

Paper title: “Masking: Epistemic Harm, Testimonial Smothering, and the Medicalization of Neurodivergence in Healthcare”

Abstract:

Under the Medical Model of Disability, disability is understood as originating from within the individual and as something that can be fixed or mitigated with medical and social interventions. Within the healthcare industry, such a model reproduces ideology that epistemically harms disabled individuals. Using case studies and personal testimonies within disabled communities on social media, this work considers the physician’s assessment on the decision making capacity of the patient and the biases that implicate the clinicians recommendation for medical or social intervention. My work, focused on neurodivergent cis-gendered women and persons assigned female at birth who have been treated for neurodivergence through pharmaceutical intervention, aims to address how epistemically unjust pharmaceutical intervention creates learned testimonial smothering in neurodivergent persons. Through a cross-disability engagement with social epistemologists, this work follows the thread backwards to make sense of how testimonial smothering enacted in masking neurodivergence can result from hermeneutical injustice taking place within the healthcare setting.

Key Terms: Medical Model of Disability, Social Epistemology, Testimonial Smothering, and Hermeneutical Injustice.