



Queen's
UNIVERSITY

**Feminist
Legal Studies**

**Women, Disability, and Intersectionality:
Designing for Equality and Leaving No One Behind**

*International Women's Day Annual Conference, Feminist Legal Studies and the
Faculty of Law Queen's University
Kingston Ont., March 13-14, 2026*

Biographies and Abstracts



Dr. Anna Lawson, Professor of Law, University of Leeds

Bio: Anna, who is blind, co-directs the Centre for Law and Social Justice at the University of Leeds and co-directed the Centre for Disability Studies from 2015-2023. Her work focuses on disability equality and human rights at international, national and local levels with a particular focus on issues of equality, accessibility and inclusion. She has led a range of multinational research projects on disability rights and justice, including a European Research Council Advanced Grant on Inclusive Public Space. Anna regularly works closely with inter-governmental organisations, national governments and local government. She is an active member of a range of disabled people's organisations and the patron of the National Association of Disabled Staff Networks. Anna is one of the founding editors of the new Hart Series on Disability, Law and Justice, and Fellow of the British Academy and the Academy of Social Sciences. In recognition of her work on disability equality, she was awarded the international Bob Hepple Memorial Prize by the Equal Rights Trust and Industrial Law Society in 2016.

Abstract: Women and Disability: Critical Reflections on Designing for Equality and (Mobility) Justice

In this talk, I will draw on findings from a recent multinational study on the inclusiveness of pedestrian space to reflect on the importance of designing for equality and the impact, particularly on disabled people and women, of failing to do so. I will discuss common challenges hampering this approach to design and possible law and policy strategies for addressing them. Ideas of intersectionality, solidarity and mobility justice will inform the talk.

Conference Panelists



Ladan Adhami-Dorrani

Bio: In a world that has madly become violent, Ladan has decided to stay a student for life. With a Ph.D. in Social and Political Thought from York University, Ladan has embarked on a journey to learn how to unlearn what she has learned. In a manuscript book entitled *The Mainstay of the Law and the Perpetuation of Inequalities* that will be published by Bloomsbury Publishing, Ladan questions Western reason and the value neutrality at the self-centered liberal democratic and legal system in the United States. From racial/ethnic inequality to gender disparity, from class discrepancy to unequal treatment of those whose sexual orientation has historically relegated them to the periphery, Ladan with a passionate conviction joins the counter-hegemonic voices raised by postmodern, postcolonial and critical feminist perspectives. Given that there is no way but to act with hope, Ladan calls for political participation accompanied with inclusive Love that invites substantial changes for a peaceful and sustainable future.

Abstract: The effects of historical disabling knowledge: Deconstruction as a process of enabling

In postmodern approaches to knowledge, there is a salient commonality among those who delve deep into the disproportionate systemic and structural setup. In the context of the mainstream Western conceptual framework, the postmodern philosophers and intellectuals' endeavour to show us that the knowledge that we have gained through socialization is not given and natural. Rather, it has been constructed, evolved, normalized and internalized over time, and has been subject to challenges, negotiations, interpretations and refutations which point to the power of agency. Instead of scratching the surface, such philosophers like Jacques Derrida, and many other after him, who have followed his deconstructive footsteps come to show that the knowledge that we have gained is neither universal nor objective or value free. Rather, it is context-dependent under the strong influence of the normative power interests. This paper presentation delves into the historical disabling knowledge that has led to the marginalization of the intersectional "Other," and maintains that deconstruction is a process of enabling that allows us to develop a critical mind and heart. When accompanied with Hannah Arendt's political vision to act in concert, energized with

inclusive Love, deconstruction can uproot historically disabling knowledge and give growth to the new enabling process.



Sharry Aiken

Bio: Sharry Aiken is a Professor at Queen’s Law and Academic Director of the Graduate Diploma in Immigration and Citizenship Law. She is also co-chair of the Legal Affairs Committee of Canadian Council of Refugees and president of the FCJ Refugee Centre in Toronto.

Abstract: Inequalities at the Border: Ableism, Intersectionality and Disability-Based Exclusion in Canadian Immigration Law

Canadian immigration law has systematically marginalized the intersecting experiences of gender and disability, particularly for racialized migrant women, in ways that are broadly dissonant with contemporary commitments to substantive equality, accessibility and inclusion.

Drawing on intersectionality, feminist disability theory, and critical migration scholarship, the paper situates the regulatory framework of medical inadmissibility and “excessive demand” within broader architectures of ableism that construct disabled migrant women as presumptive public burdens and render their care needs incompatible with an imagined, normatively able-bodied national community. It foregrounds the specific position of non-status and precarious-status disabled women with deep roots in Canada, whose pathways to regularization remain structurally blocked notwithstanding formal commitments to inclusive and equitable legal systems and to “leaving no one behind” reflected in the CRPD, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and CSW70’s access-to-justice priority theme.

Doctrinally, the paper offers a critical appraisal of leading Canadian cases on medical inadmissibility, and excessive demand, tracing how judicial reasoning erases or fragments intersectional harms experienced by racialized, poor, and disabled migrants and how disability is framed as an individualized medical deficit rather than a site of rights-based accommodation and structural barrier removal. The paper will show that, even where courts have recognized unconstitutional distinctions among categories of non-citizens, they have largely insulated the core premises of medical inadmissibility from substantive equality review, entrenching a regime of disability-based exclusion that is in

tension with Canada's international human rights obligations and domestic accessibility commitments. The paper argues that taking substantive equality for disabled migrant women seriously would require re-imagining immigration law as a central site for designing for equality through disability-inclusive legal architectures and the dismantling of systemic barriers that currently preclude full membership and belonging for women and girls with disabilities in Canada and transnationally.



Gwendoline Allison

Bio: Gwendoline has more than twenty years of experience advising employers and employees on a wide range of issues arising from their workplace relationships. From pre-hiring to post-dismissal, Gwendoline represents clients in employment and labour law, human rights, administrative law, constitutional law, and in general litigation matters. With her broad experience with organizations and the litigation process, Gwendoline is committed to obtaining positive results for her clients. An experienced trial advocate, Gwendoline has appeared before all provincial and federal levels of court, and a variety of tribunals. She is a frequent writer and presenter and is the founding co-author of a textbook on employment standards law.

Abstract: Medical Assistance in Dying: A.Y. v. N.B.

In *A.Y. v N.B.*, 2024 BCSC 2004, the BC Supreme Court granted an interim injunction prohibiting a medical professional from carrying out medical assistance in dying. The injunction application was the third such application in Canada, and the only successful one to date. The court noted that "there is a serious question to be tried in B.C. about whether there should be judicial oversight when someone chooses to die pursuant to the MAID exemption provisions in the Criminal Code. This applies to both the assessment of whether the exemption conditions were met and whether the process was properly followed....In particular, I would say there is a serious issue to be tried about justiciability in the apparent circumstances of this case, where [the patient]'s situation may be limited to mental health issues or conditions, may well be remediable, and there are challenges to the process involved in her MAID approval."



Bitá Amani

Bio: Bitá Amani is full professor at the Faculty of Law, Queen's University in Kingston and affiliated faculty for Cultural Studies. She also serves as adjunct faculty at Osgoode Hall Law School. She is one of the founding members of Feminist Legal Studies Queen's, serving as a Co-Director since its inception and organizing an annual visiting speaker series and International Women's Day Conference for over fifteen years. She is currently on sabbatical as a Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Law at Oxford University, and Visiting Research Fellow with the Oxford Intellectual Property Research Centre. Bitá teaches courses in intellectual property (IP), information privacy, and feminist legal studies (workshop), and is currently working on several issues related to equality, including AI governance and discrimination, food law, intellectual property and care work and caring relations. Book publications include: *State Agency and the Patenting of Life in International Law: Merchants and Missionaries in a Global Society*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009) and *The Elgar Companion to Intellectual Property and the Sustainable Development Goals*, (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2024, with Caroline B. Ncube and Matthew Rimmer (eds)).

