. A forum or way to archive events and sharing of stories about things student groups did on campus
  - d. Students can share their experiences with disability pride and power
- Advertise CCL newsletter in CONNECT E-zine- get submissions from students about disability pride
- CONNECT retreats/workshops for students to start organizations
- Include pride and power in the handbooks CCL provides
  - a. How to start a student organization
  - b. How to hold an accessible event
  - c. Leadership succession of student groups
- Join with the Leaven Center
  - a. Host a disability pride and power event using arts and theater as a way to express disability pride and power
- Educate MAROH- the national RHA (this falls under generic leadership organizations)

**Target Group:** Disability Organizations

**Recommended Strategies:**

- Training for faculty and advisors in colleges (Disability Services Offices, Student Life, Residence Hall Associations)
  - a. Bring in expert that has been successful with pride and power
  - b. Have students with disabilities be part of the training/facilitators – they know what they need best
  - c. Provide resources
- Trainings/Workshops for disability organizations
  - a. Have guest speakers from organizations that have demonstrated proud and powerful
  - b. Have people with disabilities be part of the training/facilitators – they know what they need best
  - c. Provide resources
- Brochures and mailings with information about pride and power
- Give assessment tools to disability organizations
  - a. How accepting is your organization of people with disabilities
  - b. Organizational culture
  - c. Anti-Ableism
  - d. Stereotypes
- Ally/Anti-Ableism workshops
  - a. Able-bodied privilege
  - b. How to be an ally
  - c. What is ablesim
- Having a proud and powerful corner of the CCL newsletter that would include things like:
  - a. Disability culture quiz
  - b. Poems about proud and powerful written by people with disabilities
  - c. Update on what we are doing around proud and powerful
  - d. Proud and powerful quotes