

A Healthcare Crisis: The Lack of Disability Studies in Medical School Curriculum

Doctors and healthcare professionals often do not possess the expertise to treat patients with disabilities and will deny or provide differential treatment. Many parents seek help from several individuals in order to get their child the care they need. This all boils down to a dearth of Disability Studies in the medical school curriculum because of the parallelism between having a disability and having an illness. Conceptualizing disability as a medical problem limits the understanding of disability as part of one's identity and rather treats it as an illness to be overcome. This is entirely problematic because the disability community receives worse healthcare treatment, which in turn lead to higher medical bills, and potential for disaster. Medical schools should require attendees to not only take a course on patient care, but also to how provide care for diverse groups of patients. Healthcare professionals must stand by disability rights activists in viewing Disability Studies as the framework by which society sees differences in the world to reduce stigma and abolish marginalization of the disability community as a whole. As of current, disability is viewed by much of the medical community as a consequence of socio-environmental factors and a temporary unfortunate condition in need of treatment. Reconceptualizing disability provides a framework by which healthcare professionals and disability justice advocates can challenge the unfair disadvantages faced by the disability community because of the lack of liable medical advice they are able to receive from their own trusted doctors. Disability must be seen as part of the human experience, rather than a medical problem for providers to view Disability Studies as potential for differences, shift their concept of disability, and to give disabled patients the best care that one could possibly provide.

As a future healthcare professional, I want to be an advocate to use appropriate non-degrading and non-ableist language towards all patients despite background or identity. As part

of this project to expand the knowledge of Disability Studies in the medical field, I will be interviewing a doctor and professor at a medical school as well as a student from the same medical school to identify where the issue is at stake and how the community can improve the education of our future healthcare professionals. Prospective medical students and administrators must fill in the gaps in disability training to solve challenges faced by individuals with disabilities to introduce a community into an inclusive society. The purpose of this project is to provoke medical school administration and staff to question their daily theoretical and reexamine traditional practices. This discussion can cause professionals who were initially trained to perceive disability as a medical problem to practice different procedures. In turn, a firm grasp on Disability Studies is essential for healthcare providers to implement their knowledge into their research and practice to provide over-satisfactory healthcare to disabled patients. This project will combat systematic ableism present in today's institutions by increasing the pressure of implementing a Disability Studies aligned curriculum in professional schools, which will ultimately lead to available and adequate healthcare for the disabled community. There is a complete lack of Disability Studies in professional schools that directly affects the disability community. Thus, it becomes essential for providers and professional schools alike to transform their old model of disability into a new model that defines disability as part of the human experience to emphasize the importance of understanding disability as a function of one's identity, rather than a medical deficit.