Before We Begin

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
We acknowledge and honor the land we are on today. We honor the Shawnee indigenous tribe. This is just one way of honoring the people and cultures and to counteract the institutional erasure of the people and culture.

CONTENT WARNING
In this presentation we will discuss ableism in the form of language and actions. As such we will provide examples of oppressive and exclusionary language and history. Please feel free to refrain from any activities or discussions that you feel may be activating.

OUR ASK
We ask you join us in creating a culture of Access, Inclusion, Civility and Respect.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN
During the presentation we will work to utilize aspects of universal design including reading from slides and describing photos.

Learning Outcomes

• Participants will be able to define ableism.
• Participants will be able to recognize casual ableism.
• Participants will receive prompts to begin thinking about how to respond to ableism
• Participants will have the opportunity to examine how students access their spaces and resources.
• Participants will learn about universal design as it pertains to academic advising.
• Participants will gain access to resources to serve as advocates to combat ableism.
Ableism

- First appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1981 — defined as the systematic oppression of a group of people because of what they can or cannot do with their bodies or minds as the result of ignorance.
  - The system of discrimination that denies rights to those with disabilities.
  - Wrongly promotes that idea that people with disabilities are somehow broken and need to be fixed.
  - When disability is viewed as defect rather a dimension of diversity.

Casual Ableism —
Often unintentional use of language or actions that helps to perpetuate ableist ideas and values.


History of Ableism in Education

- Eugenics — “by the late 1920s, more than three hundred colleges and universities offered courses that covered eugenic themes, with as many as twenty thousand students enrolled”
  - Institutions for “feeble minded” children like Wrentham or Fernald in Boston were tightly connected to Harvard and MIT.
  - AG Bell - Oralism


Casual Ableism in Language

- "You keep using that word, I don’t think it means what you think it means"
OCD as an Adjective or Figure of Speech

Wheelchair Bound

Casual Ableism in Language

He’s lame.
Are you D/deaf/blind?
Nut job, psycho, insane, crazy
I’m so OCD about ….
I saw a spider and now I have PTSD.
Short bus
Diabetes
Suffers from…
He is so ADD.
Invalid
Victim
The “R” word
She is so bipolar.
People First vs Identity First

- **Person-first language**: “person with autism”, “she has autism”, “I have a disability”
- **Identity-first language**: “I am autistic”, “I am disabled”
- **Social model of disability**: disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person’s impairment or difference. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

> I subscribe to what’s called the social model of disability, which tells us that we are more disabled by society than by our bodies and our diagnoses.  
> —Sandeep Thadani

Ableism in Actions

- Inaccessible Events
- Presuming Incompetence
- Able-bodied people failing to check their privilege
- Assuming people with disabilities have no autonomy
- Feeling entitled to know how people became disabled
- Assuming disability is always visible
- Questioning why someone would want access
- Considering Access a burden

Inspiration Porn

The portrayal of people with disabilities as inspirational solely or in part on the basis of their disability, which objectifies disabled people for the benefit of non-disabled people.
Addressing Ableism

"The trouble is that once you see it, you can’t unsee it. And once you’ve seen it, keeping quiet, saying nothing, becomes as political an act as speaking out."
— Arundhati Roy

Ableism as a Microaggression

- Take a moment to reflect and assess the situation. Give the person the benefit of the doubt as this is about education.
- Gather more information regarding intent.
  - “I think I heard saying _______? Is that right?”
  - “Could you say more about what you mean by that”
- Focus on the event and not the person.
  - “Maybe you didn’t realize this but (words/actions) is/are (offensive/exclusionary). Instead consider (saying/doing), which is more (respectful/inclusive)
- Model the behavior
  - Use yourself as an example
  - Remember this is about education not shaming

Did I Say/Do That?

Own Up To It!
- Admit it when you commit an act of ableism (microaggression)
- Apologize
- Think of ways to reframe what you are really trying to do/say
- Learn from it and strive to not do it again
Scenarios

• Please discuss one of the two scenarios below in pairs or small groups. How would you respond?

• Student A – “I am having a really difficult time putting classes together for the spring semester. Between prerequisites and restrictions, I cannot get the schedule that I want. I am so OCD about my schedule and I need it to be perfect”

• Student B – “I’m not getting the grade that I deserve in my history class. The faculty member is so ADD, I have no idea what is due half of the time because she is all over the place.”

