

**PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS
OF DISABILITY**

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Third Edition

PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF DISABILITY

By

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*This book is dedicated to my wife Donnita, my daughter Deniece,
my son Tony, my daughter-in-law Juana,
and my grandchildren, Raymond and Donnita.*

Also,

*I would like to dedicate this book to my Educational Services
and Admissions and Records staff for their loyalty and dedication.*

WVB

*For the many lessons of compassion, courage, and sacrifice that I have
learned from my students and colleagues who have disabilities,
I dedicate this book to their lives not wasted.*

GH

PREFACE

The third edition of *Psychosocial Aspects of Disability* continues the theme of the first and second editions of emphasizing that attitudinal barriers create environmental barriers for persons with disabilities. This edition is improved as a primary introductory text or a supplemental text for student helping professionals with the addition of chapters on employment, understanding ethnic groups, concepts, theories, and therapies and issues for the twenty-first century. Additionally, Chapter 1, *Beliefs and Treatments*, has been completely revised, and Chapter 6, *Self Determination through Advocacy and Legislation*, has been updated by adding a section on advocacy and updating the legislation section to include some of the recent and important legislation that is having an impact upon persons with disabilities. Appendix A, *Resources*, has been updated and significantly expanded. Also, Appendix E, *Terminology and Definitions*, has been added.

This edition is divided into five parts. Part I, *Identifying the Problems*, provides an historical view of societal beliefs and treatment of persons with disabilities. Part I also points out how the beliefs and perceptions we hold with regard to persons with disabilities affect how we treat them. Furthermore, while many interventions have been applied with good intention, some of them nevertheless have been a source of handicap for persons with disabilities. Additionally, Part I highlights some of the most evil intentional behaviors, and we discuss the impact these behaviors have had and to some extent continue to have with regard to societal beliefs about the worth of persons with disabilities.

Part II, *Empowerment*, provides information about efforts that have been made to help persons with disabilities gain and maintain control of their lives. It also emphasizes the fact that persons with disabilities have been and continue to be the major force in advancing the disability rights agenda. Additionally, this section discusses employment, one of the key variables in independence of persons with disability.

Part III, *Minority Views*, provides proof that ethnic and racial minorities constitute a significant part of the population of persons with disabilities. By providing background information with regard to the ethnic and racial groups—African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic or Latino Americans—the reader is given valuable information about these groups and some of the past and present factors that impact their lives. An understanding of these factors is essential for helping professionals who want to become effective across cultural boundaries.

Part IV, *Psychosocial Concepts and Interventions*, augments the readers' understanding of some of the ways persons with disabilities may attempt to

cope with their life situation. Several theories and therapies are presented so that the readers can gain a better understanding of their philosophies and goals as well as some of the techniques they utilize. The explanations of these theories and therapies are not intended to emphasize their use exclusively with persons with disabilities nor are the explanations an attempt to identify a psychology of disabilities; relatedly, it is our belief that persons with disabilities use the same coping defense mechanisms as persons without disabilities to effectively deal with their life situations; therefore, the same psychological theories and therapies apply to persons with disabilities as they do for persons without disabilities. We recognize that some disabilities present unique situations; however, this is true for each individual regardless of his or her degree of disability or lack thereof.

Part V, Issues and Conclusions, serves as both a conclusion and a beginning. It is a conclusion because it serves as the ending of the third edition. It is the beginning because new issues spring forth from the current disability rights efforts of persons with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

In 1984, when the first edition of this book was published, it was estimated that there were 35 million persons in the United States who had a disability. Currently, it is estimated that there are over 50 million persons in the United States with a disability. Worldwide, it is generally believed that there are 450 million persons with disabilities. As is evident, particularly within the United States, there has been a significant increase in the population of persons with disabilities.

While the population of persons with disabilities in the United States has significantly increased, also there has been significant progress made with regard to disability rights, self-pride, and access to America's goods and services. Even so, much more must be done. Most of these improvements have occurred as a result of increased sensitivity to the abilities and needs of persons with disabilities. Without question, this sensitivity would not have occurred, to the extent it has, without the efforts of persons with disabilities. Efforts have included protests, coalition building, lobbying, and refusing to accept second-class citizenship.

