



*Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion & Advocacy Series*

*Presents:*

# *Intersectionality Among Women and Girls with Disabilities and Their Allies*

**Keynote Speaker:** Donna Walton, Ed.D, RespectAbility Board Member and  
Founder and President of *Divas with Disabilities*

**MC:** Debbie Fink, Director of Community Outreach and Impact, RespectAbility  
and the *Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion & Advocacy Training Series*

**Presenter:** Stephanie Farfan, Policy, Practices, and Latinx Outreach Associate, RespectAbility

Vivian Bass, Board Member, RespectAbility Executive Committee

[www.RespectAbility.org](http://www.RespectAbility.org)

# Meet RespectAbility's Team

**Debbie Fink** is Director of Community Outreach & Impact for RespectAbility, and responsible for the *Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion & Advocacy Training Series*.

She brings more than 15 years of diverse leadership experience in public health, education and arts programming to serve RespectAbility's mission.

Fink has a lifetime commitment to enabling people with disabilities to have a better future and is passionate about the constructive impact volunteers can make in the world.



Picture: Debbie Fink smiling at the camera.

# Meet RespectAbility's Team 2

**Stephanie Farfan** was the Policy, Practices and Latinx Outreach Associate for RespectAbility. As a little person, she has always been committed to disability rights and advocacy. She has experienced firsthand the discrimination many people with disabilities face. This discrimination led to her commitment to fight the stigmas and social barriers that people with disabilities have to contend with to be taken seriously. Farfan has been a part of Little People of America (LPA) since she was 16 years old and volunteered her time as a co-chair for the Hispanic Affairs Committee. Farfan completed her undergraduate studies with a major in Peace and Conflict Studies and a minor in French at Juniata College in Pennsylvania. She is currently pursuing a Masters' in International Peace and Conflict Resolution at American University.



Picture: Stephanie Farfan smiling at the camera.

## Did you know that...

- ❖ ... there are almost 500,000 women and girls with disabilities in NYC.
- ❖ ... women with a disability earn on average nearly \$9,000 less than women without disabilities, and \$16,000 per year less than men without a disability.
- ❖ ... 44% of the city's women with disabilities live below the poverty line.
- ❖ ... only 29% of African American women with disabilities are employed.
- ❖ ... only 24% of Latinas with disabilities have jobs.

**BROOKLYN - Average Income: \$26,566 (<28% peers)**

❖ ~ 68,500 working-age women w/disabilities

**QUEENS - Average Income: \$24,073 (<24% peers)**

❖ ~ 55,500 working-age women w/ disabilities

**MANHATTAN - Average Income: \$23,715 (<54% peers)**

❖ ~ 44,800 working-age women w/ disabilities

**THE BRONX - Average Income: \$21,151 (<28% peers)**

❖ ~ 67,500 working-age women w/ disabilities

**STATEN ISLAND - Avg. Income: \$21,151 (<32% peers)**


❖ ~ 11,000 working-age women with disabilities

## The Intersection between Gender-Based Violence And Disability

- ❖ Over 40% of women w/ physical disabilities report being sexually assaulted
- ❖ 83% of women and girls with developmental disabilities are victims of sexual assault
- ❖ Women w/ disabilities are **TWICE** as likely to be victims of domestic violence as non-disabled women

**It is TIME to change this PARADIGM!!!**

# Adding the Disability Lens...



**By bringing the disability lens, *you* can help organizations cultivate a more inclusive and equitable environment for people with and without disabilities alike. New York City needs *your* participation and leadership!**

# 1. Commit publicly to inclusion of people with disabilities



Pictured: Words "We are all equal" handwritten on palm of hand

We must send the message time and again that all people are of equal value and must be respected and heard fairly.

This is especially true for women with disabilities and *especially* true for women of color with disabilities.

*Your advocacy is crucial!*



## 2. Your lived experience can make a difference

- ❖ Disability impacts people of all races, genders, sexual orientations, and other backgrounds.
- ❖ Integrating and owning your multiple identities will make your advocacy work stronger and more effective.

# 3. Identity Language Preference

- ❖ Decide whether you prefer “person first” or “identity first” language.
- ❖ Be comfortable letting other people know your preference.
- ❖ [Webinar on Disability Etiquette](#)



Picture: Blind woman with white cane facing the camera.

