

# Disability Etiquette

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## Session Objectives

- Introduction
  - What is Occupational Therapy
  - Presenters
- Terms: disability, equity, and accessibility
- Language and behaviors related to people with disabilities



## Occupational Therapy

*A Health Care profession that works with people with physical, sensory, emotional or cognitive challenges. We help individuals gain independence and remove barriers through a variety of interventions.*



# DISABILITY & SOCIETY

TOM CRAIG MAUREEN CONNOLLY BROCK UNIVERSITY

ONLINE THIS GRAD COURSE WILL LOOK AT WHAT THESE WORDS MEAN.

WHAT  
★ ASSUMPTIONS & VALUES  
★ STEREOTYPES  
★ EXPECTATIONS  
★ STIGMAS  
ARE BUILT INTO LANGUAGE



ARE WE SELF-AWARE?  
CRITICAL?  
OF THE THINGS WE SAY

LANGUAGE HOLDS ASSUMPTIONS LIKE "DISABLED CAR" OR "BLOCKING HWY"



"THAT'S SO LAME"  
OR "THAT'S RETARDED"

WHAT TYPES OF THINGS DO WE SAY?

DO THESE RESPECT?

"MEANING WELL IS NO EXCUSE"

CONSIDER MY LIVED EXPERIENCE



WHO DECIDES LANGUAGE?  
PERSON-FIRST

"DISABLED" MAN OR PERSON WITH DISABILITIES  
ON THE RIGHT TO SAY WE? (WHO IS WE?)  
WHO IS THE THEM?



Person

PROFESSIONAL "WE"

↳ ASSUMING A PRIVILEGE?  
↳ EARNED

ABLIST CULTURE  
POLITICAL + EMBODIED WAY

CRITICAL DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE  
↳ MEDICINE NOT ONLY APPROPRIATE  
INDIVIDUAL PATHOLOGY MODEL  
BINARY

WE WILL LOOK AT SCENARIOS

RECONSIDER

Category  
how are we a professional group  
- FAMILY  
- WORKERS  
- STUDENTS

US THEM

WHO ARE THE OTHER PEOPLE?

WHAT DO YOU CALL THEM?

WHO BENEFITS?



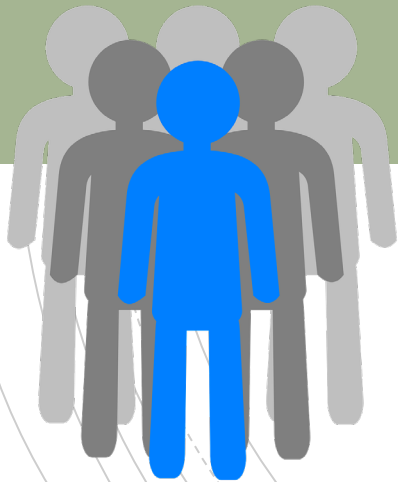
## Disability

- *“a physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that **impairs, interferes with, or limits** a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions”*





## Disability



- 16% of the world's population experience a significant disability
- non selective, affecting various cultures, ages, and gender
  - risk factors



# Disability

## ■ Physical

- Dysfunction in one or more structures of the body
- Could be acquired through traumatic injury or disease; or congenital from birth



# Disability

- **Physical Disability Examples**
  - Amputations, Fractures, Arthritis, Visual and Hearing impairments, Spinal cord injury (SCI), muscles strain, neck/back and shoulder impingement





# Disability

- **Mental Health**
  - Significant disturbance in thinking, emotional regulation, and behavior
  - Those exposed to adverse conditions are more likely to develop; some individuals are also predisposed by genetics



## Disability

### ■ **Mental Health Condition**

#### **Examples**

- Anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Schizophrenia, eating disorders



# Disability

- **Cognitive**
  - Impaired functioning related to processing and/or execution of information related to attention, memory, knowledge, decision making, planning, reasoning, judgment, and perception.
  - Genetics, prenatal complications, malnutrition, environmental exposures, trauma, substance abuse



## Disability

- **Cognitive Disability Examples**
  - Age related; Parkinson's & Alzheimer's disease, stroke, brain injury, Multiple Sclerosis, drugs/alcohol



# Disability

- **Developmental Disability (DD)**
  - Chronic conditions causing impairments in learning, language, behavior, and the physical body.
  - Occurs at any point during development



# Disability

## ■ **Developmental Disability**

### **Examples**

- Autism, Behavior disorder, Down syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Intellectual disabilities





## Disability

- How many hats do you wear?
- What is it that you need or want to do?
- Who else can be impacted by disability?



*“dealing fairly and equally with all concerned”*

Equitable



- Equality vs Equity



## Accessible

- Ability to be: reached, used, seen, understood, appreciated, influenced (open), or adapted.



**SOME DISABILITIES  
LOOK LIKE THIS**

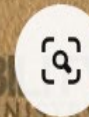


**SOME LOOK LIKE THIS**



@abilityministry

DISABILITY  
MINISTRY



## Biases

- Not all disabilities look like something.
- “You are such an inspiration.”
- “I could never do what you do.”
- “You need this help.”
- “You should be happy we are helping you.”





“

there is no  
greater disability  
in society than the  
inability to see a  
person as more

ROBERT M. HENSEL





## Interactions

- Introduce yourself
  - Use typical greetings
- Speak directly to the person
- Do not offer assistance unless it is requested or appears necessary



## Interactions

- Meet them at their level
  - Make eye contact
  - Use gestures when appropriate to facilitate the context
  - Be patient during communication (don't assume or interrupt)
- When in doubt, ask questions!!



## Interactions

- Person First Language
  - *Puts the person before the disability*
  - Emphasizing the person as a whole
  - Recognizing that the disability is only one part of the person
- vs. Identity first language



# Instead of.. Try saying..

The handicapped or the disabled.

People with disabilities.

He's mentally retarded.

He has a cognitive disability/diagnosis.

Normal or healthy kids.

Children without disabilities.

Handicapped parking.

Accessible parking.

He's crazy/insane/psycho.

He has a mental illness or mental disability.

She's confined to a wheelchair or is wheelchair bound.

She uses a wheelchair for mobility.

The dyslexic students.

A student with dyslexia.



## Additional References

[Ability Ministry – Your Go-To Resource for Disability Ministry](#)

[Applied Disability Studies \(brocku.ca\)](#)

[Increase of age-related diseases in Humans during aging. | Download Scientific Diagram \(researchgate.net\)](#)

[What is Geroscience? - American Federation for Aging Research \(afar.org\)](#)

