

Intersectionality & Disability

Keri Gray, founder and CEO of the Keri Gray Group, advises young professionals, businesses, and organizations on issues around disability, race, gender, and intersectionality. Keri illustrates how the framework of intersectionality is essential to true inclusion.

Transcript begins.

[Keri Gray, a young-adult black woman with a prosthetic leg, sits for an interview in an airy studio. She is wearing a red romper and a black head wrap.]

KERI GRAY: My name is Keri Gray. Keri Gray is a black, disabled woman, and there's power behind that.

[on-screen graphic: Intersectionality & Disability]

GRAY: In the United States, one in four in the black community have some type of disability, whether that's visible or invisible.

Historically speaking, organizations and institutions have shown us that they want to identify with one thing and build power around that, build influence and access. And I get it, right? So, this idea that you have disability rights, you have women's rights, you have LGBTQ rights, and those kind of different pockets are really building a strong narrative.

But the thing that I find to be harmful is when we're not building in coalition, because the reality is, is that you have people like myself, who are black, disabled, and women, and so many other things. And when you live at the intersections of all three of those, then you can't split your political and social dynamics between these different groups. It doesn't produce real results of freedom and it doesn't produce real results of access to employment and other opportunities that you're looking for.

I'll give one example on this. So the Black Lives Matter movement. When it was created, it was created in conjunction mostly with a lot of young folks. What was unique about this particular movement was the intersectional philosophy that was built upon, the folks getting up and saying, "We are not just fighting for one narrative, but we are specifically fighting for folks who are on the margins. We are fighting for black folks who are also LGBTQ, who are women, who are fem, who are trans, who are disabled."

They named it. They saw their people across the country and said, "I'm fighting for all of you. Not just some of you. Not just the ones that have traditionally gained power and access." And that gives me a lot of hope. Because no one wants to be left behind.

[on-screen graphic: There Is No Justice without Disability]

End of transcript.