

Chapter V

Conclusion

“I think that all children need early models of people with disabilities/exceptionalities so that these types of differences become ‘normal’ in terms of the human experience.”

Brenna (Interview)

Literature serves as a potent lens through which society perceives and understands disabilities, offering a platform to deconstruct stereotypes and shed light on lesser-known disabilities. Through nuanced storytelling and diverse characters, literature can humanise the experiences of individuals with disabilities, showcasing their multifaceted lives beyond societal preconceptions. By delving into these narratives, readers gain empathy and a deeper comprehension of the challenges, strengths, and complexities of living with various disabilities.

Moreover, literature doesn't just inform; it incites social change by challenging stigmas and fostering inclusivity. As Zanita E. Fenton highlights in *Dis Crit: Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory in Education*, quoting Linton, “Disability, then, is a marker of identity that designates a specific minority group bound by common social and political experience” (204). This insight underscores the significance of disabilities as an aspect of identity, shaping shared experiences within a societal framework.

Beverley Brenna, a distinguished writer, harnesses the power of storytelling to advocate for disability representation, notably within the realm of special education. Her narratives resonate with authenticity and empathy, amplifying the voices of characters navigating the intricacies of disability. As someone with a background in special education, Brenna infuses her writing with an acute understanding of the challenges and triumphs faced by individuals with disabilities.

Brenna's commitment to authenticity and inclusivity in her narratives not only educates but also empowers readers, fostering a more compassionate and informed society. Brenna's dedication to representing diverse experiences within her stories embodies the spirit of special education—embracing uniqueness, fostering growth, and advocating for equitable opportunities for all.

The present study focuses on the convergence of hidden disabilities, societal stigma, trauma, and the pervasive negative perception of those with disabilities, which deeply affects individuals living with these conditions. Extensive research has divulged the intricate network of challenges within this realm, underscoring the urgent necessity for societal shifts and enhanced empathy toward disabled individuals.

The core chapters dedicated to normativity, stigma, and the nuanced exploration of addressing ableism converge as pivotal pillars in justifying the thesis statement's assertion about the persistence of ableism in our contemporary world. Through an intricate analysis of Beverley Brenna's literary works, these chapters serve as illuminating lenses, divulging the intricate interplay between societal norms, the stigmatisation of disabilities, and the entrenched biases encapsulated within the construct of ableism.

By dissecting these fundamental components, this scholarly inquiry reveals the subtle yet profound ways in which societal perceptions of 'normalcy' marginalise and disadvantage individuals living with disabilities. It underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive reevaluation of societal norms, an eradication of stigmas, and the implementation of strategies to dismantle the pervasive influence of ableism, thereby substantiating the significance of this exploration within the broader discourse on societal prejudices.

The second chapter undertakes a comprehensive exploration of ability interwoven into the fabric of daily life, emphasising its profound impact on the assessment of individuals within societal frameworks. By centering on the evaluation of people through normative perspectives, it unveils the inherent complexities in such societal judgments. This chapter meticulously dissects a spectrum of characters from Brenna's literary repertoire, scrutinising their societal roles and the prevailing perceptions about them.

As articulated by Hanjo Berressem in *Culture – Theory – Disability: Encounters between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies*, the notion of "... differently constrained lives' encompasses not only 'lives with disability,' but all modes of life in relation to an unattainable 'non-constrained,' 'non-disabled' state" (30). Employing this consistent analytical framework, the chapter illuminated the intricate interplay between societal norms and individual attributes, yielding nuanced insights into the dynamics of perception and social positioning.

In the third chapter, a rich exploration of stigma unfolds, revealing how the characters in Brenna's selected works intricately embody its diverse shades. It intricately dissects the characters' endurance of stigma across various societal levels, highlighting the intricate layers they navigate.

This chapter masterfully portrays the multifaceted nature of stigma, illuminating its complex dimensions and the intricate challenges these characters confront within societal structures. Through their compelling narratives, it vividly illustrates the pervasive impact and intricate nuances of societal biases, offering profound insights into the profound influence of stigma within Brenna's literary world.

