Welcome to the waiting room!

Thank you for joining us for today’s webinar presentation. We will begin shortly. If you need assistance before we start, you can communicate with us using the question window.

CQL™ The Council on Quality and Leadership
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MODERN ABLEISM AND DISABILITY PREJUDICE

“INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE.”
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Photo by Tom Olin

www.c-q-l.org
Agenda

• Brief history of traditional and historical forms of ableism
• Discussion of modern disability discrimination and social devaluation
• Overview of social psychology frameworks of prejudice
• Research on contemporary disability prejudice

Housekeeping

This webinar is being recorded and will be available on our website for you to reference at a later time.

Questions will be answered at the end, as time permits.
ABLEISM
DISABILITY PREJUDICE

SOME EXAMPLES

• Ableism is “discrimination in favor of the able-bodied,” including “the idea that a person’s abilities or characteristics are determined by disability or that people with disabilities as a group are inferior to nondisabled people”

• Ableism manifests through pervasive institutional, systemic, and subtle discrimination

• Examples of modern discrimination
  • 50% of people with disabilities experience poverty
  • It is still legal to forcibly sterilize people with disabilities
  • Unemployment rate of people with disabilities has never been below 70%

DISABILITY PREJUDICE
CULTURAL NARRATIVES

• Disability discrimination and social devaluation is pervasive
• Prominent disability narratives may seem positive but can be problematic
• Common beliefs, stereotypes, and tropes
  • Exaggerate difficulties; focus on what they cannot do
  • Helpless, vulnerable, dependent, innocent
  • Bitter because of their impairments
  • Inspirational, overcoming
• Based on projections and limited understanding
• People with disabilities’ experiences are much more complex than these narratives
Source: Young, S. (2014). I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much. http://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_youvery_much/
Disability prejudice

Cultural Narratives

- Disability discrimination and social devaluation is pervasive
- Prominent disability narratives may seem positive but can be problematic
- Common beliefs, stereotypes, and tropes
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HOW PREJUDICE OPERATES
HOW WE TYPICALLY THINK ABOUT
PREJUDICE

PREJ UDIC ED

NOT PREJ UDIC ED
UNDERSTANDINGS OF PREJUDICE OVER TIME

• Early research: Reinforced difference (reinforced white supremacy, exaggerated disability, etc.)

• Modern research
  • 1920s – 1950s: Prejudice as pathology
  • 1950s – 1990s: Prejudice as normative cognitive process
    • Explicit = conscious prejudice
    • Implicit = unconscious prejudice
  • 1990s – today: builds on 2nd wave, adds focus on targets of prejudice, stereotype formation, microaggressions
NO ABLEISM

 Truly low prejudice
 (low explicit, low implicit)

 Aversive ableist
 (low explicit, high implicit)

 Symbolic ableist
 (high explicit, high implicit)

 MOST PEOPLE

 Old fashioned

 EXTREME ABLEISM

• High in explicit prejudice, high in implicit prejudice

• Expressed through symbols (e.g., opposition to affirmative action, ‘identity politics’) – rationalize and justify their prejudice

• High in individualism – belief that people just need to try harder

• People with disabilities produce excessive demands on the system and demand special favors

• Logic: since there is civil rights legislation, people’s disadvantages must be due to the person themselves, not discrimination

AVERSIVE ABLEISM

• Low in explicit prejudice, high in implicit prejudice

• Being progressive and egalitarian is important to their self concepts – believe they are not prejudiced

• Act in prejudiced ways in ambiguous situations where it is harder to be “caught” being prejudiced

aversive ableism

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_U_byvTzW4w
AVERSIVE ABLEISM

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_U_byvTzW4w
RETHINKING ABLEISM

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT PREJUDICE ($n = 344,760$)

**Explicit**
- Strongly prefer PWD: 61%
- Moderately prefer PWD: 21%
- Slightly prefer PWD: 10%
- No preference: 5%

**Implicit**
- Strongly prefer PWD: 1%
- Moderately prefer PWD: 3%
- Slightly prefer PWD: 4%
- No preference: 12%
- Slightly prefer nondisabled: 13%
- Moderately prefer nondisabled: 26%
- Strongly prefer nondisabled: 41%

PREJUDICE STYLES \( (n = 344,760) \)

- Aversive ableists, 56.3%
- Truly low prejudiced, 29.0%
- Symbolic ableists, 11.3%
- Principled conservatives, 3.3%

THE

‘SO WHAT?’
The higher a state’s disability prejudice, the more people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) they institutionalize, regardless of state size.

States with less disability prejudice, direct more of the their long-term services and supports (LTSS) funding to home and community based services (HCBS)

People who oppose the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) have higher disability prejudice compared to people who support the ADA.

States lower in disability prejudice have higher disability employment rates

REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

LANGUAGE

• The R-word
• Autism puzzle piece
• Language that ‘skirts’ around disability (e.g., handicappable, differently abled) – implies there is something wrong with it

Source:
Although family members of people with disabilities have less disability prejudice than people who are not family members, family members still often have moderate disability prejudice.

People with disabilities themselves often have internalized ableism.

NOW WHAT?
NOW WHAT?: RECAP

- Most people are aversive ableists
  - Egalitarian values
  - Rationalized prejudice
  - Conflicting messages about disability
  - Well meaning
  - Ableism ‘sneaks out’
- Understanding modern prejudice is hard
  - Nondisabled people, especially those with no disability consciousness, really bad at seeing it.
- Which is worse (explicit or implicit)? Neither. Both are harmful, just in different ways.
NOW WHAT?: WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Examine your privileges, prejudices, and stereotypes – then make an intentional effort to change your behavior.
  • An easy everyday first step is re-examining the language you use.

• Organizational cultural change – respectful, person-centered services and supports

• Changes at the systems/state/national level – advocate for rights of people with disabilities; more representatives with disabilities