

Tuesday, 2:30 – 4:00, C5

Disability Pride: Exploring the Role of the Disability Identity

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Objective:

Identify and emphasize attitudes that enhance the opportunities for persons with DD to achieve their optimal potential

Notes:

**From Pity to Pride:
Why Disability Matters**



NASW CONFERENCE

Michigan Disability Rights Coalition
MDRC
WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT FOR ALL

Who We Are



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Training overview



**Disability Identity, Pride,
and Power**



Why Pride is Important



**How to Support the
Development of Pride**

Disability Identity



My disability is invisible so why does it matter if I identify? (have pride)



Disability is more than the physical, and/or mental effects on the body.

Disability Pride

- Accepting and honoring our uniqueness and seeing it as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity.
- **Pride** comes from celebrating our own heritage, culture, unique experiences, and contributions.



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Disability Power

- Knowing and feeling one's pride and applying our unique voices, skills, and actions with energy and confidence to achieve a vision
- This vision is one of full citizenship in all places: personal relationships, home, school, work community, institutions, etc.



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Internalized Ableism



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WHAT IS DISABILITY PRIDE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

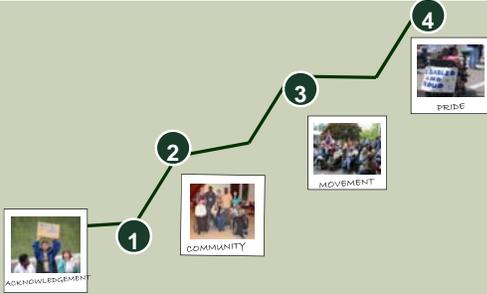


<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEOb7-E-hOs>

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Tiers of Pride



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Tiers of Pride 1



1

15

Tiers of Pride 2

2





COMMUNITY

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Tiers of Pride 3

3






MOVEMENT

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Tiers of Pride 4

4







PRIDE

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What is to Gain

- Self-esteem
 - Self-acceptance
- Support System
 - Sense of belonging
- Accommodations
- Value of Interdependence
- Life of Honesty
- Appreciation for diversity



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Building Disability Pride

Acknowledge			

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Acknowledge

- Acknowledge identity
- Acknowledge losses
- Acknowledge gifts



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Building Disability Pride

Acknowledge

Language

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Language

Special Crippled Handicapped

Can't Normal

Words Matter

Differently Able Special

Handicapable

Normal

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LANGUAGE: FROM DISABILITY COMMUNITY

Offensive

- Retarded
- Handicapped
- Crippled

Thriving

- Disabled person
- Deaf

Special Person with a disability

Surviving

- Differently Abled
- Handicapable
- disAbility

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LANGUAGE: FROM ALLIES/SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Offensive

- Normal/Average
- Those People
- "We all have a disability"

Thriving

- Non-Disabled
- Person without a disability

Surviving

- Able-Bodied
- Able-Minded
- Temporarily Able-Bodied (TAB)

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Building Disability Pride

			Acknowledge
Language			
			History/Culture
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History and Culture




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Building Disability Pride			
Language		Acknowledge	
	Practice		
		History/Culture	
			28

Practice	
<p>“Remember, you weren’t the one, who made you ashamed, But you are the one, who can make you proud. Just practice, Practice until you get proud, and once you are proud, Keep practicing so you won’t forget. You get proud By practicing.”</p> <p>—Laura Hershey</p>	
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Building Disability Pride			
Language		Acknowledge	
	Practice		
Inclusion		History/Culture	
			30

Environmental Inclusion



- Welcoming environments
- Physical access
- Attitudinal access
- Programmatic access
- Policies and procedures

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RESOURCES

- Clinical Applications
- Medical vs. Social Model
- Welcoming Environments
- Pride Chart




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Questions?




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From Pity to Pride: Why Disability Matters

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It takes a shift in one's thinking to change a system!!! We need to make a philosophical shift in how we view disability. We need to examine our attitudes and beliefs around disability in order to improve the systems that serve people with disabilities.

Disability Pride:

Accepting and honoring our uniqueness and seeing it as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity. Pride comes from celebrating our own heritage, culture, unique experiences and contributions. Disability pride:

- Recognizes the power people with disabilities have to make change.
- Results when we challenge and undo negative beliefs, attitudes and feelings that dominate groups think there is something wrong with our identity.
- Rejects shame and the need to “blend in”
- Self acceptance and validation of our uniqueness
- Results in making choices based on respect for interdependence, accommodations, and creativity.
- Feeling a strong connection w/ a community of other people
- Recognizes that it is our uniqueness that will transform all people and institutions (society)

Disability Power:

Knowing and feeling one's pride and applying our unique voice, skills and actions with energy and confidence to achieve a vision (of full citizenship in all places: personal relationships, home, school, work, community, institutions, etc.). Disability power:

- Includes the commitment to provide personal and institutional support for people with disabilities who are seeking to claim their full and rightful place, power and pride
- Knowing practicing and using the skills to make changes
- Expressed when disability communities protest discrimination and celebrate disability culture, heritage and history.

Tiers of a Proud Identity:

1. **Acknowledgement** - This includes acknowledgement of their disability as part of their identity.
 - Getting rid of the messages that we are just “special” or that we are “just like everyone else.” Instead, we need to acknowledge that we are different – we are part of natural human diversity – and diversity is not a bad thing.

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2. **Community** – This includes realizing that you are not the only one and finding a place where you fit in.
 - Knowing there are many others like you – with the same barriers put on us by society. It is having a shared understanding of the oppression you face with others like you. It is sharing common experiences with other people with disabilities – talking to people who “get it.”
3. **Movement** – This includes realizing you are part of a larger movement for social justice.
 - Learning about disability history (both the oppression and resistance). Looking at how long we have been oppressed and how far we have come over the years. Realizing how long people in your community have been fighting for equality.
4. **Pride** – This includes being able to say “I’m disabled” while also having a sense of pride instead of shame.
 - Not hiding or denying your disability. Using your community’s history as fuel to move forward and continue to fight for justice. Finding great power and excitement when around a large group of people with disabilities.

Building Blocks of Pride:

1. **Acknowledge** – Acknowledge their disability. Help them acknowledge the losses and the gifts that come with disability.
2. **Language** – Use language that supports disability pride.
3. **History and Culture** – Expose people to disability history and culture. Learn about it yourself.
4. **Inclusion** – Make your programs inclusive of people with disabilities. Acknowledge the importance of community (spaces for people with disabilities only) but know that it must be by choice.
5. **Practice** – Allow people with disabilities the opportunities to practice being proud. You should practice what you preach. If you are teaching disability pride, you should believe in disability pride.

Benefits of Pride:

- **Increased Self-Esteem** – As one accepts themselves they have a higher self-esteem and self-confidence
- **Accommodations** – When one knows they have a disability, they know what accommodations they need. When they are proud of their disability, they are able to advocate for the accommodations they need without feeling a sense of shame or like they are asking for something “special.”
- **Increased Independence/Interdependence** – As one gets the accommodations they need, they are more likely to be independent and successful in their lives, housing situations, places of employment, educational settings, personal relationships, community involvement, etc. Increased value of interdependence – knowing it is okay to rely on others.
- **Community Inclusion** – As people become more independent in the places mentioned above, they become more likely to be included in community activities.