In the fourth chapter, a scholarly examination scrutinises the intricate concept of ableism, concentrating its analysis on the pivotal realms of spatial configuration and accessibility as paramount contributors to the cultivation of inclusive environments. This section intricately dissects the multifaceted nature of ableism within societal frameworks, specifically highlighting the intrinsic correlation between spatial design and the facilitation of inclusivity.

By elucidating the interplay between environmental factors, notions of ability, and the overarching pursuit of inclusiveness, this chapter substantiates the imperative role played by accommodating spatial structures in engendering the active engagement of individuals across diverse abilities. It underscores the scholarly imperative of cultivating environments that transcend physical and attitudinal barriers, ultimately advocating for the realisation of a more inclusive and equitable societal paradigm.

Following an in-depth and meticulous analysis in the core chapters, a collection of significant findings and observations has emerged from the research. These detections shed light on the intricate interplay of the factors under examination, revealing compelling connections and patterns that uncover previously unexplored aspects within the study's scope. These findings represent pivotal discoveries, making valuable contributions to the broader conversation surrounding the subject matter.

The initial finding highlights a critical issue: people facing invisible disabilities often confront stigma and discrimination, resulting in deep emotional or psychological wounds. This experience of being invalidated, marginalised, and feeling disconnected from society creates profound trauma. This ongoing struggle against disbelief and judgment takes a heavy toll on their mental well-being, exacerbating their challenges. As a result, these individuals grapple not just with their

condition but also with the damaging effects of societal attitudes, making it crucial to address these prejudices for the sake of their mental health and overall well-being.

Moreover, the cumulative impact of stigma, trauma, inadequate support environments, and hostile attitudes significantly undermines the mental and emotional health of individuals grappling with invisible disabilities. Take Natasha as an example. Her past experiences of abandonment and displacement have left her grappling with trauma, making it challenging for her to navigate unfamiliar and alien environments. In these settings, communication becomes increasingly difficult due to the absence of the familiar surroundings that provide her with a sense of security and ease. This struggle not only amplifies her existing challenges but also underscores the vital need for inclusive spaces and understanding to support individuals like Natasha in their daily lives.

Another critical finding emphasises the perpetuation of stigma and discrimination towards individuals with invisible disabilities due to society's prevailing negative attitudes. This bias manifests in various forms, from exclusionary practices to unsupportive behaviours and outright prejudice, thereby subjecting individuals to traumatic experiences within an ableist society.

Implementing proactive measures, such as offering tailored support for those with conditions like Asperger's Syndrome, FASD, and other invisible disabilities, coupled with fostering safe and empathetic environments, holds the potential to alleviate such trauma. A striking illustration of this supportive approach can be witnessed in Samantha's school from "Finding Your Voice," where inclusivity and understanding create a nurturing space that empowers individuals with invisible disabilities to thrive despite societal barriers.

Stigma encompasses the web of negative stereotypes, biases, and discrimination that individuals with invisible disabilities, like Asperger's Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), frequently confront. These misconceptions and prejudices often stem from a lack of awareness or misinformation about these conditions. People living with Asperger's Syndrome, for instance, might face unjust treatment, harsh judgment, or exclusion due to their distinctive social interaction and communication patterns. These experiences exact a heavy toll, resulting in profound psychological, emotional, and social impacts. A poignant portrayal of this ordeal can be found in the trilogy novel through Jane's victimisation by Kody, a situation that exposes her to dehumanising treatment, shedding light on the destructive consequences of stigma and discrimination on individuals with invisible disabilities.

Combatting stigma requires multifaceted efforts aimed at raising awareness and educating society about the realities of living with invisible disabilities. This approach serves as a catalyst for promoting acceptance, empathy, and inclusion, all of which are indispensable in mitigating the detrimental effects of biases and misconceptions. Within the narrative of "Finding Your Voice" in *Something to Hang on To*, the contrasting parenting styles exhibited by Janine's mother and Samantha's father vividly illustrate how differing attitudes towards disability profoundly shape familial dynamics. It's imperative that awareness initiatives cast a wide net, addressing both the broader public and families specifically, to nurture a culture of inclusivity and foster deeper understanding of the experiences faced by individuals with invisible disabilities.

While combating stigma remains pivotal in ableist societies, there exist numerous challenges linked to invisible disabilities, including difficulties in social interactions, sensory sensitivities, and coping with the resulting psychological stress.