Dr. Amani has served as consultant to the provincial government on gene patenting, on the e-Laws project for the Ministry of the Attorney General (Ontario) Office of the Legislative Counsel (OLC) as editor and annotations editor for the online delivery of access to laws, and was co-investigator on a report on the policy implications for women and children of recognizing foreign polygamous marriages in Canada, funded by the Status of Women Canada and the Department of Justice. She was a delegate of the Women's Intercultural Network, an NGO with Special Consultive Status to the Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC), for UNCSW 67 in New York in 2023. She is currently engaged in a 7-year funded SSHRC partnership for strengthening a families research ecosystem for defence and public safety sectors. She has served as a legislative drafter with the OLC and is called to the Bar of Ontario (2000).

Abstract: AI, Disability Equality, and the Accessible Canada Act: From Constitutional Rights to Positive Obligations and Emerging Standards for a Barrier Free Canada by 2040

The capacity for AI to amplify inequalities and scale up harm with disparate impacts on vulnerable and marginalized communities is now well documented and reported on in the literature. Disability

is dynamic and disability equality has been an area in need of better scrutiny within intersectional harm analysis of AI systems and their use. Positive obligations toward elimination of systemic barriers for accessibility for all persons and in particular persons with disabilities can be found in the Accessible Canada Act (ACA). Such obligations align well with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 10 to reduce inequality within and among nations and the 2030 pledge to leave no one behind and start with the most behind first. Canada recently published the world's first voluntary standard on accessible and equitable AI. Building on my earlier work on "AI and Equality by Design", this paper examines emerging considerations in AI governance for disability equality rights protection in the design, development, and deployment of artificial intelligence systems, from constitutional rights protection to emerging national and international standards.



Elahe Amani

Bio: Elahe Amani is a gender equality, peace, and human rights, activist and followed global women’s movement since 1985. She served California State University System in the capacity of Director of Academic Technology & Women Studies lecturer for 31 years. She is a trained mediator and Faculty of Mediators Beyond Borders (MBB) Training Institute. Elahe has been with Women’s Intercultural Network (WIN) for 26 years and served as Chair of Global Circles of WIN prior to her current role as Chair of the WIN. She is well- published in English and Persian.

Abstract: Intersectionality and the Rights of Women with Disabilities in the Middle East

Intersectionality offers a critical framework for examining how multiple and overlapping dimensions of identity—such as gender, disability, class, nationality, and refugee status—interact to shape lived experiences of inequality and exclusion. For women with disabilities, these intersections generate forms of discrimination that are not simply additive but mutually reinforcing, producing structural barriers across social, economic, and political spheres. In the Middle East, disabled women frequently face double marginalization, rooted in the convergence of patriarchal gender norms and entrenched ableist attitudes embedded in legal systems, social institutions, and cultural practices. These intersecting forms of oppression are evident in unequal access to education, limited

employment opportunities, restricted mobility, inadequate healthcare, and exclusion from public and civic participation.

The paper will employ an intersectional feminist and disability-rights lens to analyze how regional socio-political contexts, legal frameworks, and cultural narratives shape the lives of women with disabilities in the Middle East. It also highlights variations within this population by examining the roles of class, nationality, and displacement, including the heightened vulnerabilities faced by refugee and conflict-affected women with disabilities. The paper argues that policies and development strategies that address gender or disability in isolation fail to capture the complexity of lived realities and may inadvertently reproduce inequality. Meaningful inclusion, the paper concludes, requires intersectional, gender-responsive, and disability-inclusive approaches grounded in human rights and social justice.



Abbasi Ayesha Youssuf

Bio: **Ayesha Youssuf Abbasi** is a lawyer from Pakistan, currently a PhD researcher in International Law at Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, China. Her research focuses on international humanitarian law, AI governance, and digital technologies in conflict, with particular attention to the Global South. She has taught law at several universities in Pakistan and writes on international law, technology, and human rights.

Abstract: From Civilian Harm to Permanent Disability: Rethinking ‘Collateral Damage’ Through a Feminist Lens

This paper examines how international humanitarian law (IHL) understands civilian harm during armed conflict and argues that its focus on deaths and immediate injuries overlooks permanent disability as a distinct and lasting form of harm. The principle of proportionality requires balancing military advantage against incidental civilian harm, but this assessment is usually short-term and casualty-based, leaving the long-term consequences of violence largely invisible. Drawing on feminist legal theory, the paper shows how this omission has gendered effects, as women and girls are not only among those who acquire war-related disabilities but also disproportionately bear the unpaid care and social burdens that follow. Using examples from contemporary conflicts to illustrate broader patterns, the paper argues that treating disability as mere injury underestimates the real human cost of warfare and obscures questions of responsibility, care, and justice. It concludes by calling for a rethinking of civilian harm

that recognises permanent disability and its gendered dimensions, in line with feminist commitments to equality, inclusion, and leaving no one behind.



Grace Barnes

Bio: Grace Barnes is a PhD researcher and Hardiman scholar at the Centre for Disability Law & Policy, University of Galway. Her project examines the operation of disability, gender and sexual stereotypes in court judgements from the European Court of Human Rights. She holds an LL.B. degree (First Class Honours) from the University of Bristol and a Master's degree in Gender and International Relations. She previously worked in Family Law at a UK law firm.

Abstract: Disability or Sexuality? Recognising binary constructions of disabled women's sexuality in human rights discourses

This research analyses the operation of sexual stereotypes in case-judgements from the European Court of Human Rights with the aim of understanding disabled women's access to sexual rights in human rights discourses. The research identifies that when a disabled woman's sexuality is made prominent in a case through discussions of relationships, intercourse and pregnancy, she is made able-bodied by silences surrounding her disability. On the other hand, when disability is prominent in a judgement, for example by citing international material relating to disability, this is linked to vulnerability, incapacity and victimhood. Silences exist in these cases where discussions of sexual autonomy may otherwise have been present. The result is that disabled women are restricted to two opposing identities in the Court's discourse: sexual presuming able-bodied; or disabled presuming desexualised. This can shape the judicial reasoning, legal outcomes and disabled women's experiences of the Court. Human rights discourses may be developed which promote disabled women's rights to protection from sexual violence and able-bodied women's rights to sexual autonomy, but which prevent the development of disabled women's rights to sexual education and healthcare, bodily autonomy, decision-making capacity and freedom from discrimination.



Hillary Chua

Bio: **Hillary Chua** is a Sheridan Fellow at the National University of Singapore, Faculty of Law, where she has taught the law of torts and conducts research in medical law and ethics, and disability law. She is also pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Law (DPhil) at the University of Oxford. Her thesis focuses on comparing mental capacity law in England and Wales and Singapore, in terms of how it regulates consent to intimate relationships among intellectually disabled adults. She has been called to the Singapore Bar and practised medical law before joining academia.

