

**KINDNESS AND
COMPASSION ARE
NOT THE
FOUNDATION WE
NEED**



GROWING PAINS

Right now, many people are starting to recognize and truly see our Autistic community for the first time, and they want to help. They want to learn and do better.

This is an exciting time for everyone! Inevitably, there are going to be some growing pains. And that's okay.

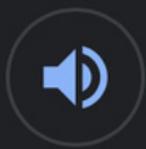
One thing we are seeing is a paradigm shift from looking to gain compliance and "fixing us" to kindness and compassion. We are so happy to see this rapid era of change, but we would like to respectfully ask you to change your target.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH KINDNESS AND COMPASSION?!

Kindness and compassion are wonderful. They're also context-specific. People show compassion to someone who is struggling. Kindness is similar.

Both often translate as synonyms of mercy, pity, benevolence, and generosity.

Kindness and compassion are great, just not as a default way to approach interacting with a whole population.



com·pas·sion

/kəm'pɑːʃən/

noun

sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.

"the victims should be treated with compassion"

Similar:

pity

sympathy

feeling



DISABILITY NUANCE

Disabled people, like all people, need kindness and compassion when the situation merits it: after being mistreated, when a loved one passes away, financial hardship, illness, having a meltdown or shutdown, etc.

If you think we need compassion by default, it's because you think you have something we are missing, inherently.



SAVIORISM

Disabled people experience a lot of oppression, infantilization, pity, and saviorism from well-meaning non-disabled people.

We don't need kindness and compassion as a default reaction because we are not wretched as a matter of existence.

When you have compassion and kindness as your default approach, it may come from a place of internalized supremacy.



WHAT WE REALLY NEED

Kindness and compassion are great, but they're also very easy. They're feelings you experience.

We actually need you to do some hard work.



LEARN

If you're working with disabled people, spend some time in disability spaces where there's no power dynamic.

You'll be uncomfortable, socially awkward, say all the wrong things, and be educated. But you'll stop seeing yourself as the default and will learn to truly understand and be in community with diverse ways of being human.

Can you imagine what it's like to proudly tell someone you're autistic, and they immediately respond with, "Awww"? They created a power dynamic, instantly and based on no other information.

WISDOM OF THE ELDERS

Being disabled is not a source of innate wisdom about disability. Disabled people gain wisdom and knowledge through research and being in community with disabled people whose lives are different from their own. They learn by doing years of labor-- same as anyone else.

We need everyone, even other disabled people, to first admit to themselves and everyone else that they are not an authority on intersectional disability existence.

At the foundation of equity, all people need access to community, self-determination, and self-knowledge.



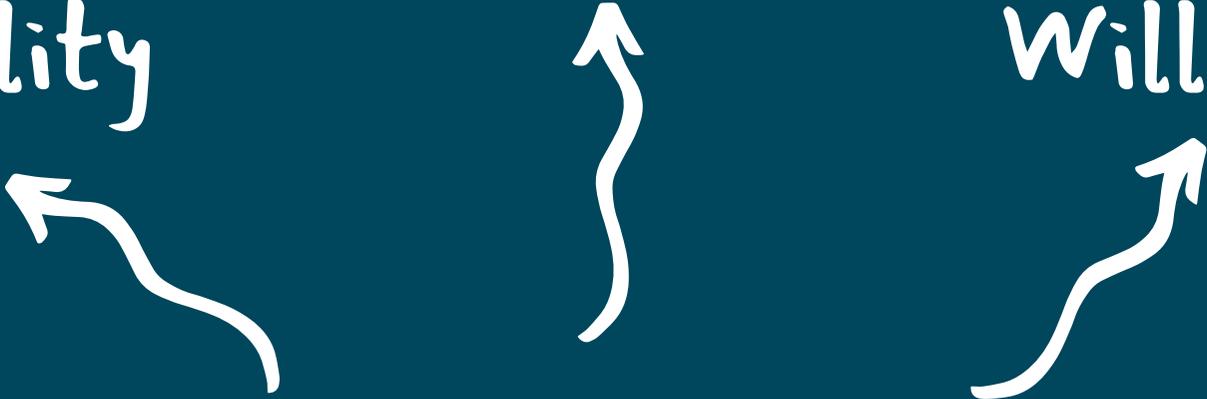
DO NO HARM.

Until you put in the work, you can't know us. You will have nothing but your compassion, and we need more. You won't know what we need. You'll assume our struggles are because we're inherently needy of your default wisdom, like you were born a firefighter and we were born on fire.

Step one is admitting, to yourself and others, that you don't already have what you need to avoid harm. The possibilities are endless from there!



Humility Curiosity Willingness



Better foundational approaches

Respect Self-determination Autonomy