Characters like Billy and Natasha from *The Moon Children* illustrate this struggle. Billy faces constant bullying, hindered from seeking help due to the barriers imposed by his disability. Conversely, Natasha, subjected to war brutality, grapples with the loss of her voice, further complicating her access to assistance.

During childhood, the provision of nurturing care and support is pivotal for children's development, but invisible disabilities frequently become formidable barriers that impede their access to necessary aid. Billy's disability poses significant challenges, making it difficult for him to seek the help he requires. Meanwhile, Natasha's loss of voice adds an extra layer of complexity, creating additional hurdles in her ability to reach out for the assistance she needs. These instances underscore how invisible disabilities not only affect the individuals directly but also hinder their capacity to access the nurturing care and support crucial for their well-being and growth.

Addressing the internal stigma stemming from feelings of difference and self-pity often necessitates dedicated counselling and psychological support. In the Trilogy, Jane's journey exemplifies this trajectory: seeking guidance from a psychologist proved instrumental in navigating the challenges she faced. With this support, she found solace in activities such as immersing herself in Pinter's plays and caring for her pet gerbil.

As emphasised by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson in *Culture – Theory – Disability: Encounters between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies*, "Telling one's disability story is an antidote to disability disqualification, to the social banishment and apartness of the sick role and the stranger-making function of disability stigma" (56). These activities transcended mere pastimes; they became pivotal pillars in nurturing her healing process, offering avenues for self-expression

and a sense of connection. Ultimately, these elements facilitated her journey in overcoming internalised stigma and embracing her unique identity.

An essential observation highlights the frequent inadequacy of public spaces and facilities in accommodating the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly those grappling with invisible conditions. This lack of accommodation further isolates them, creating barriers that hinder their participation in essential aspects of life, including employment opportunities and social engagements.

Billy's experience serves as a poignant example—he encounters significant hurdles in public spaces like stores or swimming pools due to difficulties in recognising written text, such as labels or guidelines. Introducing an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) system stands out as a promising solution that could substantially alleviate these challenges. This technological adaptation has the potential not only to empower individuals like Billy by enhancing their accessibility in public spaces but also to pave the way for greater inclusivity, ensuring that individuals with invisible disabilities can actively engage in various facets of life on more equitable terms.

A critical observation lies in the stark contrast between the theoretical ideals of inclusion and their practical execution, a gap exemplified by Billy's experience. Engaged in an ostensibly inclusive school environment, Billy navigates without disclosing his Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Tragically, this lack of transparency leads to distressing mistreatment from both peers and educators, shedding light on the failure of interventions to effectively address and remedy this situation.

Additionally, there exists a troubling pattern of exploiting individuals' vulnerabilities by select individuals. For instance, the case of Billy being targeted by

Eddie Mundy, and Rhodney encountering exploitation from peers, underscores a concerning reality: vulnerabilities are systematically leveraged, impeding the progress towards genuine inclusivity and robust support systems for individuals navigating disabilities. These distressing occurrences underscore a critical need for more comprehensive approaches within the scholarly discourse on inclusive practices and disability support frameworks.

The experience of social alienation deeply impacts individuals with invisible disabilities, leading to trauma and a pervasive sense of not belonging within an ableist society. Billy's alienation, resulting from societal attitudes, induces feelings of trauma, loneliness, and fear of stigmatisation. Both physical and social barriers, such as inaccessible infrastructure, transportation, and workplace limitations, contribute significantly to this alienation. For instance, June in *Wild Orchid* refrains from engaging with the outside world due to the fear of societal judgment regarding her disability. Similarly, Natasha's withdrawal from mainstream society stems from her inability to articulate her traumatic experiences from her home country, amplifying her sense of isolation and silence in her new environment.

Natasha's constant fear of keeping a secret from her adoptive parents heightens her stress levels. Already affected by stress, this situation significantly impacts Natasha, compounded by the stress resulting from the constant care she receives. The care she receives embodies both positive and negative aspects of an ableist society, reflecting the contrast between the care she lacked from her birth mother and the crisis she faced in Romania. Despite the positive intentions behind her adoptive parents' care, Natasha grapples with guilt and an inability to fully embrace it. Misunderstandings about her mode of communication further isolate her, yet Billy

becomes her ally by decoding Natasha's communication cues, providing space, and fostering mutual understanding between them.

