Speaker 1:

The Disability and Philanthropy Forum presents Taryn Williams, Disability Rights Activist.

Taryn Williams:

If we overlook disability in our work, then we are overlooking the very real policies and the outdated systems that prevent us from achieving economic justice. We were just talking about immigration, I'm going to move into housing, it's front of mind for me right now, because of this growing eviction crisis that we're confronting. And if we were omitting disability, it would be like trying to address geographic segregation that exists in our cities without examining the history of redlining, the patterns of investment by banks, and the ways in which the industry, in the case of investors, all the way to realtors, either deliberately or through implicit bias reinforce who gets to live where and what communities get the most benefits. If we overlook disability in our work, then what we're doing is we're addressing consequences without paying full attention to the cause.

Taryn Williams:

And all of us in this space know from our work and our history, what happens when policies are developed without addressing root causes. At best, we get unintended consequences and at worse, we end up reproducing harm and looking at more devastation in the communities that we're trying to serve. And so, again, just going back to that example, if we are not discussing disability and using a disability explicit lens, when we're talking about that, then that means sort of, we don't know how many black and brown people are homeless because of a lack of access to affordable housing that is also accessible. If we're not talking about disability when we're talking about the housing crisis, then we don't know how many black and brown people are unable to save sufficient funds to purchase a home because they're struggling to access affordable care, to pay for their expenses like prescriptions and personal attendance or the equipment that they need, or the repairs on their chairs.

Taryn Williams:

If we're not using a disability explicit lens, then we don't know how many black and brown people don't have jobs in their communities because they don't have access to accessible public transportation, to para transit, to subways, the buses that really will include them and make sure they can get from their homes to their jobs. So if we're not explicitly bringing a disability lens to the conversation, then we are risking developing solutions without seeing the whole picture of the problem that we're trying to solve. And it's challenging, it's messy work when you're talking about systemic racism and we're talking about systemic ableism, but bringing that lens is what's going to make us more likely to produce those improved outcomes.

Speaker 1:

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