Abstract: Mother Knows Best? Intellectual Disability, Intimacy, and the Limits of Legal Capacity: Lessons from Singapore

Legal guardianship regimes are said to cause ‘civil death’ for those under guardianship by appointing others to make decisions on their behalf. This has especially undermined the agency of intellectually disabled people in decisions about reproductive health and intimacy. In many countries, parents and doctors have imposed long-term contraception or sterilisation in their ‘best interests’: often due to scepticism about their parenting abilities, concerns about helping to raise disabled grandchildren, and fears about sexual exploitation, among other reasons. Singapore is a common law country with a history of such practices, and whose Mental Capacity Act 2008 was modelled after the English Mental Capacity Act 2005. In multiethnic Singapore, communitarian values and conservative views about sexuality in Confucian, Hindu, and Islamic beliefs have led to families being appointed as personal welfare deputies, and intellectually disabled people being restricted from forming sexual relationships through the practice of mental capacity law. Yet Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been understood to require the elimination of legal guardianship regimes, which should be replaced with supported decision-making, respect for will and preferences, and recognition of universal legal capacity. This presentation charts the socio-political factors and cultural taboos that have contextualised Singaporean mental capacity law and constrained disabled people’s sexual agency. It identifies supported decision-making strategies that draw upon prevailing family-centric values, and analyses challenges with implementing Article 12 cross-culturally.



Beverley Clough

Bio: Bev Clough is a Professor of Law & Social Justice at Manchester Law School, MMU. Her work engages with medical law, health, and social care law through a feminist legal and critical disability studies lens. Recent work has focussed on mental capacity and sexual relationships; a right against social deprivation; a feminist legal geography of home; and birth doulas as a liminal actor in medical law.

Abstract: (Un)Becoming Mothers: Mapping the structural intersections of motherhood and disability'

It is well documented that disabled women are more likely to have their children removed from their care. There is a large body of literature critically engaging with this in the context of child protection processes and post-birth separation. This paper seeks to build on and extend these literatures by placing them in the broader legal, policy and material landscape shaping disability, reproduction and motherhood. It draws primarily on legal and policy processes and case law in England, yet these resonate with similar processes in other jurisdictions. By bringing disability justice and reproductive justice literatures into conversation as an analytical lens, the paper seeks to map the cumulative, temporal and overlapping processes and absences that shape experiences of (un)becoming mothers.



Nancy Coldham

Bio: Nancy is the founding partner of The CG Group, a public affairs management consulting firm based in Toronto, Canada. Nancy leads the strategy practice as well as issues, crisis and reputation management. In addition to her career highlights and recognitions, Nancy is dedicated to advancing women through entrepreneurship and political advocacy. Nancy's volunteer commitment was recognized by her Order of Ontario (2019).

Nancy, with her social enterprise CriticalMassWomen, was the 2017 recipient of the Global Compact Network Canada Gender Equality Award in the category United Nation Women's Empowerment Principle 4, the promotion of education, training and professional development of women. In 2014, Nancy's commitment to advancing women and girls was acknowledged with the YWCA Toronto Women of Distinction Award for Advocacy & Political Action. Nancy has been a mentor in the Peace Through Business program of the Institute for Economic

Empowerment of Women (IEEW) since 2011, working with women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan and Rwanda.

Nancy's commitment to women entrepreneurship in post-conflict countries provided the foundation to her Master's thesis entitled "The Gendered Enterprise of Nation-Building" which earned her, in 2013, the Governor General Gold Medal Award for academic excellence. Nancy completed her Masters in International and Intercultural Communication, MAIC, at Royal Roads University. Her undergraduate degree in Journalism and Political Science was completed at Carleton University.

Nancy is currently pursuing a Doctor of Social Sciences at Royal Roads University, Victoria, B.C. Her doctoral research is focused on addressing the systemic barriers to women's leadership at the political C-level.

Abstract: Politics of the Intersectionality of Disability & Gender Justice

Aligned with Queen's University's Feminist Law 2026 IWD conference theme on disability, accessibility, and justice, intersectionality and the recognition that disability equality is one of the most historically underserved but profoundly urgent dimensions of equality, this presentation focuses on the political history of decades of unfulfilled global goals and promises.

The perspective is framed mapping of the politics and globally-recognized issues of gender and disability justice from the intersectionality of the UN Declaration of 1975 as International Year of Women, followed by the 1976 UN Declaration that 1981 would be the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), while exposing insights from many of the political, public policy and advocacy realities from within the Australian government's IYDP campaign launched under the theme, Break Down the Barriers, and a TV ad campaign slogan: "Come on, give us a go."

The foundational language, constructs and goals of disability justice emerged in 2005 by Sins Invalid, a collective of disabled queer women of colour, including Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, and the late Stacey Milbern (Sins Invalid, 2015, 2016). The San Francisco-based Sins Invalid theatre company applied a clear political vision of a just and equal world to blended performances and art.

This presentation captures the power of their success in shifting from the disability movement to the intersectionality of disability justice, creating a canvas adorned by broad strokes advocacy yet to dry (Peipzna-Samarasinha, 2018). The artistry of the political advocacy of disability equality (Curran & Runswick-Cole, 2014) and Balter (2023), over five decades, identifies the shapes and social constructs of the barriers faced by disabled individuals with a vibrant insistence for inclusion and action.

The framing is well-constructed as the fight for disability rights is inseparable from ongoing battles for race, gender, and economic justice.



Kerri Froc

Bio: Kerri Froc is an Associate Professor at University of New Brunswick Faculty of Law.

Dr. Froc writes on topics such as constitutional interpretation, access to justice, reproductive rights, women's rights of political representation, and complex rights violations experienced by working women, poor women and racialized and Indigenous women. She is an expert on section 28 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is a well-known media commentator on Canadian constitutional issues.

Abstract: Autonomy with a Vengeance Redux: Equality Rights in the Shadow of MAiD

There are currently two constitutional challenges to Canada's medical assistance in dying (MAiD) regime, one which asserts that the delay in extending it to mental illness violates the Charter and one that asserts that the prior extension to non-terminal individuals does so. They reveal the contested nature of equality in contemporary jurisprudence, specifically the extent to which autonomy should be regarded as the primary measure of constitutional harm.

This paper argues that such autonomy-centred reasoning risks collapsing section 15's concern with substantive equality into section 7 liberty, and eliminating the possibility that the Charter is able to address systemic inequality. It conducts a detailed critique of the Truchon decision, which found that limiting MAiD to those whose death was reasonably foreseeable violated sections 7 and 15 of the Charter. It demonstrates Truchon was flawed both from an evidentiary perspective and from a legal one, in that it decentred

substantive equality in its analysis. It should not be relied upon by future courts adjudicating constitutional challenges to MAiD.



Debra Haak

Bio: Debra M Haak is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Law at Queen’s University. She holds a BA(Hons) from Western University, an LLB from the University of New Brunswick, an MPhil from the University of St Andrews, Scotland, and a PhD from Queen’s University. Dr Haak’s research focusses on how legal decision makers contend with interests, rights, and values in tension. She is particularly interested in how legal decisions are made when women’s interests do or appear to conflict and in how social science research and law intersect in areas of complex and contested public policy. For over a decade, she has critically examined laws regulating the commercial exchange of sexual touching in Canada and claims those laws violate sex workers’ *Charter* rights. Dr Haak is currently researching at the intersection of sex and gender-focussed rights’ protections. Her research project, *Sex in the Age of Gender: Conceptual Clarity as a Foundation for Reconciling the Interests, Rights, and Experiences of Women, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People in Canada*, is funded by SSHRC and the CBA LFFF. She teaches IL Criminal and Constitutional Law, and an upper year course on Section 7 of the *Charter* that considers how constitutional cases bring about social change, with recent examples including commercial exchange of sex and medical assistance in dying. Until 2016, Dr Haak was a partner at a large multi-service law firm in Toronto where she practiced commercial and insolvency litigation.