A crucial observation underscores the pivotal role of inclusivity in fostering healthy growth and active participation among individuals grappling with invisible disabilities. The presence of a supportive network encompassing friends, family, and professional assistance plays a pivotal role in mitigating the stigma, trauma, and psychological stress experienced by these individuals. However, societal attitudes and the challenges imposed on disabled individuals frequently contribute to heightened psychological stress and emotional trauma.

To combat these adversities, initiatives aimed at raising awareness, educational campaigns, promoting widespread acceptance, and offering tailored support systems emerge as indispensable steps. By addressing these pressing issues head-on, such efforts are instrumental in not only tackling societal misconceptions but also in uplifting the overall well-being and quality of life for individuals navigating disabilities.

The present research emphasises the profound struggle parents face in coming to terms with and accepting their children's impairments. There's a poignant indication that for some parents, acknowledging and embracing the reality of their child's disability is an immensely challenging journey. This struggle doesn't merely affect the children; it also renders the parents themselves vulnerable to emotional distress and uncertainty.

In works such as the trilogy novel and *The Moon Children*, a prominent theme surfaces wherein both protagonists' fathers evade their responsibilities, placing the entire burden of caregiving solely on the shoulders of the single mothers. This recurring narrative highlights the far-reaching effects of parental acceptance or

rejection on the well-being of both the children and the family unit, providing a poignant depiction of the intricate complexities surrounding the acceptance of disabilities within familial settings.

This parental neglect significantly impacts the children, leaving them grappling with feelings of abandonment and neglect. For instance, Billy struggles to comprehend his father's disregard for him. Despite his attempts to rationalise the situation, "he felt as though inside him a storm was breaking free, ready to spill out and dislodge anything in its path" (Brenna, *MC* 12).

The act of abandonment within the context of parental responsibility represents more than a mere departure; it serves as a distressing reflection of a broader societal issue deeply intertwined with eugenic ideologies that are hesitant to acknowledge and accept the existence and survival of individuals with disabilities. This prevailing mindset often manifests in numerous experiments aimed at assessing fetal normalcy, advocating for abortion if any indications of disability arise.

From the lens of ableism, this approach is perceived as a preventive measure against potential hardships for the children post-birth, as well as a means of sparing parents from perceived embarrassment or challenges. However, when viewed through the lens of the disability community, this stance poses a grave threat, underscoring the peril of being perceived as different in an ableist society. It accentuates the harsh reality of navigating a world where acceptance and inclusion remain elusive ideals.

Consider Jane from the trilogy novel, an individual possessing a remarkable memory and unique abilities. Despite her extraordinary talents, she grapples with enduring alienation, relentless stigma, and the profound sense of invisibility solely due to her differences. Her narrative stands as a poignant illustration of the immense

challenges faced by those who fall outside society's norms, emphasising the profound impact of societal perceptions on the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Furthermore, a crucial finding underscores the significance of redirecting attention away from the limitations imposed by disabilities and towards recognising and appreciating the distinct abilities and untapped potential of individuals. This shift in perspective holds the key to dismantling stigma and cultivating a society that embraces inclusivity and provides robust support for all its members. When society acknowledges and celebrates the diverse talents and strengths inherent in every individual, it creates an environment conducive to nurturing these abilities, fostering personal growth, and fostering a sense of belonging for everyone, irrespective of their differences or challenges.

The intersectionality of circus culture and disability offers a profound subject of observation within the broader context of societal inclusivity. The circus, as a cultural entity, has emerged as a unique arena where individuals with disabilities find a platform to challenge prevailing stereotypes and redefine societal perceptions of their capabilities. This observation sheds light on the transformative potential of cultural expressions in fostering inclusivity, pushing the boundaries of traditional norms. In examining the symbiotic relationship between circus culture and disability, it becomes evident that the circus serves as a microcosm reflecting the principles of diversity and equality. This nuanced observation underscores the intrinsic value of cultural arenas in influencing societal attitudes towards disability. Such insights contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding cultural inclusivity, emphasising the role of diverse cultural expressions in reshaping societal narratives and advocating for a more equitable and inclusive future.

