

Manifesto for the Disability Resilience Network – by Philip J Connolly

How will we be different to other advocates for disabled people

- 1) We do not have all the answers but we are seeking to contribute towards the welfare of disabled people in areas where the disability sector is less active.
- 2) We see all disabled people as having resources that can be the basis for collaboration with others who themselves may or may not be disabled. These resources include but are not limited to the following: empathy, resilience, resourcefulness, insights from experiences, fables and stories, time, ideas, innovation and cooperation aimed at solving problems and the capacity to generate further resources.
- 3) We will focus on how to make these qualities and attributes abundant, commoditised in the service of disabled people, as far as possible under their direct control and in the service of their economic participation in society. Wherever we encounter the rationing of support we will respond with communitarian solutions based upon abundant caring and sharing.
- 4) We will not run services nor provide or replicate widely available information services.
- 5) We will signpost to practical support but we ourselves will focus on universal belief systems such as resilience that nurture strength of mind, ability to find a coping mechanism or adaptation technique or prevail in making a complaint or defending a right.
- 6) We commit to supporting all disabled people to interact directly with one another on a digital platform to transfer hope, share skills and form friendships and collaborations and take political action against discrimination and injustice
- 7) We will promote positive psychology and a can do approach to problem solving.
- 8) We support the key strengths of the social model of disability namely absolving people of any guilt for their impairment and resolving their exclusion through a collective response but whilst we support a just political response from a fair government we will instead offer leadership through creating communities based upon principles of mutualism and self sufficiency and link these to form our own version of Jerusalem but one integrated to progressive trends in the rest of society.
In line with the United Nations Charter on the Rights of People with Disabilities we see the understanding of disability as being an evolutionary process and we therefore commit to a continuing and deeper understanding of disability as an aspect of the human condition. Our minds are open to the possibility that there are advantages to being disabled and that there are advantages to the whole of society too especially in an age characterised by meta and existential crisis.
- 9) We will focus on a push/pull theory of change in which our contribution will be on the pull factors of narrative change that raises aspiration, affordable tools that can be further modified by disabled entrepreneurs and inventors and business models that are based upon coproduction and accountability with and to disabled consumers. We will as disabled people be able to tell our own stories of our own successes of liberating our lives from all forms of poverty (economic, ambition, imagination) and to all audiences.
- 10) We reject all forms of elitism and segregation. We will work to connect those disabled people who succeed to those disabled people who aspire and all disabled people to all other people wherever and whenever they wish for this.