Margaret Hardiman

Bio: **Maggie Hardiman** is a researcher whose work centres on sexual violence, policing, and the experiences of marginalised groups. She works as a Consultant for Operation Soteria (Pillars 1 & 2), advising UK police forces on suspect focused investigations, evidence based practice, and a national operating models for rape and serious sexual offences.

Maggie has extensive experience working with government bodies, police forces, and community groups, leading mixed methods research that has shaped national guidance and informed frontline practice. Her work includes major studies on risk identification in non convicted sex offence perpetrators, police decision making, and the intersectional barriers faced by victim survivors in the criminal justice system.

She is also a Research Officer with the International Association for Suicide Prevention and an Associate Lecturer in Psychology. Her publications span gender based violence, policing, and ethical international research partnerships, and she is committed to improving justice outcomes through rigorous research and collaborative practice.

Abstract: A Mixed-Methods study on police responses in England and Wales to Reports of Sexual Violence from Victims with Impairments

Gender-based violence is a serious public health and societal concern. Of the rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) that are reported to the police in England and Wales, few are ever charged. This is further worsened when you consider key intersectional factors such as impairments, including disability. Our research aims to understand how the police in England and Wales responded to reports of RASSO from victims with impairments. Using data from Operation Soteria, the present study involved a convergent mixed-methods approach analysing 22 case reviews of RASSO and 50 semi-structured interviews with police officers. The findings suggest that victims who were noted to have a mental impairment were more likely to be discredited and perceived as submitting a false allegation than those with physical impairments, resulting in poor investigative practice. There was a consistent lack of appropriate safeguarding, which further increased the vulnerability and risk experienced by these individuals. This work emphasises the importance of improved training and need for specialism within policing. Future research should consider the interplay between a range of intersectional factors and how this impacts the likelihood of RASSO cases being charged.



Jane Healy

Bio: Dr Jane Healy is Staff Tutor at Open University and a Visiting Fellow in Criminology at Bournemouth University, England. Jane's research interests include hate crime victimisation and offending, domestic abuse and violence, and inclusivity at the Eurovision Song Contest. Jane's PhD was on disablist hate crimes and she has published on hate crimes, domestic abuse and intersectionality. She has taught across criminology, sociology and forensic psychology programmes including hate crimes, terrorism studies, criminological theory and intersectional criminology. Jane's current research explores how Eurovision's perceived focus

on unity, inclusivity and belonging for minority groups could provide insights to be transferred to hate studies.

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Haley Hrymak

Bio: Haley Hrymak is a PhD Candidate at the Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia where her research focuses on economic abuse and the family law system. She is also a staff lawyer with Rise Women's Legal Centre and has conducted numerous research projects on family violence and its intersection with the family law system. Her PhD research is funded through a SSHRC Doctoral Award and the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Doctoral Fellowship. She was called to the bar in 2015 and has worked in the areas of criminal and family law.

Abstract: Economic Abuse and the High Costs of BC's Child Support System

Economic abuse is one of the most common forms of intimate partner violence, yet research is limited. There is no pre-existing

research that comprehensively analyzes the experiences of survivors seeking child support in BC. The paper presents the results from in-depth qualitative interviews with 50 people, 31 survivors of economic violence and 19 experts with specialized knowledge in economic abuse in BC. The personal accounts of violence from survivors, and the experiences of experts, provide novel insights into understanding the high costs survivors face when seeking child support from their abuser. The analysis within this paper creates a clearer understanding of the tactics abusers employ to perpetrate economic abuse within the child support system. This article critiques the ways the child support process places payors in a position of control, reinforcing an abusive dynamic.



Bahar Karbakhsh-Ravari

Bio: Bahar is an immigration lawyer and mediator in private practice since 2012. Bahar provides clients services in the area of immigration and refugee law, including Appeals to the Immigration and Appeal Division of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada and Judicial Reviews to the Federal Court of Canada. After having finished her LLM in Alternative Dispute Resolution, Bahar gained her Qualified Mediator designation from the ADR Institute of Ontario, and provides mediation services and is a roster mediator for the Mandatory Mediation program in Toronto for civil cases.

Besides a passion for human rights orientated law, Bahar has a deep love for nature, music, dance, writing and for the creative arts. For her M.A. Major Research Project, Bahar explored through documentary how dance and movement can be used for conflict resolution and personal transformation. Bahar believes in peace and the power of love and hopes to spread this message through her legal and literary work.

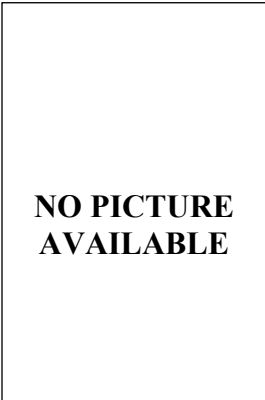
Abstract: Embodied Resistance: Iran & Beyond

Resistance in Iran and beyond flows from our bodies—our voices, our movements, our stories. Drawing on examples from the Women, Life, Freedom uprisings in Iran in 2022 through the present, this work foregrounds music, dance, gesture, song, storytelling, and poetry as praxis of resistance through which ordinary people, inside Iran and across the diaspora, assert presence and defiance. The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to silence bodies through policing, so-called ‘moral’ regulation, imprisonment, injury, and killing, yet these embodied acts cannot be fully contained—like wind, they cannot be captured or muted.

Attending to resistance through the body also requires attending to disability, both as lived experience and as a condition produced by state violence. Repression leaves bodies injured, exhausted, traumatized, and denied care; disability is not incidental to authoritarian control, but one of its effects.

For practitioners—artists, scholars, organizers—this calls for an expanded understanding of what it means to use our bodies as part of resistance. It asks us to work with our bodies not as expendable instruments, but as sites of vulnerability, relation, and care; to create practices that honor different capacities, tempos, and needs. Sustaining resistance requires bodies that can endure, rest, and be held in relation to others.

In the heart of the storm, these embodied acts remind us of our agency: that we too are powerful, able to shape change, even if slowly—like gentle breezes converging to turn the tide. Resistance is not peripheral; it flows through our bodies and our voices, enduring, unstoppable, and alive.



Aneela Khan

Abstract: A Mixed-Methods study on police responses in England and Wales to Reports of Sexual Violence from Victims with Impairments

Gender-based violence is a serious public health and societal concern. Of the rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) that are reported to the police in England and Wales, few are ever charged. This is further worsened when you consider key intersectional factors such as impairments, including disability. Our research aims to understand how the police in England and Wales responded to reports of RASSO from victims with impairments. Using data from Operation Soteria, the present study involved a convergent mixed-methods approach analysing 22 case reviews of RASSO and 50 semi-structured interviews with police officers. The findings suggest that victims who were noted to have a mental impairment were more likely to be discredited and perceived as submitting a false allegation than those with physical impairments, resulting in poor investigative practice. There was a consistent lack of appropriate safeguarding, which further increased the vulnerability and risk experienced by these individuals. This work emphasises the importance of improved training and need for specialism within policing. Future research should consider the

interplay between a range of intersectional factors and how this impacts the likelihood of RASSO cases being charged.



Sabrina Khela

Bio: Sabrina Khela is a Judicial Law Clerk at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. She holds a juris doctor degree (JD) from the Lincoln Alexander School of Law, Toronto Metropolitan University, an honours bachelor of arts degree (HBA) from the University of Toronto (English literature and French), and a master’s degree (MSt) from the University of Oxford (English literature). Following the completion of her clerkship, Sabrina intends to pursue a career in academia and litigation, specializing in criminal law, constitutional law, human rights law, and women’s rights.

