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C O N S U L T I N G

# WeThe15

# Disability – The Big Picture

- World's largest minority population
  - 61 million Americans have a disability
- Disability encompasses 15-20% of the population
  - Physical disabilities
  - Visible, Invisible disabilities (Diabetes, MS, Epilepsy, TBI)
    - 70% of disabilities are invisible
  - Long COVID – disability numbers are increasing
- Disability touches and intersects with:
  - Every community
  - Every race and ethnicity
  - Every religion
  - All ages
  - All sexual identities

# Disability – The Big Picture

- Because of its intersectionality, disability MUST be included in DEI initiatives
- Disability is the minority group that anyone can become a part of at any time in life
- Disability doesn't discriminate
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Education
  - Profession

# Diversity of Disability

- Disability is different and unique for everyone (social model of disability – personal experience)
  - Disability Onset
    - Since birth, congenital (17%)
    - Acquired later in life (83%)
  - Type of Disability
    - Spinal Cord Injury
    - Congenital (dwarfism, spina bifida)
    - Traumatic Brain Injury
    - Amputee/limb loss (congenital or acquired)
    - Vision Impairment (congenital or acquired)
  - Injury or Illness
    - Car/bike accident
    - Combat injury
    - Cancer, MS

# Medical vs Social Models of Disability

## Medical Model

- Disabled because of medical condition, impairment, or difference in need of treatment
- Disabled need “Fixing” – what is “wrong” with the individual
- Disability is a medical problem
- Creates low expectations, decreased independence, choice and control
- Does not involve personal experience of disability

# Medical vs Social Model of Disability

## Social Model

- Disabled because of barriers in society
- The more society is accessible with less physical barriers, disability IS no longer the “issue”
- Disability is neither good or bad, it’s just part of our personal experience
- Barriers
  - Physical – Sport facility only has stairs to access gym, pool
  - Social/Attitudinal–
    - Fear of disability and including in a sport program
    - Attitudinal - Ableism needs the cure, not our bodies
  - Institutional –
    - Subway/public transportation stops aren’t accessible to wheelchairs
    - Schools/universities some parts of campus that are not accessible
    - Reduces ability of disabled to fully participate in community
  - Communication –
    - Not providing a visual accommodation at practice
    - Breaking down instructions
- Removing social barriers creates equality, access offering disabled more independence, choice and control – Creating opportunities to **PARTICIPATE IN LIFE, COMMUNITY**

# Social Model of Disability

***“We are more disabled by the society in which we live than by our bodies or diagnoses”***

- Stella Young, Australian Disability Advocate, Comedian



# Disability Culture – Language Matters

## Outdated/Offensive Terms

- Laundry List
  - Handicapped
  - Crippled
  - Special Needs
  - **“Confined” to wheelchair**
  - **Wheelchair-bound**
  - Victim
  - Suffered
  - Afflicted
  - Invalid
  - Stricken

# Disability Culture – Language Matters

## Outdated/Offensive Terms

- Labels can be damaging
- Many disabled dislike jargon, euphemism and should be avoided
  - “Physically challenged”
  - “Differently-abled”
  - “Special Needs” – *Yes, it really is ok to stop using....please*
  - “Despite their disability.....”
  - Overcoming-ness (medical model, low expectations); AKA - Super Crip Narrative

# Disability Culture – Language Matters

## Stop Using ‘Special Needs’

- LinkedIn Post, Deb Dagit
  - President Deb Dagit Diversity LLC and Corporate Consultant Inclusion Works at Disability:IN

Yes, inquiring minds want to know why this term will not go away. Not appreciated by people with disabilities at work or school. Need an alternative? How about just people/colleagues/students with disabilities?

Our needs are not "special." They are tools and supports to provide equity and enhance inclusion. We don't refer to lactation rooms as fulfilling special needs for nursing Mothers. We don't refer to ergonomic workstations/cubes as special needs for people who sit in front of a computer all day. Please just stop. Even a first grader knows that "special" is demeaning and is almost always accompanied by low expectations and stigma.



# Disability Culture – Language Matters

## Stop Using ‘Special Needs’

- LinkedIn Post, Haben Girma
  - Harvard Law, Disability Justice Lawyer

"Special needs" is problematic. During the Inclusive Africa Conference, Dagnachew B. Wakene, LL.B., MPhil urged people to avoid this phrase. Labeling a disabled person's need for water, food & dignity as special suggests it's extra & optional. Just don't. But I'll confess, Dag & I have special needs.

Dag is a disability justice advocate from Ethiopia pursuing his Ph.D at the University of Pretoria, and he asked for my book. Now, he didn't absolutely "need" it. But he told me he'd been waiting 3 years and would really love a copy. So when I traveled to Nairobi I packed a book for him.

He's a good friend and knows one of my "special needs" is excellent coffee. He generously brought me a very special bag of beans from Addis Ababa. If you're referring to disabled people, use the word #disabled. "Special needs" just makes me think of coffee, books & other sweet gifts.