## 4. Become an “Inclusionist” for an organization or agency



Picture: African American woman in a wheelchair smiling at the camera.

- ❖ See beyond your own disability(ies) and accommodation requirements.
- ❖ Learn about other disabilities and their accommodation requirements.

*Advocate for all people with disabilities!*

[Resource on Disability Inclusion](#)

## 5. Learn how to ensure digital accessibility



Picture: banner on a building which contains a person in wheelchair and the phrase "pardon our appearance as we make our selves accessible to people of all abilities"

- ❖ Learn how to identify digital inaccessibility.
- ❖ Figure out who to contact to make a change and follow up!
- ❖ Caption videos – everyone can do this on YouTube!
- ❖ Make documents and presentations accessible
  - ❖ See [Webinar](#)
- ❖ See [RespectAbility's webinar on web accessibility](#)

*Share this information with others!*

## 6. Ensure physical accessibility at civic events

- ❖ Learn how to identify physical inaccessibility *before* an event.
- ❖ Figure out who to contact to make a change and follow up!
- ❖ Refer to the *Disability Access Checklist* in your packet.

All of the following must be accessible:

- ❖ Invitation/notification of event
- ❖ Facilities
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Staff/Volunteers

Additional Resources:

[Physical Accessibility](#)

[Event Checklist](#)

# Disability Access Checklist

- Do you have policies or programs that support inclusion of people with disabilities at all levels? Are they prominent on your website and print materials?
- Do you serve people with disabilities as you do everyone else, or are they forced into segregated “special-needs programs”?
- Do your event registration forms invite people to request any accommodations they might need, such as sign-language interpreters or the ability to bring a service animal?
- Has someone who uses a wheelchair checked the physical accessibility of your offices and/or events? Are they accessible?
- Has a person who is blind or who uses adaptive computer technology checked your website, social media and facilities for accessibility?
- Do your videos have closed captioning? Do you have a way to communicate with people who are deaf or use adaptive devices?
- Have you considered how the language you use may affect your ability to include people with disabilities?
- Have you thought about Intersectionality? People with disabilities cut across every demographic – gender, age, race, sexual orientation, etc.
- “Nothing about us without us” is more than a slogan in the disability community. Are you including qualified people with disabilities in leadership positions?

## 7. Have the resources ready

- ❖ [RespectAbility](#), Best Practices for Employers
- ❖ [TAPAbility](#), which can source talent
- ❖ [AskJan.org](#), which can problem solve inclusive employment questions for free



Picture: African American woman with leg braces and a walker, looking at the camera.

**Vivian Bass** is a vital member of RespectAbility's Executive Committee. She has dedicated her career to improving the quality of life, independence and community inclusion and dignity of persons with disabilities throughout the Washington, D.C., area, nationally and internationally. She became the CEO Emeritus of The Jewish Foundation for Group Homes (JFGH) in June 2016 subsequent to serving for 30 years at the helm of the agency. Bass has presented at The World Congress on Disabilities in conjunction with the Paralympics, The National Organization on Disability (NOD), The American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), The General Assembly of The Jewish Federations of North America, The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), The International Lion of Judah Conference and numerous others.



Picture: Vivian Bass smiling at the camera.



**Dr. Donna Rena Walton, Ed.D.**, currently serves on RespectAbility's Board of Advisors. She is the author of her newly released book [\*Shattered Dreams, Broken Pieces\*](#), an eye-opening tale of reinvention that chronicles the decades Walton spent working to rebuild her world through disasters, setbacks, trials, and tribulations after a dangerous form of bone cancer threatened her life-and forced the amputation of her left leg above the knee.

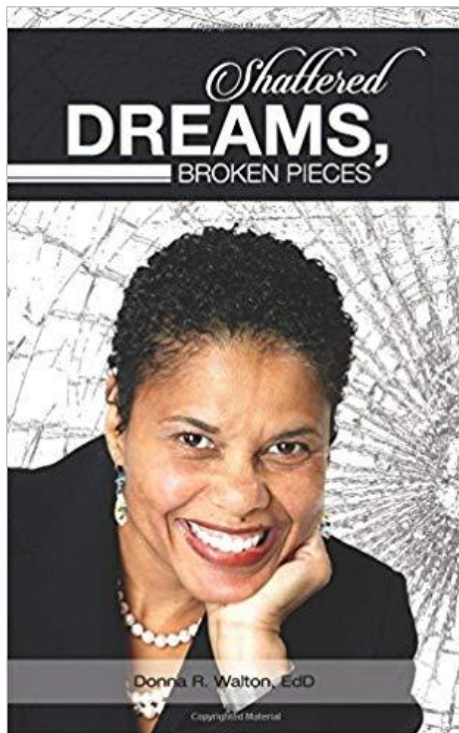
Founder and President of Divas With Disabilities, Inc., Dr. Walton has made an unprecedented impact in the disability and women of color communities as a hub for thoughtful discussion on issues, self-love, and shaping the perception of what "disability" looks like by promoting women of color through various media platforms. Her work has increased access and inclusion opportunities in countless industries that have traditionally marginalized the participation of the women she represents.



Picture: Dr. Donna Walton smiling at the camera.

*Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion & Advocacy Series*

# *Intersectionality Among Women and Girls with Disabilities and Their Allies*



Keynote Speaker: Donna Walton, Ed.D,  
RespectAbility Board Member  
Founder and President of *Divas with Disabilities*

Introduction by Vivian Bass, Board Member,  
RespectAbility

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Pictured: Cover of Dr. Donna Walton's book, "Shattered Dreams, Broken Pieces," which contains a photo of Dr. Walton smiling.

## I AM...

- ❖ I AM Responsible.
- ❖ I AM Catholic  
(or another religion).
- ❖ I AM nervous.
- ❖ I AM funny.
- ❖ I AM Latina  
(or another ethnicity).
- ❖ I AM outspoken.
- ❖ I AM happy.
- ❖ I AM competitive  
(or another sport).
- ❖ I AM a poet  
(or another special talent).
- ❖ I AM loveable!

## I HAVE...

- ❖ I HAVE a pet  
(name kind of pet).
- ❖ I HAVE a disability.
- ❖ I HAVE a supportive  
family.
- ❖ I HAVE a home.
- ❖ I HAVE brown eyes  
(or another feature).
- ❖ I HAVE one best friend.
- ❖ I HAVE positivity.
- ❖ I HAVE a good heart.
- ❖ I HAVE an open-mind.

## I BRING...

- ❖ I BRING enthusiasm.
- ❖ I BRING experience.
- ❖ I BRING leadership.
- ❖ I BRING love.
- ❖ I BRING compassion.
- ❖ I BRING humor.
- ❖ I BRING creativity.
- ❖ I BRING computer skills  
(or name other skills).
- ❖ I BRING strength.

## I NEED...

- ❖ I NEED moral support.
- ❖ I NEED a sense of humor.
- ❖ I NEED a friend (or family member).
- ❖ I NEED to live a healthy lifestyle.
- ❖ I NEED to be patient.
- ❖ I NEED leadership skills.
- ❖ I NEED courage.
- ❖ I NEED writing skills. (or any other kind of skill).
- ❖ I NEED independence.
- ❖ I NEED love.

## I SEEK...

- ❖ I SEEK companionship.
- ❖ I SEEK employment.
- ❖ I SEEK independence.
- ❖ I SEEK positivity.
- ❖ I SEEK mentorship.
- ❖ I SEEK teamwork.
- ❖ I SEEK routine.
- ❖ I SEEK community.
- ❖ I SEEK happiness.
- ❖ I SEEK inclusion.

# My Elevator Pitch Template

Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Choose from the list of "I Am") (Choose from the list of "I Am")

I am looking to / for an opportunity to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Circle One) (Choose from the list of "I Seek")

I have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Choose from the list of "I Have") (Choose from the list of "I Have")

I bring \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Choose from the list of "I Bring") (Choose from the list of "I Bring")

I welcome the chance to talk to you more about \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Choose from the list of "I Seek")

I really think we could work together to \_\_\_\_\_!  
(make the world a better, more inclusive place for all!)

## **Debbie Fink**

Director, Community Outreach & Impact  
*and the Women's Disability Leadership, Inclusion &  
Advocacy Training Series*

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