In summary, addressing the intricate challenges intertwined with invisible disabilities requires a multifaceted and holistic approach. This comprehensive strategy spans various dimensions, encompassing heightened awareness, enhanced educational initiatives, policy reforms, and the cultivation of a more inclusive and empathetic societal framework.

It's imperative to recognise that individuals grappling with invisible disabilities aren't defined solely by their conditions; instead, they possess a diverse spectrum of abilities and talents. When these inherent capabilities are supported and cultivated, they have the potential to flourish remarkably. Consider the story of Adelaide, an advocate who recognised Jane's innate talent for drawing and provided the necessary encouragement for her to channel her focus and energy into that skill. This narrative vividly illustrates the transformative impact of identifying and nurturing the inherent strengths within individuals facing invisible disabilities.

By cultivating an environment that values and supports these diverse abilities, society can unlock the vast reservoirs of potential within every individual, paving the way for their personal and professional growth while nurturing a more inclusive and enriched community for all. This collective effort toward recognising and nurturing individual strengths serves as a beacon of hope, promoting empowerment and inclusion for those navigating the complexities of invisible disabilities.

By portraying characters grappling with Asperger's syndrome and FASD, Brenna sheds light on the complexities and struggles that extend beyond the framework of governmental policies. The narratives seem to highlight the gap between policy ideals and the day-to-day reality faced by individuals with disabilities, illustrating the ongoing societal challenges in fully accepting and integrating those with neurodevelopmental disorders. This nuanced exploration likely serves to unsettle

the idealised image of Canada as a caring country, prompting a critical examination of the existing societal attitudes and structures that may hinder the genuine inclusion and acceptance of individuals with disabilities.

The societal understanding of disability predominantly through a medical lens, as underscored by Teryl L. Dobbs in the article “A Critical Analysis of Disabilities Discourses” within the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, echoes Linton’s assertion: “Society, in agreeing to assign medical meaning to disability, colludes to keep the issue within the purview of the medical establishment, to keep it a personal matter and ‘treat’ the condition and the person with the condition rather than ‘treating’ the social process and policies that constrict disabled people’s lives” (193-94).

This quoted passage succinctly encapsulates society’s agreement in assigning a medical meaning to disability, perpetuating its confinement within the purview of the medical establishment. This collusion reinforces the treatment of disability as a primarily personal matter, focusing on ‘treating’ the condition and the individual rather than critically addressing the wider social processes and policies that constrict the lives of disabled individuals. Linton’s statement prompts a profound shift in perspective, emphasising the imperative not only to ‘treat’ the individual’s condition but also to critically ‘treat’ the social processes and policies that perpetuate constraints on the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Davis’s exploration in *The Disability Studies Reader* provides a transformative lens through which disabilities are understood. By shifting the focus from the individual with disabilities to the construction of normalcy, Davis illuminates a critical finding: the ‘problem’ concerning disabilities doesn’t reside within the individual but rather within societal constructs of normalcy. This perspective redefines the discourse, emphasising the pivotal role of societal norms in shaping

perceptions of disability. As Davis aptly states, “The ‘problem’ is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the ‘problem’ of the disabled person” (1). This insight underscores the need for a reevaluation of societal constructs, highlighting the importance of acknowledging and challenging prevailing norms in our understanding and treatment of disabilities.

Brenna’s vision offers a unique perspective, delving into the world of persons with disabilities and shedding light on their feelings of alienation and detachment from society. It’s a poignant reflection on how despite policy reforms and technological advancements, societal attitudes remain largely unchanged:

I strongly believe that all children should be exposed early on to role models with disabilities or exceptionalities. This exposure helps normalise these differences as a natural part of the human experience. One way to do this is by ensuring that our libraries and classrooms portray a diverse array of characters, each with their unique differences. Books should serve as both windows and mirrors for children, offering insights into unfamiliar topics while reflecting their own struggles and achievements. This approach engages students by emphasising that ability exists along a continuum and is highly contextual, dependent on the task at hand rather than a simple binary of ‘having’ or ‘not having’ a specific ability. I firmly believe that this proactive approach, rather than expecting individuals with disabilities to cope or be resilient to ableism, can effectively prevent ableism from taking root in our society.