Abstract: Gender Justice Delayed: A Feminist Critique of *R. v. Jordan*

Canadians live in a society where sexual violence is occurring at alarming rates. Sexual violence is also a highly gendered crime, and disproportionately impacts racialized women, Indigenous women, and women who identify as persons with a disability. While survivors and victims have become more comfortable with coming forward about their experiences of sexual violence, they have also faced various procedural barriers in the criminal courts, predominantly due to *delays*. This is because sexual violence cases carry the risk of being thrown out due to unreasonable delay and are indeed being thrown out for this reason. Section 11(b) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is a fundamental right. It guarantees that any person charged with an offence has the right to be tried within a reasonable time. In *R. v. Jordan*, the Supreme Court of Canada set out the framework that should be used to determine whether an accused was tried within a reasonable time under s. 11(b): 18 months between the charges and the trial in a provincial court without preliminary inquiry, or 30 months for cases tried in provincial courts after a preliminary inquiry or in superior courts.

While the Supreme Court’s intention was to remedy the “culture of delay and complacency” in the courts, the *Jordan* decision resulted in devastating consequences for survivors and victims pursuing criminal charges against responsible persons. With an increasing number of sexual assault cases being thrown out because of unreasonable delay, survivors and victims are disproportionately impacted by the s. 11(b) framework and lack

access to the full potential of the criminal justice system. Bringing together feminist legal theory, critical legal theory, and scholarship about criminal and sexual assault law, this paper argues that the Supreme Court's decision in *Jordan* has disproportionately impacted survivors and victims of sexual assault and has deepened the disabling impacts of sexual violence especially for survivors and victims seeking redress through the criminal justice system. The Supreme Court's reasoning does not strike an appropriate balance between the purpose of s. 11(b), which is the protection of the fundamental right to be tried within a reasonable time and the importance of justice, fairness, and the proper administration of justice. The fundamental right to a trial should allow survivors and victims a recourse in the criminal justice system to seek justice for the harms they have experienced. As a solution to this serious issue, I propose that the presumptive ceilings established in *Jordan* should not apply to serious offences, such as sexual assault, and that serious offences should be an exception.



Yukiko Kobayashi Lui

Bio: Yukiko Kobayashi Lui is an SJD Candidate at the University of Toronto Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law.

Abstract: Reconstructing Bracklow v Bracklow

The disabled ex-wife looms large over the Canadian law of spousal support. She is the protagonist of *Bracklow v Bracklow*, the landmark Supreme Court of Canada case that created need-based entitlement to spousal support. Although *Bracklow* is often taken as an expansion of spousal support, I argue that this expansion happened in tandem with an equally consequential contraction in the welfare state. Reconstructing *Bracklow* in macroeconomic view brings concerns about disability, distribution and poverty that have always animated family life back into view.



Nolan Krahn

Bio: Nolan Krahn (he/him) is a sociology M.A. student at York University. His thesis research merges social movement studies with critical disability studies. Echoing calls from disability justice scholars to look to the work disabled activists for guidance in times of social upheaval and climate crisis, the project analyzes actions from Southern Ontario’s disability justice movements as creative forms of activism that expand beyond non-disabled social movement tactics. He is interested in qualitative methods, including semi-structured and oral history interviews, discourse analysis, and archival analysis. Prior to his M.A., he spent six years working as a transcriptionist for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind students. He produces electronic music in his spare time, both solo and as part of a band originally based in Treaty 1.

Abstract: Genealogical Precursors” to Southern Ontario’s Disability Justice Movement

A central mandate in Sins Invalid’s (2019) disability justice framework is to eliminate hierarchies that further marginalize disabled folks who are not straight cis white men. These hierarchies, the progenitors of disability justice assert, largely characterized late 20th century disability rights movements in the anglosphere. However, to echo Sami Schalk (2023), some of these earlier disability rights movement campaigns can be understood as exemplary “genealogical precursors” to present-day disability justice. For example, Schalk highlights the Black Panther Party’s involvement in the 504 sit-ins as an illustration of disability justice principles in praxis before the framework was given a name. I suggest that a number of events in Southern Ontario’s late 20th century disability rights movements can be characterized in a similar manner. The histories of disability rights and disability justice as both critical frameworks and movements are not linear or mutually exclusive, but intertwined and co-constitutive. Through a review of historical literature on a selection of disability rights protest events from the early 1970s to the late 1990s in Southern Ontario, I highlight areas where earlier disability movements laid a foundation for Ontario’s disability justice movements today. This presentation is adapted from a chapter of an MA thesis in which I explore how the tactics of disability justice movements expand how contentious repertoires can be both understood and enacted in multi-issue social movements. The chapter lays a foundation that informs content analyses of local disability justice organizations’ websites and the blog posts of prominent disability justice scholar-activists.



Michele Leering

Bio: As a [Visiting Scholar](#) at Queen’s University’s Faculty of Law, Michele is co-organizing the first *International Symposium Series: Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals* between April and July 2026. She is also advising and supporting the September 2026 Law Foundation of Ontario-funded *Championing Health Justice Partnerships Conference*. Her research and advocacy are informed by four decades as Executive Director and community lawyer with Ontario’s non-profit Community Advocacy & Legal Centre. She works to transform legal services to be more holistic and evidence-based to respond to the multi-faceted and intersecting needs of clients and marginalized communities. Her approach is also informed by her [doctoral research](#) into more *integrative reflective practice* as a critical and essential meta-competency and more robust professional competency frameworks for 21st century lawyers. Her research also advances “people-centred justice,” a concept advanced by international organizations like the OECD and is inspired by the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 16.3 on access to justice and the rule of law. She is a Member of the Order of Canada for her work on access to justice.



Hanna Tilahun

Bio: **Hanna Tilahun** is a Senior Gender Advisor at World Vision International in Ethiopia, where she leads gender-transformative programming that advances women’s empowerment, social norms transformation, climate resilience, and inclusive development. Her work focuses on designing practical frameworks that promote intersectional inclusion and strengthen women’s participation in economic, social, and governance systems.

Hanna holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Laws in International Human Rights Law from Addis Ababa University. Her professional background spans the justice, policy, and development sectors. She began her career in Ethiopia’s Federal High Court as an Assistant Judge and later served as a Federal Public Prosecutor at the Ministry of Justice, working on cases related to the protection of women, children, and vulnerable groups.

She has also worked as a Senior Legal Advisor and Attorney with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Labor Union and as a Gender Officer with the international NGO Vita, supporting programs that

promote gender equality and women’s economic empowerment. In addition to her professional work, Hanna volunteers as Senior Legal Advisor to the Minister of Women and Social Affairs and for the international NGO MTU Tulvikutugi, supporting legal and programmatic efforts in gender, child protection, and social inclusion.

At this conference, Hanna presents “**Gender-Transformative Programming as a Model for Intersectional Inclusion: Lessons from Ethiopia’s RESILIENT-WE Project,**” exploring how gender-transformative development approaches can address structural barriers affecting women and women with disabilities.

