

**Cultural View of Disability:
Communicating with People
with Disabilities**

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Overview

The purpose of this presentation is twofold:
to provide an overview of multiculturalism as it pertains to people with disabilities
to explore disabilities from a multicultural perspective to increase participants' cultural competence when working with people with disabilities

Learning Objectives

- ▶ Articulate an overview of multiculturalism as it relates to working with people with disabilities
- ▶ Identify appropriate language to use when communicating with people with disabilities
- ▶ Exhibit increased competencies when communicating with people with disabilities

The Real Facts about Disability

- ▶ There are approximately 54 million people in the U.S. with a disability
- ▶ It is the largest minority group
- ▶ It is the only minority group that anyone has the chance to become a part of at anytime
- ▶ It is also the minority group that everyone is represented in: all socioeconomic statuses, all races, all genders, all ages

Defining Disability

- ▶ The Census Bureau's American Community Survey defines disability status through six area:
- ▶ Hearing, vision, cognition, walking or climbing stairs, self-care, and independent living

Defining Ableism

- ▶ **Ableism** - The practices and dominant attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. A set of practices and beliefs that assign inferior value (worth) to people who have developmental, emotional, physical or psychiatric disabilities.

People with Disabilities

- ▶ Persons with disabilities face many kinds of barriers on a daily basis. These can be physical, attitudinal or systemic.
- ▶ An ableist society is said to be one that treats non-disabled individuals as the standard of 'normal living', which results in public and private places and services, education, and social work that are built to serve 'standard' people, thereby inherently excluding those with various disabilities.

People with Disabilities

- ▶ In many cultures people with physical, sensory or mental impairments were treated as if they were responsible for the disability
- ▶ Having an inclusive society means products, services, and societal opportunities and resources are fully accessible, welcoming, functional and usable for as many different types of abilities as reasonably possible

Disable the Label

- ▶ People with disabilities are people first
- ▶ PWDs have individual talents, interests, and needs
- ▶ They are moms, dads, daughters, sisters, brothers, neighbors, colleagues, students, teachers, nurses, and etc.

People First Language

- ▶ Communicates respect
- ▶ Is an objective way of acknowledging, communicating and reporting on disabilities
- ▶ It eliminates generalizations, assumptions and stereotypes by focusing on the person rather than the disability

What's in a Word?

- ▶ Words have power!!!
- ▶ The language society uses to refer to People With Disabilities (PWDs) shapes its beliefs and ideas about them.
- ▶ Old, inaccurate, and inappropriate descriptions perpetuate negative stereotypes and attitudinal barriers
- ▶ When we describe people by their medical diagnoses, we devalue and disrespect them as individuals

Never Use.....

- ▶ VICTIM - use: person who has/experienced/with.
- ▶ [THE] CRIPPLE[D] - use: person with a mobility disability.
- ▶ AFFLICTED BY/WITH - use: person has.
- ▶ INVALID - use: a person with a disability.
- ▶ NORMAL - most people, including people with disabilities, think they are.
- ▶ PATIENT - connotes sickness. Use person with an illness or injury.

Disable the Label

Instead of:	We say:
▶ Handicapped/Disabled	▶ People with disabilities
▶ She's autistic	▶ She has autistic disorder
▶ Marcus is retarded	▶ Marcus has an intellectual disability
▶ He's wheelchair bound	▶ He using a wheelchair
▶ Handicapped Parking	▶ Accessible parking

So What?

- ▶ Use basic consideration of language when we talk with and about PWDs.
- ▶ Recognize PWDs as people first and foremost
- ▶ Do not dismiss their ability, interest and ambition.
- ▶ Remember this is situational and individuals may prefer something different.

Media Portrayal

- ▶ How does the media portray people with disabilities?
 - ▶ Positive or negative?

Stigma

- ▶ How does the media portrayal of persons with disability add to the STIGMA?
- ▶ What can we do to in order to stop perpetuating myths?

Implications for Practitioners

- ▶ How can we help or hinder our clients?
- ▶ How can we promote healthy media portrayals?

Intersection of Privilege

- ▶ Defining Privilege:
 - ▶ A right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor: prerogative especially : such a right or immunity attached specifically to a position or an office.
 - ▶ An advantage that only one person or group of people has, usually because of their position.

Racism/Sexism/Ageism/Ableism/ Heterosexism/Classism

- ▶ Invisible to the majority for several reasons:
 - ▶ They do not personally experience it.
 - ▶ Their challenges are not attributed to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, and class.
 - ▶ They do not see, or perceive, what others experience.

Why does privilege matter?

- ▶ It sets the foundation for what we think about ourselves and others.
- ▶ It can contribute significantly to a person's opportunities.
- ▶ It can influence a person's perception of who they are and what they can do.

Racism/Sexism/Ageism/Ableism/ Heterosexism/Classism

- ▶ **Oppression** (the "ism's") happens at all levels, reinforced by societal norms, institutional biases, interpersonal interactions and individual beliefs.
- ▶ **Social Justice** is the idea of acting with equality, fairness and dignity to all human beings that follows the principle that all individuals and groups are entitled to fair and impartial treatment.

Becoming culturally competent

- ▶ Recognize that all human beings have the capacity for thought, feeling, and behavior
- ▶ Be knowledgeable in several cultures; study differences and similarities of different groups
- ▶ Gain an understanding and appreciation of what motivates others and how they form their world view
- ▶ Cultivate understanding and awareness of your own cultural influences.

Understanding Others Cultural Values

Requires information about their group
Requires exposure to a variety of individuals within the group
Requires understanding of the sociopolitical dynamics of justice, oppression, history, and self-awareness
Requires an understanding of how age, geographical location, ethnicity, and physical ability mediates the influences of culture

Increasing Self-Awareness and Knowledge

Investigating your own cultural heritage (self-examination)
Paying attention to the influence of privilege on your understanding of cultural issues
Educating ourselves through diverse sources of information
Developing diverse relationships and understanding the influence of sociocultural contexts

The Role of the Culturally Competent Counselor

In a collaborative effort with the client, the counselor helps to identify personal, social, or career problem areas to determine counseling goals by paying attention to the client's needs rather than basing decisions upon assumptions related to the client's race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability status, social economic status, or intellectual ability.

Techniques are implemented for behavioral change based upon client need and not upon the values and biases of the counselor.

The counselor facilitates the development of a personal relationship that provides a climate for the client to expand self awareness, explore possibilities for growth, learn new skills, and achieve a better understanding of their environment.

Washington D.C. Government Sensitivity Training Video



Questions



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