Annotated Bibliography on Identity as Affected by Disability

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With Differently Abled Persons

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Annotated Bibliography on Identity

Fairchild, S. R. (2002). Women with disabilities: The long road to equality. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 6*(2), 13–28.

The author, an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Kentucky, describes the barriers to full inclusion of women with different abilities in American society. In addition, the issue of the intersectionality between gender identity and differently abled identity and the resulting discrimination from society is discussed. The study identifies this double jeopardy in the areas of women with different abilities' pursuit of human rights, relationships, and employment. To address these barriers, the author maintains that social workers should intervene by advocating against the perpetuating institutional, environmental, and attitudinal barriers facing women with different abilities, which maintain the marginalization of this population. Specific actions for micro and macro level practice are provided.

Galvin, R. D. (2005). Researching the disabled identity: Contextualising the identity transformations which accompany the onset of impairment. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 27*(3), 393–413.

The author, a researcher for the School of Social Inquiry at Murdoch University in Australia, engaged the process of grounded theory to test existing hypotheses about the identity formation of people with different abilities. After surveying 92 individuals from four nations, asking how their respective conditions influenced their self-concept and the perceptions others have of them, the author found that independence, employment, and appearance/sexuality were the aspects of identity formation most affected by the respondents' different abilities. The author makes the argument that others denigrated the identified affected areas of identity to a significant degree. Accordingly, the author agrees with the social model – that is, "disability" is the result of society's exclusion of those who do not possess normative values. Furthermore, the author argues that those who feel "disabled" have adopted the view that their challenge is a personal problem, therefore alluding to implications for direct social work practice.

Hahn, H. D., & Belt, T. L. (2004). Disability identity and attitudes toward a cure in a sample of disabled activists. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 45*(4), 453–464.

The authors, researchers at the University of Southern California and the University of Hawaii at Hilo, respectively, present their findings generated from 156 surveys completed by activists from the differently abled community on the subject of cure. Most of the activists surveyed would not choose to be cured of their conditions. Furthermore, many agree with the minority group model, which describes "disability" as a product of discrimination rather than biological impairment. The authors, indeed, argue that curing people with different abilities could have significant ramifications for their identities. Social work implications are suggested in the observation that positive associations with differently abled identity reduce respondents' pursuit of treatment.

Kim, E. (2011). Asexuality in disability narratives. *Sexualities, 14*, 479–493.

The author, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin, describes the narratives of differently abled individuals on the issue of asexuality. More specifically, the author argues that asexuality is not necessarily a societal stigma imposed on people with different abilities. Rather, in many instances, it is a choice; identity is intentionally disengaged from sexuality. Accordingly, the author asserts that differently abled individuals should not be assumed to have the same sexual desires as individuals who are not differently abled. Thus, social work implications are observed in the applications of client self-determination and empowerment in identity formation.

Kirk, S. (2010). How children and young people construct and negotiate living with medical technology. *Social Science & Medicine, 71*, 1796–1803.

The author, a researcher for the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work at the University of Manchester, engaged the process of grounded theory to investigate how children and young people with different abilities reconcile their use of necessary medical technology with their identities and social relationships. After surveying 28 individuals, the author found that the respondents were ambivalent overall toward their medical equipment, yet made conscious efforts to incorporate the technology into their everyday lives. Furthermore, the author observed that the respondents were selective in their disclosures about their conditions, which gave them control over their identity formation and influence in their social relationships. Implications for social work practice are alluded to in the author's perspective that the identities of children who require the assistance of medical technology are strongly influenced by this factor, and that these children would benefit from help in maintaining relationships with their peers.

McDonald, K. E., Keys, C. B., & