

Identity Development in an Ableistic Society

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Why this presentation?

- Background
- Concerns about: Ethnicity
Disability
- How do we develop our identities and how do we learn to relate to others?
- What are the implications for service providers and students



Awarenesses

- Paucity of direct training for service providers
- Not a lot of research on how disability is viewed by the general public
- Not much discussion and training that affects our own issues with disability



Other Identity Models

- Racial Identity - Janet Helms
- LGBT Identity Development - Vivienne Cass
- Disability Identity – Evolving



Disability Service Delivery Models

- Medical
- Interactive (also referred to as social or integrative)
- Affirmation (extension of social view: impairments are an important part of self and the individual is part of a diverse world)



Contexts

- Experiences and Training
- Socio – Economic Status
- Model in Use



New Disability Identity Model for People w/o Disabilities

- I. Contact: oblivious to ableism
- II. Conflicted: awareness and dissonance
- III. Withdrawal: powerlessness
- IV. Reassessment and Reinvestment: "I get it"
- V. Immersion/Emersion: continued effort to help but belief that ableism does not describe their own views; recognition of guilt
- VI. Full Acceptance: awareness of one's role and positive action to remove barriers



Contexts

- Source of Disability – congenital or acquired
- Visibility
- Severity
- Socio-Economic Status
- Societal Perspectives and Safety




New Disability Identity Model for People with Disabilities

- I. Ableism: Accepted Standard
- II. Identity Confusion: rejection by others and dissonance within
- III. Immersion: participation in or with the disability community
- IV. Emersion: begin to emerge with an identity as a person with a disability
- IV. Self-Acceptance and Exploration:
- V. Integration: with disability and other aspects of personality




Service Providers		PWD
Contact		Ableism
Conflicted		Identity Confusion
Withdrawal		Immersion
Reassessment/Reinvestment		Emersion
Immersion/Emersion		Self-Acceptance/Exploration
Full Acceptance		Integration



Implications

- Common Understanding
 - Staff
 - Student
 - Faculty
- Train New Providers
- Improve Services to Students
- Promote Universal Design



Resources/References

- Helms, J.E., & Cook, D.A. (1999) *Using race and culture in counseling psychotherapy: Theory and process*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Helms (1995) from Sue, et al. (1998) *Multicultural counseling competencies: Individual and organizational development*. Sage Productions: Thousand Oaks, CA
- Cass, V. C. "Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model" pp. 219-235. *Journal Of Homosexuality* – Vol 4 (3), Spring 1979.
