

# Including Disability in LIS Education and Workplaces: From Local Concerns to Global Vision

Keren Dali<sup>a</sup>, Kim M. Thompson<sup>b</sup>, Mirah J. Dow<sup>c</sup>, Brady Lund<sup>c</sup>, Kevin J. Mallary<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Denver, USA

<sup>b</sup>University of South Carolina, USA

<sup>c</sup>Emporia State University, USA

<sup>d</sup>University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA

keren.dali@du.edu, thomps@mailbox.sc.edu, mdow@emporia.edu, blund2@g.emporia.edu,  
kmallary@vols.utk.edu

## ABSTRACT

Local variations notwithstanding, workplace disability exclusion is a global phenomenon. Despite continuous attempts to increase the participation of disabled LIS faculty and staff in workplaces, both recruitment and retention efforts fall short. Despite tremendous documented successes with regard to including students with disabilities in LIS programs and users with disabilities in libraries, archives, museums, and information organizations, the situation of faculty and staff with disabilities remains neglected. Attempts to quantify workplace exclusion may be misleading since many faculty and staff choose not to disclose their disability, fearing negative consequences for their career prospects. Bullying and discrimination, added to physical and mental health challenges, can be particularly marginalizing. These observations emerge in different countries and regions, including Canada, the Caribbean, Israel, South Africa, UK, and the U.S. The heartening trend of expanding diversity conversations on campus and at LIS workplaces often exclude disabled employees, be they academics or professionals, which results in a serious marginalization of disabilities even in the context of diversity efforts. Similarly, discussing global LIS education and professional practices, we leave employees with disabilities out. As a result, our global vision is regrettably fragmented and excludes an international community of talented and productive individuals who, in some countries, represent the largest minority group. Striving for a truly global and inclusive educational, professional, and information environment, LIS community members could begin by counteracting the view of the world as exclusively able-bodied. This ALISE Academy workshop takes concrete steps in this direction by going beyond politically correct, theoretical, or conceptual discussions, and addresses the existing gaps and deficiencies in the state of disability inclusion. The session is intended for academic and professional administrators of all levels; future leaders, including beginner faculty, and Ph.D. and master's students; and any educator or practitioner interested in disability at the workplace.