Abstract: Gender-Transformative Programming as a Model for Intersectional Inclusion: Lessons from Ethiopia’s RESILIENT-WE Project

This paper examines the RESILIENT-WE Project in Ethiopia as a learning model for designing inclusive, rights-based interventions. While the project primarily targets gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of climate resilience, livelihoods, and social norms change, it offers transferable lessons for advancing disability inclusion. The analysis focuses on RESILIENT-WE’s integrated approaches—engaging community influencers, faith leaders, households, and men and boys; addressing unpaid care work; fostering policy and institutional alignment; and embedding rights-based, participatory frameworks. Using qualitative data from program implementation and field observations, the paper highlights how gender-transformative strategies can inform interventions for women and girls with disabilities, demonstrating the potential of adaptation to promote equitable participation, dismantle structural barriers, and enhance access to education, livelihoods, and protection. This study positions RESILIENT-WE as an exemplary case of operationalizing intersectional inclusion in contexts where direct disability interventions are absent, emphasizing the value of transferable programmatic frameworks to leave no one behind.



Cherie Metcalf

Bio: Cherie Metcalf is Associate Dean (Research) at Queen's Faculty of Law. Her research generally focuses on environmental and resource law and policy, especially intersections with Indigenous rights. She often uses empirical methods and interdisciplinary approaches. Her recent work relates to climate change and the role played by different institutions in advancing fair and effective climate action (SSHRC, CFLR). Another project examines legal "culture" in Canada and the US and the comparative role of private litigation to enforce public regulation (SSHRC). She has published in the *Northwestern University Law Review*, *Maryland Law Review*, *International Review of Law & Economics*, *Canadian Public Policy*, *University of Toronto Law Journal*, and *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* and regularly presents in Canada and the US. She was an invited visitor at the University of Colorado Faculty of Law & Institute of Behavioral Sciences Institutions Program, and Vancouver School of Economics at UBC. She teaches public & constitutional law, law & economics, and (when she has the chance) international environmental & resource law.



Ishani Mookherjee

Bio: **Ishani Mookherjee** is a third-year D.Phil. in Law student at the University of Oxford. She is a member of Somerville College, and an Oxford-Indira Gandhi Scholar at the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development. Her doctoral research, being supervised by Prof. Jonathan Herring, aims to critically evaluate the present legal framework on disability-selective abortions in India, and propose reforms thereto. It primarily draws upon the feminist 'ethics of care' model to develop a normative framework to address the dilemmas involved and examines the applicability of such a framework within the Indian socio-legal context. Prior to the D.Phil., she read for the Bachelor of Civil Law at the University of Oxford in 2022-23, during which she opted for public law courses, like International Human Rights Law, Comparative Equality Law, and Constitutional Theory. In 2021, she graduated with the B.A. LL.B. (Hons.) degree, as the gold medallist, from Jindal Global Law School, India.

Abstract: Understanding 'Choice' in Disability-Selective Abortions through the Feminist Ethics of Care: An Indian Perspective

Disability-selective abortions refer to abortions based on foetal condition(s), which may result in or increase the possibility of disability in the future child, if born. This paper will critically evaluate one aspect of the Indian legal framework on disability-selective abortions, which permits such abortions at advanced stages of the pregnancy: the reliance placed upon the pregnant woman's reproductive rights and choice. This paper will be divided into four parts. Part I will employ doctrinal methodology to provide an account of the Indian legal framework, especially to underline the extent of reliance placed upon the woman's reproductive rights and choice by Indian courts to permit such abortions. Part II will demonstrate that the liberal individualist framework of choice, dominant in the existing jurisprudence, fails to account for broader socio-legal context and structural constraints, which shape reproductive decision-making by Indian women. Part III will argue that while it is important to expose the exploitative potential of the extant socio-legal framework, it is also important to acknowledge that women may exercise (limited) agency while making reproductive decisions, albeit within specific (unfavourable) circumstances. In view of the limitations of a liberal individualist framework and a sole emphasis on exploitative external structures, Part IV will examine whether a relational model of autonomy, as endorsed by the feminist ethics of care, captures the complexities involved in reproductive decision-making by Indian women in context of disability-selective abortions and whether the Indian courts have or could accommodate such an account within Indian doctrine.



Deepti Panda

Bio: **Deepti Panda** is an internationally trained lawyer with over 18 years of litigation experience in commercial matters, domestic and international arbitration, cross-border disputes, and public interest litigation. She has been appointed as mediator and sole arbitrator in multiple proceedings by the Bombay High Court for over 10 years. Currently a doctoral candidate at Queen's University, she is researching the intersection of public and private international law. Deepti holds an LL.M. in International Dispute Resolution from Queen Mary University of London and a B.L.S., LL.B. from Mumbai University.

Abstract: The “Shrimp Salad” Bowl of Rights, Privileges and DEI: A Hohfeldian Critique of Corporate Inclusion

This paper uses Wesley Hohfeld's well-known “shrimp salad” example to critique the conceptual foundations of diversity,

equity, and inclusion (“DEI”) in corporate law. Drawing on Hohfeld’s distinction between “rights” and “privileges”, the paper argues that much of corporate DEI discourse remains trapped in a language of permission rather than enforceable entitlement. According to Hohfeld there is no right without a corresponding duty imposed on others. Absent such a duty, it is merely a privilege. This analytical framework is employed to examine contemporary corporate inclusion regimes, in which DEI objectives are commonly articulated through aspirational or deontic language—“corporations should be inclusive” and “boards ought to be diverse”—without creating corresponding legal duties.

This paper analyzes diversity disclosure requirements under the Canada Business Corporations Act (“CBCA”) and the Canada Business Corporations Regulations (“CBCR”), which rely on “comply or explain” mechanisms rather than mandatory enforcement. I argue that corporate law in Canada positions individuals who meet DEI criteria as having a “privilege” to compete for participation in corporate governance, rather than a “right” to inclusion supported by institutional obligations. The paper contends that when inclusion is framed as permission, it reproduces existing hierarchies; when framed as an enforceable right, it has the potential to disrupt them. It concludes by calling for a shift in corporate law from aspirational DEI rhetoric to a rights-based framework that imposes clear duties on corporate actors and enables meaningful accountability.



Derek Ross

Bio: Derek Ross, LL.B. (Western), LL.M. (Toronto), is Executive Director & General Counsel for Christian Legal Fellowship. His litigation practice focuses on public and constitutional law, and he has appeared before all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada. He has also appeared before legislative and Parliamentary committees to present on constitutional and legal issues.

Derek serves as a visiting faculty member at Western University’s Faculty of Law, teaching Law & Religion, and is a centre associate with the UBC Centre for Constitutional Law and Legal Studies. He is also a Law Commission of Canada Associate and is contributing to the Commission’s *Charity and Law in Canada* project. Derek previously served as an Executive Member of the Charity and Not-for-Profit Law and Constitutional and Human

Rights Law sections of both the Canadian Bar Association and the Ontario Bar Association.

Derek's academic writing on the Charter has been cited by the Supreme Court of Canada, the Court of Appeal for Ontario and the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. He is the general editor of two editions of *The Supreme Court Law Review*, which were also published as corresponding books: *Assisted Death: Legal, Social, and Ethical Issues After Carter* (LexisNexis Canada, 2018), and *Canadian Pluralism and the Charter: Moral Diversity in a Free and Democratic Society* (LexisNexis Canada, 2019). He also co-edited four volumes on constitutional and human rights law: *The Forgotten Fundamental Freedoms of the Charter* (LexisNexis Canada, 2020), *Forgotten Foundations of the Canadian Constitution* (LexisNexis Canada, 2021), *Rights, Freedoms, and Their Limits: Reimagining Section 1 of the Charter* (LexisNexis Canada, 2023), and *Equal and Inalienable Rights: Essays on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (LexisNexis Canada, 2024).

