

**The Importance of Non-Knowing
Growing and Rejection of
Hustle Culture
Keynote Presentation by
*DJ Ralston, M.A.***

Keynote Summary:

In this talk, DJ will share what they have learned about slowing down, valuing relationship over task accomplishment, how to build inclusion and belonging through the art of asking instead of telling, and will challenge us to consider how we might engage in non-knowing growing. In today's ever-changing, knowledge-based society, literally everywhere we look, whether overt or implied, from social media to t-shirt slogans, reality TV, music lyrics, or an agency-wide email, hustle culture abounds. At the heart of this hustle culture is an over-emphasis on the value of productivity, one that has conditioned us to value knowledge acquisition and knowing over not-knowing, to value task accomplishment over relationship(s), and to unquestioningly accept that ultimate success can only look like autonomy and independence. If we are or want to be equity and inclusion oriented, then we must ask the question who determines what counts as knowledge and who has access to that knowledge?



About DJ:

DJ Ralston, M.A., (they/them) is a Senior Technical Assistance (TA) and Research Analyst with the George Washington University (GWU) Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education with close to 20 years of experience working in the disability and employment arena at the local, state, and national levels. They provide TA and training on behalf of the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) and the Center for Innovative Training in Vocational Rehabilitation (CIT-VR). DJ's areas of expertise and interest include the intersection between disability and poverty, the impact of intersecting identities, and leveraging resources and fostering partnership and collaboration to ensure access, inclusion, and belonging for populations who have been historically and structurally marginalized and excluded from Vocational Rehabilitation Services. They have a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from Western Washington University, completed and maintain a Community Partner Work Incentive Coordinator (CP-WIC) Certification from Virginia Commonwealth University, and are a Doctoral Candidate in Human and Organizational Learning.