



Welcome to our Learning Network & Knowledge Hub Webinar


Providing Disability-Affirmative Care: Deconstructing Ableism in Trauma Support


Date & Time: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 | 1:00-2:30 PM EST


- All attendees are muted during the webinar.
- If you are experiencing issues, please type into the chat box.
- If you have a question for the webinar speakers, please type into the Q&A box and we will spend 15 mins near the end on Questions and Answers (2:00 to 2:15 PM).
- There will be an evaluation link in the chat box at the end of the webinar, please fill out the form as your feedback will guide our future webinars.
- Presentation slides are posted on our website, there will be a link in the chat box.
- The webinar recording will be posted on our website within the next few days:
<http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/in-kh-webinars>

 **Western** Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children

 **LN** NETWORK

 **KC** KNOWLEDGE HUB CENTRE FOR TRAUMA RESEARCH & COMMUNITARIANS


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Providing Disability-Affirmative Care: Deconstructing Ableism in Trauma Support

 **TORONTO PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC**

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Outline

- Presenter introduction
- What is Ableism?
- Trauma/Abuse in disabled persons
- Using a Disability-Affirmative lens

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Who am I?



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Language

“To me, person-first language demeans the person. It attempts to dissociate them from some characteristic and in so doing defines that characteristic as bad, by virtue of it being necessary to dissociate from” - anon

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Intersectionality

“Our beliefs about bodies disproportionately impact those whose race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age deviate from our default notions. The further from the default, the greater the impact. We are all affected - but not equally.”

— Sonya Renee Taylor, *The Body Is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love*

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What is Disability?

Your excuse is invalid.

Never Ignore Somebody With a Disability, You Don't Realize How Much They Can Inspire You !!

Share If You Agree

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Disability in society

Disability in society

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Disabled Women

- Gender + Disability-related Violence
- Increased risk for abuse
 - Sexual abuse: 4x more likely (Martin et al., 2006)
 - Intimate partner violence (Plummer & Findley, 2012)
- Trauma
 - Risk for PTSD elevated
 - More likely to be reported as some sort of accident or “traditionally understood” threat to life

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Developmental Disability

- Risk of assault 4-10x higher
- Institutional trauma
 - Autonomy
 - Dignity of care
 - Sparse options
 - Limited support

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Mental Health

- Similarly increased risk:
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Eating Disorders
 - Addiction




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Considering the whole picture...

- Multiple axis of social marginalization
 - Poverty
 - Unemployment
 - Housing issues
 - Transportation
 - Access to community



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Living in an Inaccessible World Creates Trauma Responses in Marginalized and Disabled People

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Trauma-Informed Approach

- Reconceptualize responses
 - Fight/Flight/Freeze
 - Hypervigilance
 - Emotional Arousal
 - Emotional Numbing/Blocking
 - Excessive People Pleasing
 - Masking
 - Passing As Normal
- Survival Strategies!!!

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Access to Healthcare & Therapy

- Underutilization of preventative healthcare services
- Difficulties accessing mental health services
- Less likely to be identified
- Less likely to be included in research, healthcare, prevention programs.
 - Shelters
 - Mental health services

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Caregiver Abuse

- 60% : Higher rates of abuse by family members, caregivers and medical professionals (2.1 times)
- Prevention of basic needs and assistive devices
- Normalized – “The Compromise”
- The culture of institutionalization
- Compliance → Safety & Limited alternate options

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Medical Trauma

Rice 2014

- Comparison to sexual abuse survivors
- Invasive
- Dehumanizing
- Ongoing challenge of bodily autonomy

 Two side-by-side photographs of a woman's back. The woman is wearing white underwear. The left photograph shows her back from behind, appearing healthy and unmarked. The right photograph shows her back from behind, featuring a long, vertical, raised surgical scar running down the center of her spine.

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Goodley & Lawthom (2005) describe mainstream psychology as a “pathologising, voyeuristic, individualizing, impairment-obsessed discipline that has contributed to the exclusion of people with impairments” (p. 136)

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What is Ableism?



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Examples

- https://www.tiktok.com/@katcyborg/video/6907892282482035969?sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=6916756541333718533&is_from_webapp=vl
- https://www.tiktok.com/@flickerup/video/6898124256744426757?sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=6916756541333718533&is_from_webapp=vl

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Ableism in the Counseling Room

- Feelings of being misunderstood
- Overemphasis physical impairments while simultaneously ignoring disablement
- Stage Theories → Emotional stereotyping
 - Depression/Denial vs.
 - Inspirational/Cheerful
- Barriers to treatment



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Ableism in the Counseling Room

- Assumptions about character
- Valued judgments about disability
- Accessing support
 - Can the person get there?
 - Affordable?
 - Accessible?
 - Intersectional?

