

Disability Rights Iowa and
Co-Sponsors Present:
National Mental Health Awareness Event
with Keynote Speaker
Dior Vargas
Queer Latina Feminist Mental Health Advocate



May 10th 2022
6:30–8 p.m.

Polk County River PLace
2309 Euclid Ave
Des Moines, IA 50310



with introductions by:

Catherine E. Johnson, Executive Director of Disability Rights Iowa and
Sonia Reyes, Executive Officer of the Office of Latino Affairs, Iowa
Department of Human Rights



Disability Rights Iowa

LEGAL PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY

Dior Vargas

Queer Latina Feminist Mental Health Advocate



Dior is an award-winning mental health activist with over 10 years of experience in advocacy. She specializes in working with universities and corporations to discuss self-care advocacy, wellness accessibility, diversity within mental health, and related topics.

Her personal story and policy expertise inspire others to passionately engage in normalizing conversations around mental health. Additionally, she provides organizational consulting in the creation of actionable roadmaps to increase employee productivity through organized mental health support.



Awards and Recognitions

- 2022** Mental Health Equity Journey Award, NYS Office of Mental Health
- 2021** Mental Health Power 50 Listee, City & State NY
- 2020** D-30 Disability Impact List Honoree, Diversability
- 2019** Public Health Social Justice Award, New York University
- 2019** President's Service Award, New York University
- 2017** Susan M. Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame Inductee, National Disability Mentoring Coalition
- 2015** Cookie Gant and Bill Compton LGBT Leadership Award, Alternatives Conference
- 2015** Voices of the Year Honoree for Impact, BlogHer Conference
- 2015** Champion of Change for Disability Advocacy Across Generations, Obama White House

About this Event

Disability Rights Iowa is honored to host in partnership with over 15 Co-Sponsors, its first Annual Hybrid Event Celebrating National Mental Health Awareness Month.

Dior will share with us her personal journey of growing up at the intersection of being a Queer Latina Feminist experiencing mental health symptoms without fully understanding her symptoms, and navigating her symptoms in her community that did not understand or accept her mental health symptoms. Dior will speak about the impact not being accepted or included in her community had on her mental health and her life. Dior will share what she learned through her personal experiences regarding her rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act as a person with mental health diagnosis. Dior will also talk about how learning that her mental health diagnosis is considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act ADA, changed and empowered her life, her work, and her mental health advocacy.

Right now, Iowans across the state are participating in this event either in Des Moines, in our satellite viewing stations in Sioux City, Mason City, Dubuque, Davenport, Fairfield, and Council Bluffs, or by Livestream.

Dior's keynote will be recorded and posted on Disability Rights Iowa website after the event concludes.



If you or a loved one are experiencing a life-threatening mental health crisis please call 911. If you or a loved one are experiencing a non-life-threatening mental health crisis please reach out to the Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255, prestamos Servicios en Español 1-888-628-9454, for deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing loss dial 711 followed by 1-800-273-8255.



Disability Rights Iowa

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Co-Sponsors

Mindspring Mental Health Alliance
L.U.N.A.
Office of Latino Affairs, Iowa Department of
Human Rights
Please Pass the Love
DD Council
UCEDD
Youth Law Center
NAMI Iowa
Harkin Institute
Mental Health and Disability Services, Dubuque
County
Mental Health and Disability Services, East
Central Region
Children's Rights Clinic
Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
One Iowa
Disabilities Resource Center
Inclusive Sioux City Advisory Council
Markey's Rental and Staging
Jill Wells Art

Captioning and ASL provided by:
Deaf Services Unlimited
Spanish Interpretation provided by:
Iowa International Center
Headsets and Transmitter provided by:
Conference Technologies, Inc

About Disability Rights Iowa

Disability Rights Iowa is a non-profit corporation that is a part of an extensive network of protection & advocacy agencies across the U.S. Since DRI's establishment in 1984, it has been our mission to protect and advocate for the rights of Iowans with disabilities and mental illness.