



Zoom In
Microaggressions and Disability

+ What Is Disability?

Various models:

1. The Religious Model
2. The Legal/ Medical Model
3. The Social Model
4. The Disability Pride Model

+ The Religious Model

- Disability is a punishment for spiritual flaws of oneself or one's family.
- Disabled people are morally flawed and should be shunned/avoided.
- Disability is stigmatized.

+ The Legal/Medical Model

- Disability is a medical problem which needs a cure.
- Disability resides in the person.
- Although disability is caused by accident, disease, or inherited defect, disability is something to be fixed.
- Disabled people are “patients.”

+ The Social Model

- People have physical or mental impairments.
- Disability resides in physical and attitudinal barriers which are created by society.
- People with disabilities are equal to non-disabled people.
- It is the responsibility of the society to remove barriers which prevent full inclusion by people with disabilities.

+ Disability Pride Model

- Disability is a culture, a community, and an identity.
- People with disabilities are a group which adds to the diversity of human experience.
- Accommodations made for PWDs have the overall impact of improving society for all people.

+ Microaggressions

Microaggressions are the everyday slights, insults, indignities, and invalidations delivered to people in marginalized groups, including people of color, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities.

+ Unconscious Stereotypes/Biases About PWDs

- Sad and less capable than other people.
- Defective, broken, need to be fixed/helped.
- Don't have "normal lives," e.g. do not have sexual desires or relationships.
- Are curiosities whose lives are meant to inspire or entertain "normal" people.

+ Examples of Microaggressions

- Ignoring people with disabilities.
- Hyper focusing and failing to respect privacy.
- Using medical model language especially outside the context of hospitals or medical facilities.
- Assuming that if a lawyer has a disability, that person is a liability.

+ More Examples

- Statements which affirm the religious model of disability
- Expressing pity or giving unneeded help
- Treating PWDs as sources of inspiration/entertainment often just for doing normal daily routines.
- Viewing disability as a second-class status by emphasizing cures and "overcoming"

+ Microaggressions for the Legal Community

- Lack of role models.
- Lack of safe to "come out"
- Programming stresses the medical model.
- Lack of a specialty bar association.
- Lack of images of PWDs in Bar Bulletin as "everyday lawyers."
- Centering quantitative measures of success.

+ Watch the Film!


