Exploring Universal Design: Increasing Access and Inclusion

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Agenda

1. Setting the Stage
2. Introducing Disability
3. Exploring Universal Design
4. Strategies
5. Discussions
6. Feedback
Setting the Stage

- Share from your own experience
- Take into account the range of identities and experiences we all bring into the room
- Assume good intentions
- Support taking risks and making mistakes
- Take ownership of any unintended impacts

Please also use the space as you need to (stand, move, stretch, fidget, leave the room, doodle, take notes...)
Perceptions of Disability (handout)

What comes to mind first when you think about the term “disability?”

Reflect on your first experience(s) with disability (issues and/or communities)

How did these experiences shape your earliest perceptions of disability and/or individuals with disabilities?

How have these perceptions evolved to today?
Discussion: Defining Disability

- What do we mean by “disability?”
- Definitions?
Different Types of Disabilities

- Brain injuries
- AD/HD
- Physical Disabilities
- Blindness/Low vision
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Learning Disabilities
- Medical Disabilities
- Speech and Language
- Psychological Disabilities
- And more...
What is Neurodiversity?

- The **diversity** of human brains and minds
- Infinite variation!
- **Neurodivergent**, means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of “normal”
Understanding & Approaching Disability

Medical Model
- Defines disability as a health condition and an impairment to be treated/"cured" by doctors and specialists
- Focus is on *changing people with disabilities*, who are seen as needing to be cared for and “cured”

Social Model of Disability
- Focus shifts from changing individuals to *eliminating socially constructed barriers* that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in their communities
Medical vs. Social Model

**Medical Model**
- The *impairment* is the problem
- The person with the disability needs to be “cured”
- The individual needs to “get rid of” or “overcome” the disability

**Social Model**
- The social structures are the problems
- Changes must occur within existing systems (e.g., inaccessibility, social prejudice, belief systems, etc.)
“Like most young disabled people, the only narrative I had available to me was that you could talk about being disabled only if you talked about doing so in an inspirational way. The other alternative was a narrative of shame — that disability is shameful so the only way to talk about it is to say ‘I overcame it’ ‘I won this battle.’”

- Lydia X. Z. Brown, Disability Justice Advocate
Disability Justice Framework

- A model of disability focused on:
  - Intersection of identities
  - Embracing and celebrating diversity
  - Examining and questioning areas of privilege

Information from Autism Women’s Network
Approach to Disability

**Reactive**
- Individualized and specialized accommodations (in response to barriers)
- Places more strain on the individual with the disability
- Still needed at times

**Proactive**
- Creating spaces, products, and services that are fundamentally accessible to everyone
- Getting rid of barriers all together (as much as possible)
- Shared, social responsibility
- ...Universal Design!
Universal Design

- “The design of products and environments to be usable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design” - Ron Mace
- Concept originally emerged in architecture in the 1990s
Universal Design

Curb cuts are a great example - ensure street access for wheelchair users, while also providing street access for delivery people with carts, bicyclists, and people with strollers.

Other examples you’ve seen?
Access for people with a range of disabilities?
Discussion: In Pairs

- What are typical barriers to access that exist in your work environment?
- In what ways is universal design already incorporated into your space?
- What are some specific ways to make your space even more accessible?
### Ableism: Discrimination in favor of able-bodied or neurotypical people.

#### Strategies: Avoid Ableist Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terminology</th>
<th>Referring to…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blind to ____ / Turn a blind eye to ____ / Blinded by ignorance/bigotry/etc.</td>
<td>Blind, low-vision, or sight-limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bound to a wheelchair / In a wheelchair</td>
<td>People with physical or mobility limitations or disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy</td>
<td>People with mental or psychiatric disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf to ____ / Turn a deaf ear to ____ / etc.</td>
<td>Deaf or hard of hearing, speech-related disabilities, or linguistic/communication disorders or disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicap(ped)</td>
<td>People with physical or mobility disabilities (often a euphemistic phrase used to avoid saying “disabled”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing-Impaired</td>
<td>Deaf and hard-of-hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiot(ic)</td>
<td>People with intellectual disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lame</td>
<td>People with physical or mobility disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-Ableist Language

Disabled person; person/people with disabilities; has/with a disability or chronic health condition; Neurodivergent; Neuroatypical...

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**
- Autistic person/people
- Person/people on the autism/autistic spectrum
- Person/people with autism
- Aspie/Autie

**Physical/Mobility Disabilities**
- Has/with a physical/mobility disability
- Uses/in a wheelchair
- Uses a cane/walker/crutches
- Has/with [specific condition]

**Sensory Disabilities**
- Blind
- Low vision
- Deaf/Hard of hearing
- Deaf-Blind
- Deaf-Disabled

Always respect individual preferences regarding how a person self-identifies and what language they use/prefer
Overview of Strategies

**Sensory**
- Lighting (avoid fluorescent lights)
- Neutral fragrances
- Noise/music
- Screen brightness

**Language**
- Building awareness of ableist language
- Respecting how each individual identifies
- Own your mistakes, apologize, and move on

**Physical environment**
- Physical assistance
- Accessible doorway, walkway, bathroom
- Ramp; elevator; railing
- Seating variety/options

**Signage**
- Color contrast
- Include graphics
- Large print
- Braille and tactile signs
- Place at consistent height and location

**Communication**
- Multiple forms (written, verbal, visual)
- Language assistance
- Respect variation in processing speeds
- Registration/check-in assistance

**Remember...**
*This is an ongoing process that takes time! It is our responsibility to work toward change*
Allyship

An active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person holding systemic power seeks to end oppressions in solidarity with a group of people who are systematically disempowered.

-The Anti-Oppression Network
Tips for Practicing Allyship

Listen. Really listen.

Respect lived experience. Each person is the expert of their own life.

Stand beside, not in front of. Allying with a movement or community does not mean leading it.

Provide the support requested. Rather than what you imagine or assume might be helpful.

Your presence/opinion may not always be desired or necessary. Show up when invited and gracefully remove yourself when you’re not.

Respect the history of the movements/communities you step into. Do your research.

Learn more about systems of oppression. Increase your understanding of and ability to talk about how oppressive systems operate.
What are your three take-away points from today’s presentation?

What are one or two action items you may do moving forward related to disability?
Feedback is Important to us!

On one side of your notecard...
Please write your “Gots”
(What did you gain from this presentation today?)

On the other side...
Please write your “Needs”
(What would you like to learn more about?)
That’s it for today...

Thank you!

Any questions?
Resources in/around Lane County:

Mobility International (MIUSA)
- https://www.miusa.org

DanceAbility International
- http://www.danceability.com

Senior & Disability Services
- http://www.sdslane.org

Lane County Developmental Disability Services
- http://www.co.lane.or.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=3585881&pageId=5300672

UO Accessible Education Center
- https://aec.uoregon.edu
Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions

Thank you FOOD for Lane County!

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