Disability

Is Not a Bad Word

with Stephanie Nicholls

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information, support, and education

Checking In

1 **Novice**

Today is my first day learning about ableism.

2 **Philosopher**

I am aware of some of the ways that ableism presents itself and its impacts but have taken no actions towards change.

3 **Ally**

I am actively working to change my own internal biases and become a better anti-ableist.

4 **Advocate**

I am not only working on bettering myself but have also begun to stand up and speak for others close to me.

5 **Activist**

I am already active at the systems level pushing for changes in policy and procedures.
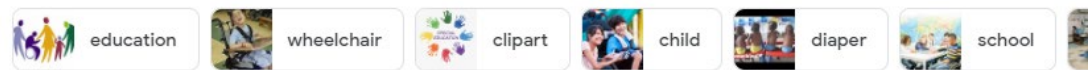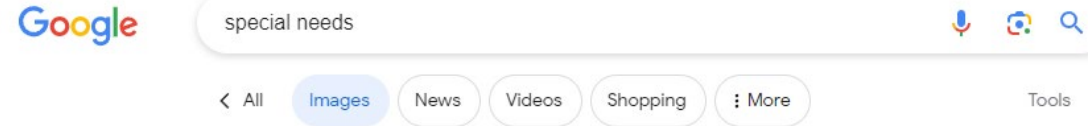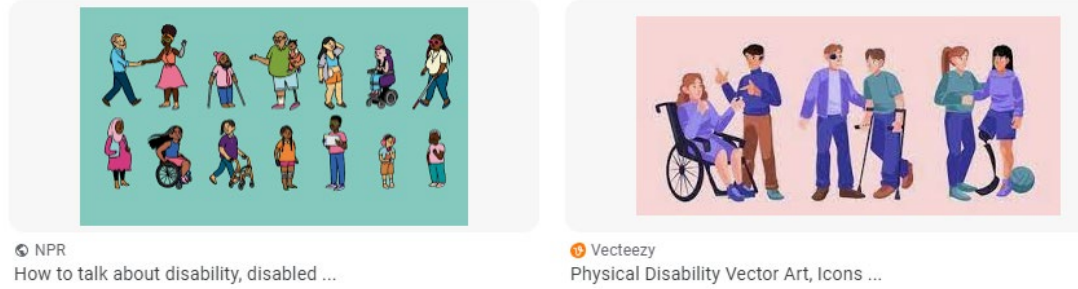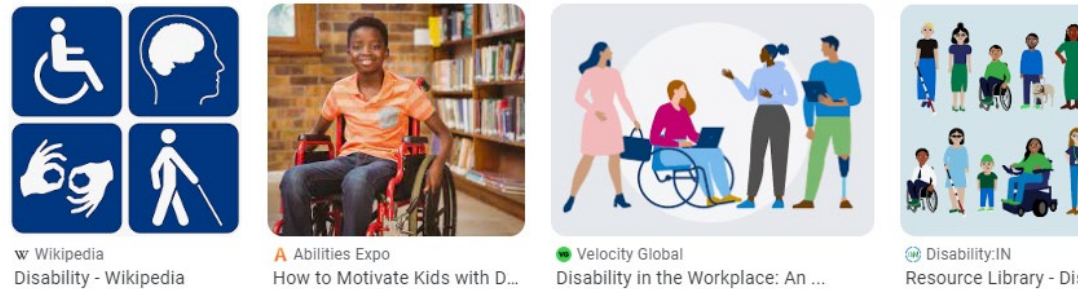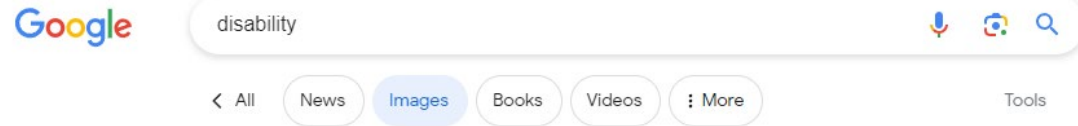
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A CAT MASSAGE?

#NotSpecialNeeds

Words Have Power

dis·a·bil·i·ty

/ˌdisəˈbilədē/

noun

1. a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities

2. a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities

3. a physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

"Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
Sec. 300.1 Purposes

The purposes of this part (Part B) are—

- (a) To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living;

- (b) To ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected;

- (c) To assist States, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; and

- (d) To assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

Medical Model of Disability

The problem is the person with a disability

Needs help and caregivers

Confined to a wheelchair

Is housebound

Too problematic for mainstream school

Drain on society

Is sick and needs a cure

Can't get up steps

Can't see or hear

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Social Model of Disability

The problem is the disabling world

Badly designed buildings

Stairs not ramps No lifts

Inaccessible transport

Special schools

Poor job prospects

Isolated families

Discrimination

Few sign language interpreters

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BIAS

tendency, inclination, or prejudice for something or someone

Explicit: Conscious	Implicit: Unconscious
Person is aware and intentional	Automatic and unintentional

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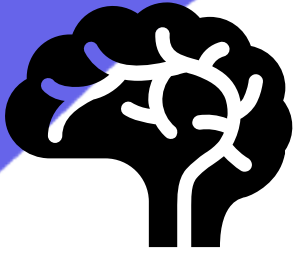
Brain Function

Bits of Information
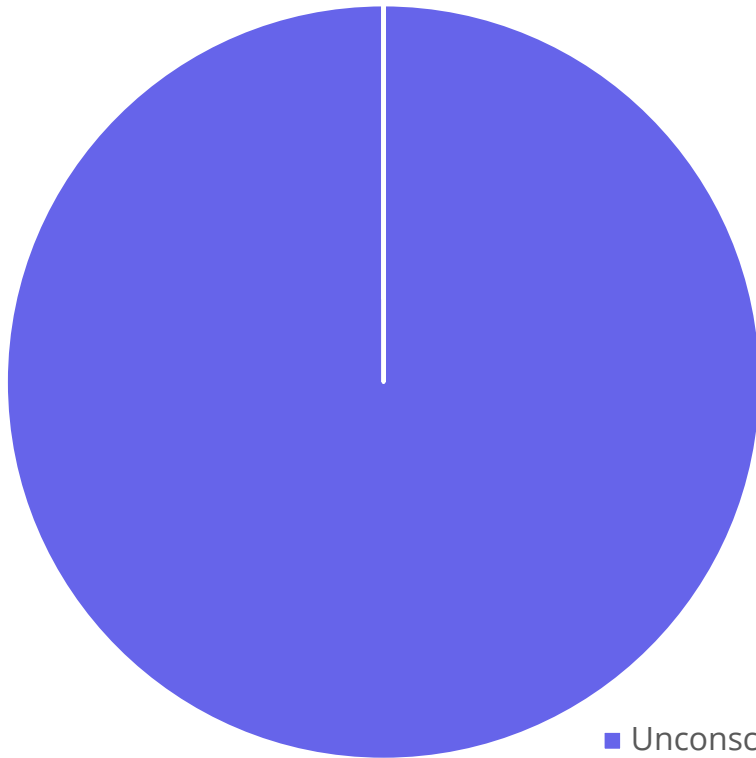
Unconscious ■ Conscious

The human brain can process **11 million** bits of information every second.

Our conscious minds can handle only **40 to 50 bits** of information a second.

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Implicit Bias

- "more automatic and less controlled" than more conscious explicit beliefs, are usually widespread in society and tend to come from personal experiences, upbringing, and the media

- individuals tend to have more negative associations with marginalized groups, including people of color, those with disabilities, or members of the LGBTQ community

Implicit bias *can* change

"It changed for sexuality and race bias pretty dramatically. Sexuality biases dropped 64 percent over 14 years, but it hasn't changed at all for disability, age, or body weight bias. Disability bias over 14 years has only shifted by 3 percent.

New data shows that, based on the rate of past movement, it will likely take more than 200 years for implicit disability biases to reach neutrality."

– Dr. Tessa Charlesworth

Defining Ableism

Ableism is the intentional or unintentional discrimination or oppression of individuals with disabilities.

The discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that able bodies are superior.