The contemporary societal terrain demands a keen comprehension of the social significance ingrained within academic investigations. The thesis entitled

“Navigating Bias: A Critical Examination of Beverley Brenna’s Select Works Through Ableism” encapsulates a crucial dialogue, uncovering the complex yet pervasive obstacles faced by individuals, particularly those with hidden disabilities such as Asperger’s syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). This scholarly endeavour meticulously explores the lived experiences of these individuals within social frameworks that frequently overlook their nuanced requirements. By adeptly employing the critical framework of ableism to scrutinise Brenna’s literature, this thesis serves as a guiding light, revealing the systemic biases deeply rooted in societal systems. Through this exposition, it initiates vital discussions on reconfiguring societal standards, advocating for comprehensive inclusivity, and cultivating environments that consciously support and empower individuals navigating such hurdles.

In conclusion, the UN sustainability model holds profound relevance when applied to the discourse surrounding disability. The framework encapsulated in the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognises the intrinsic link between sustainable development and the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. By acknowledging disability as both a cause and consequence of poverty, inequality, and exclusion, the UN sustainability model underscores the imperative to create inclusive societies that leave no one behind.

The SDGs, with their comprehensive and interconnected nature, provide a roadmap for addressing various dimensions of disability, encompassing education, employment, healthcare, and accessibility. Embracing the principles of universality and non-discrimination, the model accentuates the need for policies and initiatives that empower individuals with disabilities, fostering their active participation in all facets of life. In the pursuit of sustainability, the UN model emphasises the

importance of harnessing the unique capabilities and perspectives of people with disabilities, thereby enriching the diversity and resilience of communities worldwide. As the challenges and opportunities presented by disability are navigated, the UN sustainability model serves as a guiding light, urging global collaboration and concerted efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable future for everyone.

Beverley Brenna's works exploring disability offer an extensive scope for further scholarly inquiry. Engaging with her literary repertoire presents an expansive terrain for in-depth exploration into the realm of ableism. A rigorous investigation could meticulously scrutinise the intricate portrayals of characters with disabilities spanning Brenna's literary oeuvre. This analysis would intricately examine their agency, developmental arcs, and the societal constructs that mould their identities. Comparative scrutiny may juxtapose Brenna's depictions against those found in diverse literary works, unveiling how her narratives challenge or perpetuate prevailing stereotypes and societal perspectives toward individuals with varying abilities.

An in-depth inquiry into Brenna's narrative methodologies, encompassing linguistic nuances, symbolic elements, and narrative perspectives, would elucidate the impact of these literary devices on shaping reader perceptions and confronting ableism within the literary sphere. Furthermore, an exploration of reader responses would reveal the influence wielded by Brenna's narratives in shaping empathy, fostering understanding, and moulding attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. Conducting an intersectional analysis, amalgamating disabilities with intersecting social categories, would unveil the intricate layers of discrimination and societal perceptions interwoven within Brenna's literary landscape.

Additionally, delving into the historical and cultural contexts framing disabilities within her narratives would provide insights into the evolving societal

paradigms and the potential of her narratives to either mirror or challenge these norms. These scholarly avenues of exploration hold promise in shedding light on the complex interplay between literature, societal attitudes, and perceptions of individuals with disabilities, thereby offering invaluable insights into combatting ableism through the conduit of storytelling.

Disabilities, depicted within literature, challenge entrenched stereotypes and bring forth oft-neglected perspectives. Beverley Brenna's poignant portrayal of disability beckons for empathy and inclusion. Through the literary canvas, the intricacies, strengths, and hurdles of living with disabilities resonate, nurturing empathy and dismantling societal prejudices. This scrutiny reveals the pervasive impact of normativity, stigma, and the undemocratic nature of ableism, presenting a compelling call for societal reassessment and proactive steps toward inclusivity.

Ableism, a deep-seated problem, erects barriers to social justice, hindering progress. Addressing this issue through literature, media, and research becomes paramount. Literature's advocacy for marginalised voices underscores the urgent need for a more compassionate, fair, and inclusive society.