

An Overview of Disability Studies:

- Experiencing a disability is complex. Someone can wish to be cured of their disability, while also cherishing their disability.
- Disability is on a spectrum of experience; no one person experiences disability in the same way, despite the standardization of disability diagnostic criteria.
- This webinar will provide a brief overview of and introduction to the history and theoretical models that have helped to inform a better understanding of the unique lived, human experience of disability.

A Brief History of Disability Rights:

- Ableism: Disabilities are seen as a problem in need of a solution
- Section 504 of 1970: Prevents discrimination against those with disabilities from entities receiving federal funding
 - Working toward getting Section 504 signed was the first time the disability community came together to fight for equality
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: Extends Section 504 to all public spaces

Models of Disability:

- The Individual Model - Disability as a personal problem to overcome
 - Issue: Disability is a varied experience
- The Medical Model – Disability as treating a medical condition
 - Issue: Undermines the need for social support and widespread change; also, some disabilities cannot be cured
- The Social Model: People are disabled by their built environments and social barriers
 - Issue: Does not account for invisible and non-physical disabilities
- The Political/Relational Model - Disability is understood as a political category used for oppression & seen as a community issue
 - Issue: Does not account for those who can be independently disabled
- While there are many ways of understanding disability, the field of Disability studies is still under exploration
- No model is complete because disability is such a diverse and unique experience

Moving Forward:

- We encourage you to remember that your patients' experiences of living with their disability/disabilities is unique to them and to consider multiple models of disability when treating them
- Emphasize to your patient that reaching out for support from others living with a disability/disabilities can make space for communal support and insight into the real daily lived experience of their disability.
- If/when they are comfortable to do so, ensure that your patient knows it is valuable to get support from their existing support system

- Remember that lived representation is often more accurate than stereotypical representation
- Disability is not something to fear as long as society continues to accept the many diverse ways of living