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But I am not ableist! [1]

A friend's adult daughter has an intellectual disability and is pregnant. The family is financially stable. What do you say to your friend? What do you say to others about the situation?

Please type response in chat.

But I am not ableist! [2]

You are in the grocery store and see a person in a wheelchair using a grabber to get an item off a high shelf. What do you do?
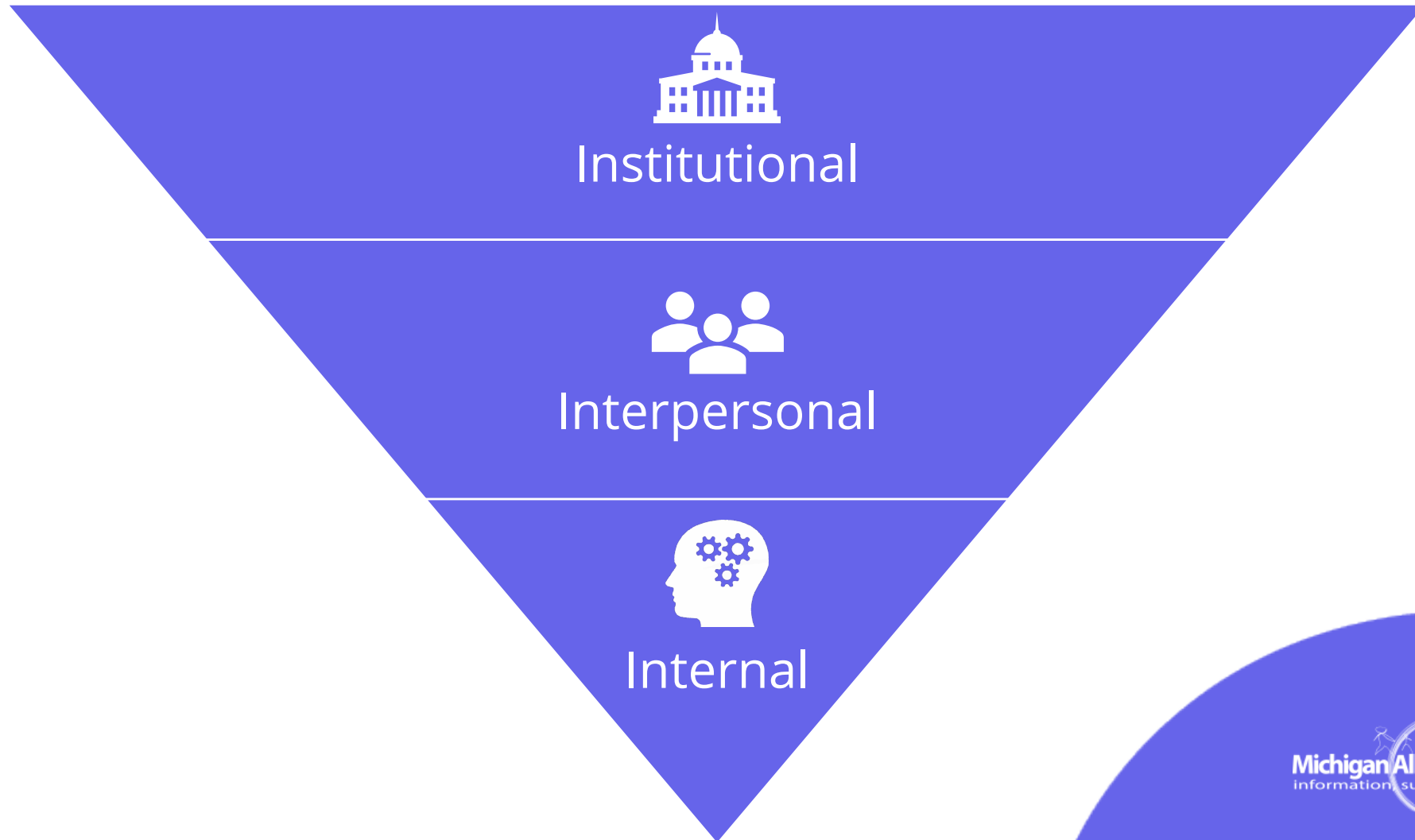
Please type response in chat.

