

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT & RESPONSE TO DANC'S CALL TO ACTION TO STOP DISABILITY ERASURE

Friday, July 29, 2022

### Acknowledgment & Response to DANC's Call to Action to Stop Disability Erasure

By Dance/NYC

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Dear Dance Artists' National Collective and Dance Community,

We write to you today to acknowledge the call to action to stop disability erasure published this Saturday, July 23, 2022 via [change.org](https://change.org) and on [Instagram](#) in response to [Dance/NYC's Dance, Workforce, Resilience, \(DWR\) Initiative Launch Event](#) which was held in person and via YouTube livestream on Wednesday, July 20, 2022.

We recognize that as a nonprofit organization based in NYC, Dance/NYC benefits from white supremacist structures, including those that are anchored in ableism, and that the impacts of those benefits and actions show up across every aspect of the organization, from our internal infrastructure to our outward facing programs. While for the past seven years we have dedicated time and resources to learn from, advocate for, serve, and invest in disabled artists and disability dance artistry, we recognize that we can still cause harm. The ways ableism and white supremacy manifest in nonprofit organizational structures are pervasive, and it is our responsibility to continue to learn, make changes, and listen to disabled people. We recognize that lived disability experience is a form of expertise that is necessary in all spaces. It is also up to us to take concrete actions and make intentional investments to interrupt the ways ableism shows up in what we do and across the sector.

We recognize that in our efforts to deal with technical difficulties during the event, we failed to present Vanessa Hernández Cruz's and Antuan Byers' video about disability justice, accessibility, and the role of multi-marginalized folks in the dance field. We acknowledge that in doing so, not only did we erase Vanessa's contribution to the event, it also resulted in the erasure of the only disabled artist that was participating as a part of the digital program. We are sorry for the harm this caused.

We also recognize the ways in which we have not always lived up to our values or taken actions to support the humanity and artistry of disabled artists who have reached out to provide feedback and call us in— whether that is through our methods of communication, the infrastructure of our programs, or the time and care that we provide disabled artists when they engage with us.

We hear you. It is clear that we have work to do. Here is what you can expect from us in the short-term:

1. By no later than September 30, 2022, we will publicly present the video featuring Vanessa Hernández Cruz and Antuan Byers in conversation. We would like to work with Vanessa, Antuan, and with the [DWR Task Force](#) to identify how to do this in a way that honors the importance of their conversation and the issues it highlights about the state of our field.
2. We will work with DWR Task Force members, which include Vanessa Hernández Cruz and disabled dance artist and advocate April Biggs, to identify and invite new disabled dance workers to join the Task Force and ensure greater disability representation by no later than September 30, 2022. For this work, and the additional work they have done to anchor the task force in disability justice, Vanessa and April will be compensated.
3. We will offer access to mental health support and a restorative justice facilitator to Vanessa Hernández Cruz and DWR Task Force members impacted, to address the harm caused and facilitate conversations for our continued work together.
4. We will work with BIPOC/Queer/Disabled arts workers and allies to assess and make changes to our annual staff and board training structures, and ensure that all of the members of both our board and staff have undergone new training by December 2022. While we are unable to create a new position on our staff exclusively dedicated to Disability Justice this year, this request will become a part of how we assess the organization's infrastructure and staffing as we move into a strategic planning period from 2022-2023.

For us as a collective of dance workers and Board, these are the first of a series of additional steps that we will be taking to address how ableism shows up in who we are and what we do. You can expect to hear from us by the end of August 2022 with additional institutional commitments and next steps. We will center disabled dance workers in any discussions or decisions about next steps, both through the feedback of members of [Dance/NYC's Disability, Dance, Artistry, Task Force](#), and folks in the larger community.

Thank you to each of the artists who invested time and resources in calling us in. Our desire is to continue to be an organization that listens, learns and evolves as we work to create a thriving dance community in accountability and by your side.

With appreciation,

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