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Well-intentioned but oblivious



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Complex Systems!

- FUNDING!!!
- Attendant Care Support
- Mental Health Support
- Transportation
- Developmental Services
- General Accessibility
 - Masks COVID
 - Translation
 - Captions/image descriptions
 - Website and print materials

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Cultural Norms

- Autistic/Neurodiverse community
 - ABA Therapy
 - Autism Speaks
 - High/Low Functioning
- D/deaf/Hard of hearing
 - Cochlear implants
 - Integrated vs. separate schooling
- Mad Community
- Crip and Crippling therapy

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Therapist Attitudes

- 75% therapists view disability as a personal tragedy



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Situating the “Problem” of Disability

- Individual – Medical - Charity Model
- vs.
- Social – Cultural - Human Rights Model



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THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9s3NZaLhcc4>

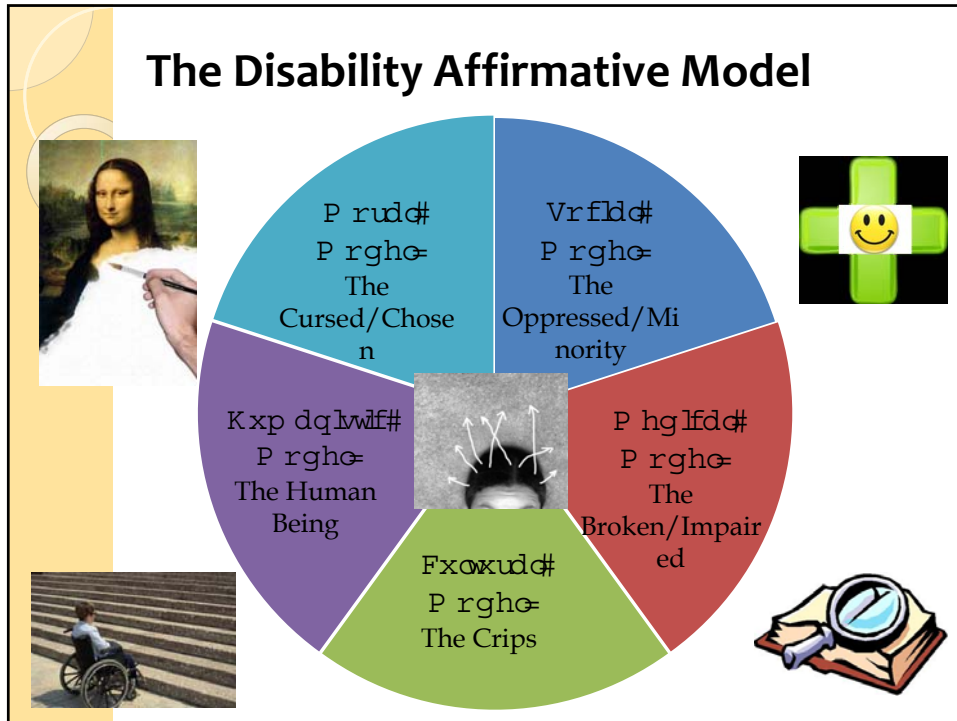
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Disability-Affirmative Therapy



- Dr. Rhoda Olkin (1999)
- Attempt bridge different models of disability (social & individual)
- Dynamic nature of disability
- Culturally-competent disability therapist
 - Disability norms
 - Avoiding assumptions
 - Including disability in case conceptualization

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Assumptions of Disability Affirmative Therapy

Disability itself is not inherently pathological or deviant and in fact has value and worth

“A client’s disability should be taken as information enhancing the case conceptualization in a way that neither underestimates nor overinflates the importance of disability”

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Trauma-Informed Disability Care

- 1) Disability-related developmental history
 - Visibility
 - Early vs. late onset
 - Discrimination / bullying
 - Exposure to disability culture
- 2) Socioeconomic status
- 3) Access to caregiving support and other resources
- 4) Client's view of disability
- 5) Advocacy skills and medical decision making
- 6) Medical trauma
- 7) Romantic/sexual history
- 8) Abuse history



