

Embracing Disability Culture, Accessibility, and Assistive Technology Use

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What is Disability?

Impairment: An Injury, illness, congenital or acquired condition that causes or likely to cause a loss of physiological or psychological functioning

Disability: the loss of limitation or opportunities to fully participate in all aspects of life due to societal, physical, environmental, attitudinal barriers

What is Disability Culture?

Peters (2000) describes three possible worldviews for considering disability culture:

- A community with a common language and history;
- A way to organize collective efforts towards social justice by challenging historical and ongoing oppression; and
- As a personal disability identity characterized by pride.



Disability Culture Offers...

Disabled people another framework of possibility or choice to pursue their own or shared goals. Brown (2002) wrote:

Disabled people have forged a group identity. We share a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. We generate art, music, literature, and other expressions of our lives and our culture, infused from our experience of disability.

Most importantly, we are proud of ourselves as disabled people. We claim our disabilities with pride as part of our identity. We are who we are: we are disabled people (p. 49).

Disability Identity

- Possessing a sense of self and feelings of connection to and solidarity with the disability community (Murugami, 2009)
- The salience of disability identity is likely to shift based on context of how the individual or the sociocultural environment defines disability (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013)

Assistive Technology

- The federal definition of assistive technology (AT) is:
...any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities [20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1401 (25)].

Assistive technology is technology used by disabled people in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.

Barriers to Assistive Technology

- Attitudinal barriers
- Lack of training
- Access/cost
- Inadequate assessment
- Lack of support
- Others?

Life Hack

- A usually simple and clever tip, strategy or technique for accomplishing some familiar task more easily and efficiently (Merriam-Webster)
- Some life hacks are low cost some are high cost

What can WE do?

- Respect the lived experience of disability- knowledge about disability and understanding of the lived experience are two different things
- Validate client experiences, this may include family members too
- Client driven/quality of life over “normalcy”
- Think outside the box. Multiple ways to do things.
- Focus on strengths (Your words matter).
- Promote autonomy to make decisions
- Collaboration is key- be an active ally

What does be an ALLY really mean? - Kayla Reed

A- always center the impacted

L- listen & learn from those who live in the oppression

L- leverage your privilege

Y-yield the floor



Questions/comments?
THANK YOU!

Feel free to email me with any
questions/comments/collaborations
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