Universal Design

Universal design means that rather than designing your facility and services for the average user, you design them for people with a broad range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics such as age, reading ability, learning style, native language, culture, and so on. Keep in mind that students and visitors may have learning disabilities or visual, speech, hearing, and mobility impairments. Preparing your program to be accessible to them will make it more usable by everyone and minimize the need for special accommodations for those who use your services as well as for future employees. Ensure that everyone feels welcome, and can

• get to the facility and maneuver within it,
• communicate effectively with staff,
• access printed materials and electronic resources, and
• fully participate in events and other activities.

From Do-It Disabilities, Opportunities, InterNetworking, and Technology
Accessible Spaces

- Are printed materials within easy reach from a variety of heights and without furniture blocking access?
- Is at least part of a service counter or desk at a height accessible from a seated position?
- Are aisles kept wide and clear of obstructions for the safety of users who have mobility, visual impairments and/or service animals?
- Are there areas where students can discuss disability-related needs confidentially?
- Is adequate light available?
- Are there quiet work or meeting areas where noise and other distractions are minimized?
- Is your “sign in” procedure accessible to everyone?

From Do-It Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology

Spaces

Images from two major New England Universities' homepages. December 15th 2018

A picture is worth a thousand words

Images from two major New England Universities' homepages. December 15th 2018
Marketing

- Do pictures in your publications and website include people with diverse characteristics with respect to race, gender, age, and disability?
- In key publications and on your website, do you include a statement about your commitment to universal access and procedures for requesting disability-related accommodations?
- Are all printed publications available (immediately or in a timely manner) in alternate formats such as Braille, large print, and electronic text?
- Are videos used by the advising office captioned or audio described?

From Do It Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology

Events

- An invite to accommodations on all event listings – advertising access.
- Are all aspects of the event accessible?
- The spaces that we select.
- Always use a microphone when available.
- Repeat audience member questions.
- Avoid the use of “stand to be counted”.
- Inclusive activities.

From Do It Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology

Staff Training

- Are all staff members familiar with the availability and use of the Telecommunications Relay Service, and alternate document formats?
- Do staff members know how to respond to requests for disability-related accommodations, such as sign language interpreters?
- Do staff members have access to a list of on-or off-campus resources for students with disabilities?
- Are all staff members aware of issues related to communicating with students with different characteristics regarding race and ethnicity, age, and disability?
Communication

• Ask a person with a disability if that person needs help before providing assistance.
• Talk directly to the person with a disability, not through their companion or interpreter.
• Provide information in alternate means (e.g., written, spoken, diagrams).
• Do not interact with a person’s service dog unless you have received permission to do so.
• Do not touch mobility devices or assistive technology without the owner’s consent.
• Do not assume physical contact—like handshakes, high-fives, or hugs—is or is not okay.
• Understand that comfort with eye contact will vary.

Communication

Visual Impairments
• Be descriptive. Say, “The computer is about three feet to your left,” rather than “The computer is over there.”
• Speak all of the projected content when presenting and describe the content of charts, graphs, and pictures.
• When guiding people with visual impairments, offer them your arm rather than grabbing or pushing them.

Speech Impairments
• Listen carefully. Repeat what you think you understand and then ask the person with a speech impairment to clarify or repeat the portion that you did not understand.

Communication

Deaf or Hard of Hearing
• Face people with hearing impairments, and avoid covering your mouth, so they can see your lips. Avoid talking while chewing gum or eating.
• Speak clearly at a normal volume. Speak louder only if requested.
• Use paper and pencil, or type things out on your cell phone, if the person who is D/deaf does not read lips or if more accurate communication is needed.
• When using an interpreter, speak directly to the person who is D/deaf; when an interpreter voices what a person who is D/deaf signs, look at the person who is D/deaf, not the interpreter.

From Do-It Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology
Communication

Learning Disabilities
• Offer directions or instructions both orally and in writing. If asked, read instructions to individuals who have specific learning disabilities.
• Allow time for processing information.

Mobility Impairments
• Consider carrying on a long conversation with an individual who has a mobility impairment from a seated position.

Psychiatric Impairments
• Provide information in clear, calm, respectful tones.
• Allow opportunities for addressing specific questions

Advising Considerations

• Best way to communicate and follow up
• Academic requirements – preparation
• Strengths and weaknesses
• Completion plan –
  • Stamina
• Course load – Financial aid, housing and health insurance considerations
• Time of day
• Schedule restrictions
• Time between classes
• Distance between classes
• Work load within classes - balance
• Access issues – entrance, parking, restrooms

Resources

• Young, S. (2014, April). I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much. https://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_you_very_much/language/en
References