Abstract: Equal Protection of the Law and the Equal Right to Life: Examining the Judiciary's Role in Overseeing the Interpretation of Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying Requirements

Section 15 of the Charter guarantees, among other rights, the equal protection of the law without discrimination based on sex or physical or mental disability. Combined with Canada's international law commitments, this requires the government to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective enjoyment of the right to life, and access to life-affirming and gender sensitive health care, by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others (UN CRPD, arts. 10 and 25). However, a growing body of scholarship has raised concerns that, in the context of Canada's medical assistance in dying (MAID) regime, these standards are not being met, and that the effects of this inequality have particular and disproportionate implications for women with disabilities as persons with intersecting identities who experience intersectional discrimination. These and related concerns have been further pronounced in a number of statements and reports issued by United Nations committees and human rights experts. This presentation will examine these issues through the lens of a specific concern that has been raised in the Canadian context: namely, that there appears to be minimal, if any, judicial oversight over how health care providers (particularly MAiD assessors and/or providers) interpret the Criminal Code's MAID

requirements, at least not until post-mortem. Perhaps more specifically: how does MAiD law and policy address intersectionality particularly when concerns are raised about whether a request for MAiD has been "made as a result of external pressure"? What remedies are available - or ought to be?



Mary J. Shariff

Bio: Dr. Mary J. Shariff is a Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba, where she also serves as Associate Dean of Graduate Programs. Appointed to lead the University of Manitoba's Master of Human Rights program in 2024 and the Master of Laws program in 2025, Dr. Shariff brings extensive academic leadership and vision to advancing interdisciplinary human rights and legal education. A Canadian legal scholar, she holds a Ph.D. from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, and has developed a transdisciplinary research program bridging law, medicine, bioethics, health, environment and human rights. Her work examines how legal reasoning moves across systems, with particular attention to autonomy, dignity, vulnerability, and end-of-life. Dr. Shariff is recognized nationally and internationally, has produced an impressive body of scholarship, provided expert opinions - including serving as an expert in landmark Canadian medical assistance in dying (MAiD) cases.

Her research focuses on high-stakes areas such as medical assistance in dying, palliative care, elder and disability rights, resource scarcity and exploitation and legal strategy, emphasizing the real-world implications of legal frameworks and systems interactions. Dr. Shariff actively engages in policy, law reform, and public scholarship, contributing to national and international debates on law, ethics, and social justice.

Abstract: Equal Protection of the Law and the Equal Right to Life: Examining the Judiciary's Role in Overseeing the Interpretation of Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying Requirements

Section 15 of the Charter guarantees, among other rights, the equal protection of the law without discrimination based on sex or physical or mental disability. Combined with Canada's international law commitments, this requires the government to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective enjoyment of the right to life, and access to life-affirming and gender sensitive health care, by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others (UN CRPD, arts. 10 and 25). However, a growing body of

scholarship has raised concerns that, in the context of Canada's medical assistance in dying (MAID) regime, these standards are not being met, and that the effects of this inequality have particular and disproportionate implications for women with disabilities as persons with intersecting identities who experience intersectional discrimination. These and related concerns have been further pronounced in a number of statements and reports issued by United Nations committees and human rights experts. This presentation will examine these issues through the lens of a specific concern that has been raised in the Canadian context: namely, that there appears to be minimal, if any, judicial oversight over how health care providers (particularly MAiD assessors and/or providers) interpret the Criminal Code's MAiD requirements, at least not until post-mortem. Perhaps more specifically: how does MAiD law and policy address intersectionality particularly when concerns are raised about whether a request for MAiD has been "made as a result of external pressure"? What remedies are available - or ought to be?



Stephanie Simpson

Bio: Stephanie Simpson has been a member of the Queen's University Community since 1996, starting in the portfolios of anti-racism advisor and education coordinator and increasing in responsibility since. She was most recently appointed in June 2023 as the Vice Principal (Culture, Equity and Inclusion). In this role, Stephanie leads the Offices of Human Rights and Equity, Indigenous Initiatives, Ombuds and Complaints and Investigations. Stephanie plays a key role in fostering both competence and legislative compliance around matters such as inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, human rights, and equity on Queen's campus.

Stephanie holds a Master of Education degree and a Master of Laws degree from Queen's. Her research has focused on how racism and processes of racialization affect youth in smaller urban centres such as Kingston, as well as adjudicative silences with respect to racial inequality and access to justice for racial equality seekers.

During her academic career she was active as a student in the African Caribbean Students Association, the Southern Africa Solidarity Group, and was a founding member of the Queen's Black History Collective. An engaged community member, she is a founding member and past Co-ordinator of Black History Month Kingston and is a longstanding member of the Black Inmates and

Friends Assembly. Stephanie currently represents Queen's on the Kingston Immigration Partnership Operations.

Stephanie is a sought after speaker on issues related to anti-racism, anti-oppression, social justice and domestic human rights. She has provided consultation and education services to a wide range of community partners, including Interval House, Limestone District School Board and Kingston General Hospital, among many others. Stephanie has been a well-respected leader on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for many years.



Deanne Sowter

Bio: Deanne Sowter is an Assistant Professor at the Lincoln Alexander School of Law, Toronto Metropolitan University. Her research and teaching interests focus on family law, gender-based violence, feminist legal theory, and legal ethics. She is especially interested in the family justice system, including the lawyers' role, and exploring the limitations of the applicable legal principles to examine the ways that family law and the professional rules governing lawyers could be more responsive to gender-based violence.

Dr. Sowter has published twelve peer-reviewed papers, and her work has been cited by the Supreme Court of Canada. Her research has been generously supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, including a Vanier Scholarship, as well as several prestigious fellowships and scholarships, including the OBA Foundation Chief Justice of Ontario Fellowship in Legal Ethics and Professionalism Studies, and the McCarthy Tetrault Fellowship in Professional Ethics at Queen's Law. Dr. Sowter has taught family law courses at the University of Calgary, Western Law, and Queen's Law. She has a JD and PhD from Osgoode Hall Law School, an LLM from the University of Toronto, and she is a collaboratively trained family lawyer and a member of the Law Society of Ontario.

Abstract: Self-Represented Litigants and Cross-Examinations: Myths, Stereotypes and Retraumatization in Family Law Cases Involving Restraining Orders

Victims of intimate partner violence (“IPV”) struggle to access the family justice system in Canada. Often experiencing a complex range of trauma, including because of IPV, the challenges these victims face are exacerbated by a system that tends to prioritize male-defined credibility norms. At the same time, because of the

access to justice crisis, many individuals are self-represented which means that in family law trials victims are directly being cross-examined by their abuser and / or are cross-examining them. There are no statutory safeguards to protect victims from retraumatization and to preserve the quality of their evidence (unlike criminal law). This project seeks to unpack those complexities, including questions about what evidence is relied upon by courts to make a finding of family violence. This paper focuses on cross-examinations in family law trials involving claims for restraining orders, where at least one party is self-represented. I will present a feminist analysis of a case law review of 40 recent family law decisions, identifying access to justice failures, including the problematic influence of myths and stereotypes, as well as patterns of systems abuse.



Marie Spinoy

Bio: [Marie Spinoy](#) is a researcher in anti-discrimination law, affiliated with KU Leuven and Ghent University in Belgium and co-director of the [Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality & Anti-Discrimination Law's Disability Rights Working Group](#). She regularly speaks, publishes and teaches on anti-discrimination law, on the rights of persons with disabilities and on critical legal theory.

Abstract: Anti-Discrimination Law at the Intersection of Gender and Disability: Design Flaws or Avenues for Action?