As an indication of the progress that has been made, when the first edition of this book was published, persons with disabilities had begun to make significant progress with their disability rights and independent living movement. By developing and shaping their organizational and coalition building skills, a national disability agenda was established that eventually led to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Similar to the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s that produced, among other things, pride of their cultures within ethnic and racial minorities, the disabilities rights and independent living movements increased the self and group pride of persons with disabilities. With that pride on display, many persons without disabilities began to pay more attention to the life situation of persons they once called "cripples." Slowly, more Americans began to accept that persons with disabilities are not helpless people who need paternalistic care. Instead, they began to recognize that societal barriers were creating handicaps for persons with disabilities.

As we progress through the twenty-first century, we have begun to see another similarity with the twentieth century civil rights movement. The similarity being attempts to reverse some of the gains made by the movements. There are growing allegations of reverse discrimination and clandestine attempts are being made to dismantle some affirmative action programs. There have been setbacks for some minority groups and persons with disabilities alike. With regard to persons with disabilities, some United States Supreme Court rulings (see Chapter 16) have challenged the definition of dis-

ability and some of the rights afforded to a person with a disability. This edition of *Psychosocial Aspects of Disability* celebrates some of the achievements of persons with disabilities, but it also issues a clarion call for more progress. Additional progress will not be easily achieved. All of us must redouble our commitment and efforts to advance the unfinished agenda of persons with disabilities. We have come too far to turn back now!

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CONTENTS

Prefacevii
Introductionix

Chapter

PART I: IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEMS

1. Beliefs and Treatment5
2. The Nature of the Problems23
3. Perceptions45
4. Growth for People with Disabilities67

PART II: EMPOWERMENT

5. Employment89
6. Self-Determination through Advocacy and Legislation115
7. Organizations for Change137
8. Human Services Personnel155
9. Family Members178
10. Teachers198

PART III: MINORITY VIEWS

11. Toward an Understanding of Ethnic Minorities223
12. Tips for Helping Ethnic Minorities253

PART IV: PSYCHOSOCIAL CONCEPTS AND INTERVENTIONS

13. Coping Styles275
14. Concepts, Theories, and Therapies294

PART V: ISSUES AND CONCLUSIONS

15. Disability Issues for the Twenty-First Century319
 16. Final Thoughts329

Appendixes

Appendix A: Famous Deceased Person with Disabilities:

A Brief Sample345

Appendix B: Resources for People with Disabilities348

Appendix C: Recreation Associations358

Appendix D: Disabilities Quiz361

Appendix E: Medical Terminology and Definitions369

Name Index395

Subject Index403

**PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF
DISABILITY**

PART I: IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEMS

Chapters 1 through 4 provide a glimpse at some of the beliefs about persons who have disabilities and their perceived worth to society. Additional focus is placed on the abuses that they have had to endure as a result of those beliefs. Conditions that create disabilities and persons who possess them have been around since the beginning of human societies. Attempts to understand perceptions of disabilities or why some individuals become disabled and others do not have throughout recorded history resulted in a variety of beliefs and behaviors. The aggregate of these perceptions and treatments have to a large degree defined the ways persons who have disabilities are incorporated in our society.

Attitudes, perceptions and beliefs play major roles in defining the status and positions persons who have disabilities occupy in our nation. For example, beliefs determine (1) how persons who have disabilities are educated, (2) where they are employed, (3) where they live, (4) with whom they socialize, (5) types of leisure and recreational activities in which they participate, (6) their ability to be involved in civic and governmental activities, and (7) whether they adequately manage basic living activities such as shopping, attending church, and voting.

Chapter 1

BELIEFS AND TREATMENTS

Chapter Outline

Introduction
Ancient Beliefs and Practices
Early American Views
Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Activities
Social Cleansing
Summary
Points for Discussion and Suggested Activities

Chapter Objectives

- To identify early American beliefs and treatment with regard to persons with disabilities.
- To identify sources that have influenced early American beliefs and treatment with regard to persons with disabilities.
- To identify early American humanitarian efforts.
- To identify early American rehabilitation efforts.

INTRODUCTION

The United States of American arguably has the best record of any country with regard to treatment of persons with disabilities. This assertion can be supported by the various pieces of federal legislation designed to assist persons with disabilities (see Chapter 6). Additionally, it can be supported by viewing the goals of the many social and civic organizations established to further the independence of persons who have disabilities, some of which will be