

Disability Culture

Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
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Faculty

Rena Carpenter, LICSW, PIP
Social Work Clinical Coordinator
Elderly and Disabled Waiver Program
Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission

What is a Disability?

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Approximately 20% of Americans have a disability

Americans With Disabilities Act

- Became law in 1990
- Illegal to discriminate based on disability
- Created standards for accommodations for public facilities, transportation, etc.

Types of Disabilities

- Some disabilities are physical while others are mental
- Some disabilities are acquired while others are congenital
- Some disabilities are visible while others are invisible
- Each person with a disability is a unique individual – we are people first!

People First Language

- | <u>Offensive</u> | <u>Inclusive</u> |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Handicapped, crippled, lame, wheelchair-bound | • A person with mobility limitations |
| • Special Needs | • Functional and Access Needs |
| • The Disabled | • The Disability Community |

People First Language

Offensive

- Crazy, insane, psycho
- Retarded, slow, simple
- Dumb or mute

Inclusive

- Person with a mental illness
- Person with an intellectual disability
- Person with a communication disorder

People First Language

Offensive

- Spastic
- Epileptic
- Midget
- Mongoloid

Inclusive

- Person with Cerebral Palsy
- Person with epilepsy
- A person with dwarfism or a person of short stature
- A person with Down's Syndrome

Why Do Words Matter?

- Words we choose affect societal attitudes, policies, and laws
- Appropriate term is "Accessibility Parking"
- Continues to be referred to as "Handicapped Parking"

Why Do Words Matter?

- Words we choose affect societal attitudes, policies, and laws
- The Federal Law related to education of individuals with disabilities is the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)"

Why Do Words Matter?

- Words can be empowering or they can be limiting
 - Avoid words or phrases that take away a person's power
 - Avoid words or phrases that define a person by their disability
 - Avoid words or phrases that tend to evoke pity

Why Do Words Matter?

- Words influence how we feel and react
- Words can create prejudice
- Words can be dehumanizing
- Words can underestimate a person's ability

Words / Phrases to Avoid

- **Suffers from (illness or disability)**
- **Confined to (wheelchair, hospital bed, etc.)**
- **Afflicted by (illness or disability)**
- **Victim of (illness, accident, disability)**
- **Struck by (illness or condition)**

Limiting vs Empowering

- **Mr. Smith is a victim of polio contracted during early childhood. He suffers from paralysis and has been confined to a wheelchair since reaching adulthood.**

Limiting vs Empowering

- **Mr. Smith is a victim of polio contracted during his early childhood. He suffers from paralysis and has been confined to a wheelchair since early adulthood.**
- **Mr. Smith contracted polio during his early childhood. Due to his paralysis, he has been ambulating with a wheelchair since reaching adulthood.**

Limiting vs Empowering

- **Susan was thought to be mentally retarded during her preschool years but was later accurately diagnosed as being deaf and dumb.**

Limiting vs Empowering

- **Susan was thought to be mentally retarded during her preschool years, but was later diagnosed as being deaf and dumb.**
- **Susan was thought to be intellectually disabled during her preschool years but was later accurately diagnosed as hearing impaired with a communication disorder.**

Limiting vs Empowering

- **Mark has been plagued by epileptic fits since the age of four.**

Limiting vs Empowering

- **Mark has been plagued by epileptic fits since the age of four.**
- **Mark has been living with epilepsy since the age of four.**

Disability Etiquette

- **Assistive Devices: Treat the device the same as you would treat a person, it is an extension of that individual**
 - **Don't touch equipment except in situations where you would appropriately touch the person**
 - **Don't assume a person with an assistive device needs your help – ASK!**

Disability Etiquette

- **The extra space in a wheelchair-accessible stall has a purpose – do not use it for storage**
- **Unless you have an accessibility parking tag AND need the space, do not use accessible parking spaces**
- **Do NOT park in the blue lines beside an accessible parking space (this can prevent a person in a wheelchair from being able to enter or exit their vehicle)**

Disability Etiquette

- **Deaf Community: Don't communicate with the interpreter**
 - **Speak directly to the person, not the interpreter**
 - **Make eye contact with the person, not the interpreter**

Disability Etiquette

- **When communicating with a person who reads lips, speak in your natural voice – do not exaggerate your words or facial features**
- **Do not turn away from a person who is deaf – they need to see your face/lips**

Disability Etiquette

- **Blind Community: Don't walk away without letting them know you are leaving!**
 - **When guiding a person who is blind, allow them to use your shoulder or forearm**

Disability Etiquette

- **Intellectually Disabled Community:**
Do not speak to them as though they are a child unless they ARE a child – don't use a 'baby voice'
- **Developmentally disabled** – also called global developmental delay (cerebral palsy)

Disability Etiquette

- **Intellectually disabled** – below average IQ (Fragile X)
- **Cognitively disabled** – affects how a person learns (dyslexia)

References:

- <https://writingcooperative.com/cultural-sensitivity-writing-about-persons-with-disabilities-fddda0c994c3>
- www.census.gov
- <https://www.thearc.org/who-we-are/media-center/people-first-language>
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