In 2024, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [recommended that](#) Belgium took more active steps to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities and to counteract intersectional disadvantage. This presentation analyses what such an intersectional approach would look like in the application of Belgian anti-discrimination law. Firstly, it maps various challenges that can be expected to apply in this area. Secondly, the presentation explores some of the ways forward for anti-discrimination law at this specific intersection. The presentation concludes with recommendations to make anti-discrimination law's protection truly accessible to all.



Hiwot Temesgen Andualem

Bio: Hiwot Andualem is a fifth-year PhD candidate in Rehabilitation Science at Queen’s University, whose research focuses on advancing health equity for women with disabilities. Her doctoral dissertation explores the role of community-based rehabilitation in promoting access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for women with intellectual disabilities. Today’s presentation highlights findings from one of her studies examining the barriers and facilitators that shape access to SRH services for women with intellectual disabilities. Understanding these factors is essential to improving inclusive health systems, supporting caregivers and service providers, and ensuring that women with intellectual disabilities can fully realize their sexual and reproductive health rights.

Hiwot would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the co-authors of this study for their valuable contributions, collaboration, and support in advancing this important work.

Abstract: Barriers and facilitators to accessing sexual and reproductive health services for women with intellectual disability

People with disabilities are deprived of education, employment, health, and social and political rights. Moreover, women with disabilities are mostly subjected to double discrimination because of their gender and are more vulnerable to physical, mental, and sexual abuse. Also, women with intellectual disability face stigma and discrimination in accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare, which in turn affects their decision-making abilities regarding sexuality. In Ethiopia, due to a lack of resources and limited awareness, women with intellectual disabilities have difficulties accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare. We aimed to explore the challenges and facilitators to accessing sexual and reproductive health services in Gondar, Ethiopia. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the existing barriers and facilitators, aiming to improve service provision for women with intellectual disabilities in Gondar, Ethiopia. In-depth interviews were conducted in Amharic using semi-structured interview guides with 17 purposively selected women with Intellectual disability aged 15-49. After the interviews were transcribed, thematic analysis was conducted using both inductive and deductive approaches. The analysis resulted in six themes: sexual and reproductive health education, contraception, prevention of sexual abuse, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and parenthood, and

community-based rehabilitation. Study findings showed the barriers and facilitators to accessing sexual and reproductive health services for women with intellectual disability, grasping firsthand information and experiences of these women. The findings have implications for future researchers, healthcare policymakers and healthcare practitioners in guiding them to design interventions promoting sexual and reproductive healthcare success and improved outcomes among women with intellectual disability.



Tika

Bio: TIKA is an Academy Award–winning composer, multidisciplinary artist, and cultural strategist whose work lives at the intersection of music, storytelling, and social impact. Her practice explores themes of voice, emotional resilience, and creative sovereignty, with a focus on how artists and communities navigate systems that shape expression, identity, and belonging.

Alongside her artistic practice, TIKA is an in-demand public speaker and facilitator, delivering keynotes, workshops, and immersive experiences across universities, conferences, and global forums. Her speaking work centers on emotional intelligence, creative empowerment, and the conditions necessary for individuals and communities to thrive.

As the founder of Iverna Island, a cultural ecosystem and future-forward creative platform, TIKA is building infrastructure that centers rest, equity, and imagination as essential components of sustainable artistic practice.

TIKA’s frameworks—including *The Cost of Silence*[™], *Rest as Resistance*[™], and *Creative Sovereignty*[™]—invite participants to interrogate the internal and external conditions that shape their ability to speak, create, and lead. Through this work, she supports individuals and institutions in cultivating more humane, emotionally intelligent, and liberated approaches to leadership and cultural production.

Her work has been recognized internationally, and she continues to collaborate across disciplines to reimagine what it means to create, connect, and care in complex times.

Abstract: The Cost of Silence: How Voice, Trauma & Nervous System Literacy Shape Disability for Black Women

Trauma seals voice — sometimes literally. As a Black woman survivor whose nervous system learned danger through silence, TIKA examines how trauma, cultural suppression, and gendered violence create disability. Blending lived experience with neuro-somatic tools, this session offers pathways to safety, self-recognition, and the restoration of voice as a healing technology.



Magdalena Zabrocka

Bio: Magdalena, having completed her BA degree in English Studies and qualified as a teacher at the University of Gdansk, joined the School of Law in 2019 as a Master of Laws student. She obtained her LLM degree in International Law and International Relations in 2020 and started her Postgraduate Diploma in Law at the BPP University. As a student at the University of Aberdeen, Magdalena was one of the editors for the ASLR while her research focus included international human rights, public international law and EU law. Magdalena has volunteered in a number of pro-bono projects, including legal advice clinics, and completed various legal internships. Her most recent employment before moving to the UK was as a project coordinator of EU-funded projects completed in cooperation with foreign partner institutions, and later on a paralegal. In 2019, she won a national literary competition and received a joint bursary from the University of Gdansk and Trinity College Dublin. In 2021, Magdalena co-authored a study commissioned by European Parliament Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) on ‘The Use of SLAPPs to Silence Journalists, NGOs and Civil Society’ and became a member of the Anti-SLAPP hub with other scholars at the University of Aberdeen, responsible for providing guidance to legal practitioners and professionals in Member States on strategic lawsuits. In 2022, Magdalena authored an analysis on the CJEU Case C-673/20 EP v Préfet du Gers concerning human rights aspects of some Brits being deprived of their electoral rights, following Brexit (Oxford Human Rights Hub). Magdalena started her PhD at the School of Law in January 2021 and, following her roles as an UG Tutor and a Research Assistant, she is currently employed by the UoA as a Teaching Fellow. Magdalena’s research concerns citizenship and residence by investment (CBI/RBI) schemes in EU Member States. Her broader interests include EU law, human rights, and public law.

Abstract: Male Centric Neurodivergence and Systemic “Acceptance Norms”: Disability, Sex, and AI Driven EDI Frameworks

Neurodivergence has been historically constructed through male centred medical and policy frameworks that position white, middle class male symptomatology as the diagnostic and normative default, with the result that neurodivergent women and girls are under recognised, misdiagnosed, and structurally excluded from meaningful support across law, education, employment, and healthcare. This paper analyses how these sex skewed baselines are reproduced and intensified as institutions increasingly rely on digitalised and AI mediated tools in EDI policy, HR processes, and accessibility governance, hard coding male pattern neurodivergence into ostensibly neutral systems while rendering female pattern neurodivergence illegible or “non compliant” with standard accommodation imaginaries. Using an interdisciplinary socio legal methodology that combines historical analysis, critical disability and feminist theory, and attention to contemporary algorithmic governance, the paper traces the chain from male dominated clinical research and diagnostic criteria to current EDI architectures and AI driven decision making, conceptualising these as “systemic acceptance norms” that determine which disabled subjects count as properly accommodated and which are disciplined or discarded. In dialogue with disability human rights frameworks and intersectional debates on accessibility, care, and institutional violence, the paper argues for a re design of legal, policy, and technological infrastructures to centre neurodivergent women and girls as epistemic agents, proposing sex responsive data practices, co produced accessibility standards, and robust algorithmic audit obligations as necessary conditions for realising disability equality and ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital turn.

This project speaks directly to the conference focus on women, disability, and intersectionality by foregrounding how disability injustice is produced at the intersection of sex biased medical knowledge, legal and policy design, and emerging AI based governance, and by offering concrete proposals for dismantling systemic barriers to access, inclusion, and care for neurodivergent women and girls.