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But I am not ableist! [3]

You are scrolling Facebook and see a story about a young woman with down syndrome elected prom queen. What is your reaction?

Please type response in chat.

Levels of Ableism

Institutional

Interpersonal

Internal

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Institutional Level

- Educational
- Medical
- Legislation
- Employment
- Public Transportation
- Media

Ableism at School

- Focusing on what the child **cannot** do

- Speaking down to or about a person with a disability

    Babytalk to older students and young adults

    Talking about the person while in their presence, as if they aren't there

- Predetermination of placement and segregation

- Assuming **"won't"** instead of "**can't**"

- Assuming **"can't"** when we haven't given the opportunity

- Refusal to accommodate - due to seeing it as unfair

    Not allowing additional speaking, processing or response time for students who need it

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Ableism at School: Implicit Bias

- Not called on to participate in class

- Assumptions of no college or trade school

- Unsolicited help

- Peers trained to be helpers instead of friends

- Low expectations

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Interpersonal Level
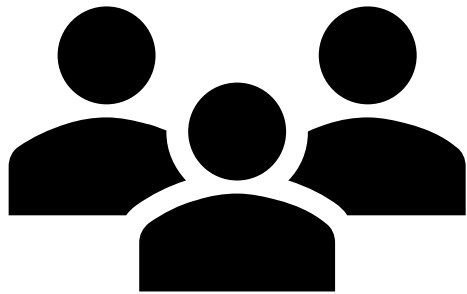
- Day-to-day social interactions
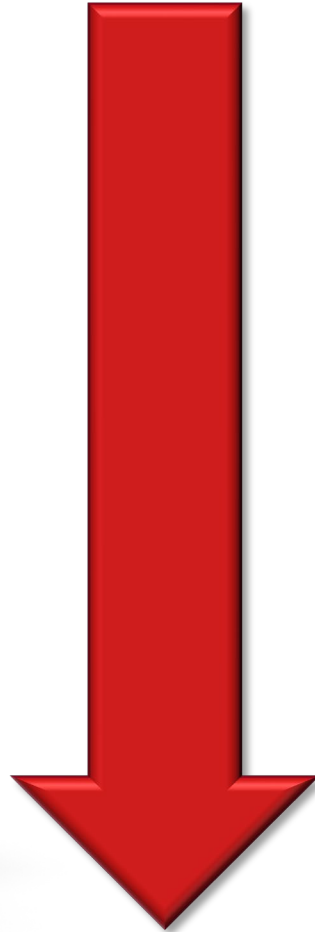
- Interpersonal relationships

- Microaggressions

Internal Level

- Believe not normal or equal

- Believe not worthy of accommodation

- Believe should be separate

- Believe can't do things

Impacts of Ableism – Access & Quality

- Education

- Employment

- Housing

- Community activities

- Transportation

- Medical care

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Impacts of Ableism – Risks

- Unemployment

- Poverty

- Bullying, harassment, and violence

- Incarceration

- Loneliness, depression, chronic stress

- Early death

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Educate yourself on disability

Reflect on your own implicit bias

Learn about ableism and ableist stereotypes

Learn about the history of disability rights activism

Listen to people with disabilities share their experiences

Challenge ableism as it happens

Presume competence

Advocate for accessibility and inclusivity

Get involved

What can you do?

TAKE ACTION

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"Recognizing the truth — that every disability may come with a unique way to know the world that could **create innovation, a different way to solve problems**. When we see somebody in a wheelchair, [let] the first association that pops into our heads be, 'Wow, I wonder what they know that I don't know**. I wonder what they can teach me that I could never know**.'"

Mahzarin Banaji
Professor of Social Ethics in the Department of
Psychology @ Harvard University

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5 "A"s

Choose (at least) **one** of these after you leave:

- **A-ha** (lightbulb moment)

- **Appreciation** (what are you thankful for?)

- **Apology** (oops, I didn't realize)

- **Ask** (specific question to further your understanding)

- **Action** (a next step you will take)

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We are here to support you!

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