Neurodiversity: A multicultural competency for clinicians and student-affairs professionals

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Outline and Purpose of Discussion

- Describe relevant nomenclature
- Discuss legal considerations
- Review key theoretical frameworks
- Examine biases
- Explore social change

WHY?
Raise Awareness
Inclusive Education
Social Change
Neurodiversity

- Atypical neurological development as a normal difference
- Focuses on positive interpretation & empowerment
- Advocates for civil and human rights movement
  - Social model versus medical
- Views disability as a construct of identity vs. disorder.
- **Neurological disability** - Occurs when inclusion into general public activities is unnecessarily restricted
## Developmental Differences/Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neurotypical view</th>
<th>Neurodiverse view</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asperger’s and Autism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Asperger’s and Autism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disease</td>
<td>Neurological needs and psychological traits that regulate thoughts and behavior on a continuum that extends from normal to pathological.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spectrum of neurodevelopmental disorders</td>
<td>No deterioration of health or mental status over time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characterized by impairments in:</td>
<td>Complex constellation of + and – traits, difficult to separate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbal abilities</td>
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<td>Social reciprocity</td>
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<td>Obsessive &amp; repetitive behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High Functioning (HFA)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Functioning (LFA)</td>
<td></td>
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Resources:

Students with Asperger Syndrome

- Students with Asperger Syndrome: A Guide for College Personnel
  - Foreword by: Paul Williamson, M.D., and Ann Kin, Ph.D.

- Succeeding in College with Asperger Syndrome: A Student Guide
  - By: John Harpur, Maria Lawlor, and Michael Fitzgerald
Cognitive Difference/Disability

- Cognitive Disabilities ~ dyslexia, ADHD, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
  - Without label cannot receive ADA assistance.

- Learning difference ~ ↑ academic self-esteem, self-efficacy, high career ambition, clear & positive goals.

Psychological Difference/Disabilities

- Psychopathology – manifestation of mental disorders involving impairments and/or deviance
  - Bipolar – potentially harmful untreated

- Psychopathology is myth - Thomas Szasz
Disability and Legal Considerations

- Prior to 1973 – 14th Amendment
- 1973 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- 1983 - Federal law 42 U.S. C Section
- 1990 – Americans with Disabilities Act
- 1990 – IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- 2004 - IDEAIA – Public Law 108-446
# Theoretical Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Model</th>
<th>Social Model</th>
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| - Diagnostic labels  
  - disorder, deficit, or condition  
- Co-morbidity vs. diversity  
- Symptoms and abnormalities  
- Cure or treatment to eliminate disorder  
- Within-person problem | - Social construction theory  
- Disability a social construction  
- Rights-based movement toward socio-political change  
- Promotes social justice in educational practices  
- Advocates for full inclusion  
- Strength based approach |
Disability Studies in Education (DSE)

- Recently developed scholarly field
- **Mission** – increase awareness of social model of disability and challenge medical framework as disability relates to education
- Research aimed at social & educational advocacy
- Research prior to DSE focused on special education
- Parallels feminist, queer, and anti-racist democratic frameworks
- Examines social policy and political economy.
- Expects schools to play a role in transforming culture.
- Provides nine standards for educators
Theoretical Considerations

Student Identity Development

- Student identity clearly linked to meaning of ‘label’
  - Difference versus Disorder

- Student identity connected to
  - Previous educational experiences
  - Academic & social self-esteem
  - Career ambition

- Difference view $\rightarrow$ social model of disability
  - Greater academic self-esteem and ambition
  - Negative teacher attitudes exist, but lead to an activist response

- Deficit view $\rightarrow$ medical model of disability
  - Reduced self-esteem and educational aspirations
  - View changes support groups shifts view to difference
Inclusive Education

- Schools constructed through lens of DSE
  1) Presuming Competence
  2) Naming Oneself
  3) Agency vs. Independence

- Does your campus succeed in answering these 5 questions?
  1) Accessibility – Do students get to where they need to go?
  2) Accommodation – Are they able to do what they want to do?
  3) Resource Availability – Are their special needs getting met?
  4) Social Support – Are these students accepted by others?
  5) Equality – Are these students seen as equals?
Ableism – discriminatory and exclusive practices due to a belief that able-bodiedness is superior

Creates institutional power toward unequal social structure

Confronting able-bodied privilege → ally to social justice

Failure to see how ideas of normalcy shape disability ableist dominant view.

Two phase process
RECOGNIZING & CHALLENGING DISABILITY BIAS’

Phase 1: Recognizing

1. Make contact
2. Develop relationship
3. Challenge established beliefs & assumptions
4. Recognize if return to previously held beliefs

Phase 2: Disestablishing

1. Stopping & Thinking
2. Ethical Decision-making

KEY: - reflective process of dissonance of uncovering entrenched beliefs of privilege (18)
Being Neuro-inclusive on Colleges Campus:

Inclusive Educational Practices

1) Increase interactions with students with disabilities
2) Reduce focus on diagnostic labels
3) Integrate principles of non-segregation
4) Partner with families
5) Principles of Partnership, Community, & Equity
6) Evaluate faculty and staff attitudes and biases
7) Examine policies and organizational structures
Being Neuro-inclusive on Colleges Campus:

**Student Life and Affairs Offices**

- **Residential Education** → Train RAs, Topics to train include available resources, emergency plans, conduct procedures, and disclosure issues.

- **Health & Counseling** → Develop referral network, assist with medical leave process, understand concurrent mental health issues, crisis management response, assistance with medication management.

- **Student Activities, Multicultural Center, & Community Services** →
  - Provide key social opportunities, examine accessibility issues.

- **Career Services** → Educate staff on disclosure issues, access to work opportunities with supervision, assessments toward fit, interview skills, help with personal organization strategies.

- **Food & Dining Services** → Asperger’s/Autism Spectrum education about sensory sensitivities or dietary restrictions.

- **Judicial Affairs** → Disability doesn’t excuse unacceptable behavior. Outline code of conduct clearly and train campus safety.
Being Neuro-inclusive on Colleges Campus:

**Disability Coordinators**

- Authorizing body for students with disabilities
- Policy, service eligibility, and coordinate accommodations
- Liaison to campus community and campus accessibility issues
  - Resolve conflicts between academic affairs and students.
- Tutoring and academic support services
- Partners with families
- Assistive technology
Being Neuro-inclusive on Colleges Campus:

**Faculty and Academic Affairs**

- **EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE**
  - Most common issue is lack of awareness
  - Consult with Provost office and department chairs

- Liaison relationship with Disability Services office

- Address barriers to *Reasonable Accommodations* for students.

- Examine accessibility of course delivery
  - Consider multisensory learning styles

- Course selection and advising key
Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand history of the neurodiversity field.
2. Know the impact of a neuro-inclusive school.
3. Have increased awareness of personal biases.
4. Know the role student-affairs has in social change.
5. Understand the role of mental health professionals.
6. Increased momentum toward advocating for neuro-equality on your college campuses.


Neurodiversity: A multicultural competency for clinicians & student-affairs professionals

Culture Change:
1) Knowledge
2) Access
3) Support

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