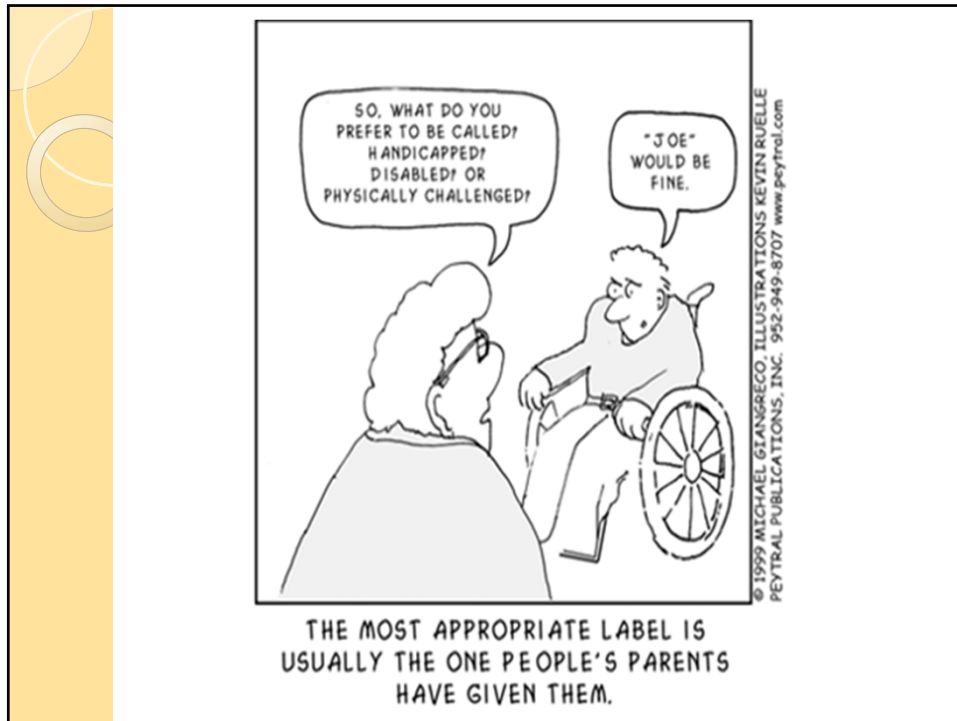
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What to say and How to say it: Language

- It's complicated!
- Take cues from the client.
- Assumptions in questions.
- Person-first – Person with a disability
- Identity-first – Disabled person
- Special Needs
- Handicapped
- Wheelchair user
- In-group terms
- PC terms...




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Rethinking Inaccessibility and Ableism as Trauma

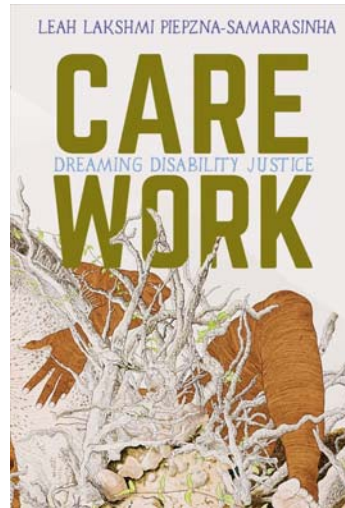


- Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Scan your environment
- Be aware of barriers
- Knowledge of Services and Rights
- Knowledge of medical impact

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Rethinking Models of Care

- Independent Living
“Nothing about us,
without us!”
- Caregiving/homemaking vs. support, help,
aid, assistant
- Models of
Interdependence



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Discussion - Ableism

- What is it?
- How do we create mental health issues for people with disabilities?
- Are people with disabilities being considered in the prevention and treatment of trauma?
- Are we reinforcing ableist norms in our treatment programs?

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Resources



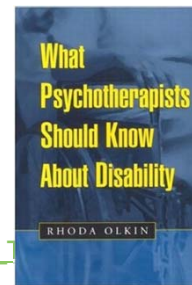
- Centre for Independent Living Toronto; www.cilt.ca
- DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN Ontario & Canada) <http://www.dawncanada.net>
- Ann Johnson Health Station www.ajhs.ca
 - SexAbility Program
 - Good Food Box Program
- ARCH Disability Law Centre <http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca>
- Parenting with a Disability Network <http://www.cilt.ca/parenting.aspx>



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Resources for Counselling

- Trauma-informed Care for Disability: <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Trauma-Informed-Guide.pdf>
- https://www.communitysolutionsva.org/files/Disability_Guide.pdf



- What Psychotherapists Should Know About Disability - Rhoda Olkin
- The Ultimate Guide to Sex and Disability: For All of Us Who Live with Disabilities, Chronic Pain, and Illness – Fran Odette, Cory Silverberg, Miriam Kaufman

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Thank you!

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"That quote, 'the only disability in life is a bad attitude', the reason that's bullshit is ... No amount of smiling at a flight of stairs has ever made it turn into a ramp. No amount of standing in the middle of a bookshelf and radiating a positive attitude is going to turn all those books into braille."
— Stella Young



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