# Offensive Stereotypes to Avoid

- People living with physical disabilities are “courageous”, an inspiration
  - People with disabilities have adapted to their disability. Living their life and taking care of everyday tasks should not be considered courageous.
- People’s lives are ruined by a disability
  - For many that have acquired their disability later in life, they acknowledge they have accomplished more post-injury than they did before acquiring their disability. They report having a new appreciation and perspective on life.
- Disability does not define someone’s life

# Disability Culture – Person First

- Most are familiar with person-first language
  - Puts person first before diagnosis
    - Individual with spinal cord injury
    - Student with cerebral palsy
    - Recognizes disability is not the most important part of the person's identity

# Disability Culture – Identity First

- Identity-First
  - Contemporary literature, scholars and disability advocates note that using the word “disabled” is more appropriate and helps strengthen the disability community as a whole.
  - Recognizes that the person’s identity as a disabled person is important
  - Suggests avoiding the word able-bodied and using not or non-disabled when referring to someone without a disability
- It’s okay to ask what an individual prefers
  - Newly injured, diagnosed may not be comfortable with identity-first language
- Disability is NOT a dirty or bad word

# Ableism

- Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior.
- At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as 'less than', and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities.
- Intentional and Unintentional



# Ableism

- Ableism refers to bias, prejudice, and discrimination against people with disabilities. It hinges on the idea that people with disabilities are less valuable than nondisabled people.
  - Wheelchair Rugby Team
- The world wasn't built with people with disabilities in mind, and because of that, the world we live in is inherently "ableist."
- Thoughts/examples of what day-to-day ableism looks like? In sport programs?

# Ableism is Everywhere, Everyday

- Access (ramps, restroom stalls, parking)
- Education
- Voting/polling places
- Healthcare
- Employment
- Events
- Transportation/travel, hotels

# Being Inclusive.....Is Good for the Bottom Line

- Untapped market in US with \$500 billion in annual disposable income
- Market of 210 million when include family and caregivers
- [Economic Impact Study](#) shows adapted sport events total early \$78 million annually
- Businesses are missing out on \$34 billion due to lack of physical or digital access



# Being Inclusive.....

Exclusion

VS

Inclusion

# Strategies for Being Inclusive.....

- Educate yourself; increase awareness
  - History of Disability Rights Movement
  - Contemporary Disability Culture – Follow Disability Influencers
- Engage the Community
  - Nothing About Us Without Us
  - Listen to disabled voices, lived experience, representation
- Verify
  - Just because designated as ‘accessible’ doesn’t mean it is
- Be proactive – [Universal Design](#) – creates livability for all
  - US Olympic and Paralympic Museum
  - Buffalo Bills Stadium
  - Mary Free Bed YMCA, Grand Rapids MI

# Disability Inclusion and Sport Events

- The World Games Disability Inclusion Initiative – built on 3 pillars
  - Athlete Experience
  - Spectator Experience
  - Volunteer Training

# Disability Inclusion and Sport Events

- Athlete Experience
  - Regional Wheelchair Tennis Tournament

# Disability Inclusion and Sport Events

- Spectator Experience:
  - Know before you go guides:
    - Planning to attend an event
    - Getting to an event
    - During the event
    - Heading home



Nothing About Us Without Us



# Resources

- [Subscribe](#) to All In Sport Consulting e-newsletter
- 2023 Adapted Sport Leadership & Business Symposium (LABS), Oct 11 and 12 - Virtual
- TED Talks
  - [Aimee Mullins](#), *The Opportunity of Adversity*
    - 1996 Paralympian, actress & public speaker
  - [Stella Young](#), *I'm Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much*
    - Australian comedian, journalist & disability rights advocate
  - Not a TedTalk, but an amazing 60 Minutes interview with a [Blind Architect](#) discussing the design of buildings and utilizing various surfaces in offices, buildings.
- Articles:
  - [Yes, you can call me disabled](#)
  - [What We Say Matters](#)
  - [Words We Use are Powerful](#)
  - [Ableism 101](#), Access Living
  - [Disability Inclusion Means Including Disabled Customers](#), The Valuable 500



# Resources

- Commercials:
  - [The Greatest, Apple](#)
  - [WeThe15](#)
- Guides:
  - [Discover Inclusive Events: A guide to creating access and inclusion at all events](#)
  - [Disability Language Style Guide](#), National Center on Disability and Journalism at Arizona State University
- Books:
  - [Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to be an Ally](https://emilyladau.com/book/) (<https://emilyladau.com/book/>) by Emily Laudau
  - [Disability Friendly, How to Move from Clueless to Inclusive](#) by John Kemp

# Resources

- Recent articles related to Travel and Disability (all from Fall 2022)
  - [NYT Charles article.indd \(pva.org\)](#)
  - [Uber discriminates against people with disabilities, new DOJ lawsuit alleges - The Verge](#)
  - [Disabled Passengers Describe Air Travel Nightmares, Call for Change \(businessinsider.com\)](#)
  - [US airlines pledge to improve disabled accessibility - Aircraft Interiors International](#)

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