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## Words Are Powerful: We Should Treat Everyone Equally

The concept that I found that is important from this article is “Words are powerful”. I personally can relate in the sense that in our child care center, we had a child that was diagnosed with Autism. I experienced that the teachers will address the mother/caregiver and did not include the child in their conversation about the child’s assessment. According to Snow (2009), “With the best of intentions, we work on people’s bodies and brains, while paying scant attention to their hearts and minds”. This is true, even though they mean well, the child feels hurt, left out and ignored. I agree with the author that as adults we should be mindful of not only words but how we address each unique child and include them in the conversation.

Snow (2009), believes that the greatest obstacle facing people of disability is “Old, inaccurate descriptors and the inappropriate use of medical diagnoses perpetuate negative stereotypes and reinforce a significant and incredibly powerful attitudinal barrier”. I agree with the author because narrow minded people that are aware that a person is facing a disability have a tendency to view and treat them differently. However, there are people who can relate and are there to help these individuals and treat them equally in society.

The statement, “People with disabilities are not broken!” is referring to how we address situations and compare them with phrases used erroneously on people with disabilities (Snow, 2009, p. 2). Snow (2009), used examples such as: handicapped parking, disabled vehicle, disabled list, etc. I feel that some words, terms or phrases should be more scrutinized instead of verbally linking situations with phrases used incorrectly.

A problem that can be rephrased into a need for a person of disability would be a person using a cane. Just because you have one doesn’t mean that they are not able to walk it can mean that their foot might be sprained. However, if they have a physical disability like paraplegic we need to treat them with respect and ask permission if they require assistance. Another example would be an albino person just because they have a skin disorder doesn’t mean that they are sick. However, don’t make them feel awkward by staring at a person if they have a physical disability.

The reason Kathie Snow called her company “Disability is Natural” is because her son has cerebral palsy and she can relate to the unfairness of being labeled. She emphasized in her statement, “He is not his disability, and his potential cannot be predicted by his diagnosis”. According to Cook, Klein & Chen (2012), “Therefore, we must choose language that models equity, acceptance, and respect when referring to children with special needs”.

Snow is referencing that an individual disability can become less stressful if the environment provides their needs. For instance, if a wheel chair bound individual is shopping at a retail store and is unable to enter because the premises is not accessible that becomes an issue and can cause the individual to feel dependent of others, feel awkward and causes them to seclude themselves at home.

Terminology of racism and sexism has not changed to be more respectful than devaluing a person through language. In comparison, all three concepts can make an individual deal with

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oppression, abusiveness, hatred, struggle, aggressiveness, discrimination and prejudice, etc. According to A Day in Our Shoes (2018) quote, "Being disabled is not a tragedy. How our society treats disabled people, that's the tragedy (pg. 1)." This quote also applies to racism and sexism. Society needs to change their perspective of all injustices of life in order to live in an equal society.

English Oxford Dictionaries (2018), states Ableism is defined as, "discrimination in favor of able-bodied people" (p. 1). Ableism correlates with racism, sexism and the topic of person first language in that it all four relationships make an individual feel inferior. According to Minty, S and Ouchlets (2014), "Most people get racism and sexism because it's a gut feeling or learned experience" (p. 2). In an ableist society they tend to exclude individuals with various disabilities. The article first language when talking about people with disabilities has helped me view differently on how to express myself and think first and put myself in their shoes before speaking and hurting anyone's feeling. Furthermore, I will ask before I help anyone without their permission.

In conclusion, I learned to address a person with a disability by putting them first and by using the individual's first name when addressing them. I will also avoid using jargon words. Also, according to Pelton, R (2016) the phrase "Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me" is not a true quote for these individuals because as mentioned "Words are powerful" and affects their lives. We need to change our perspective and treat everyone equally if we want to live in a better world.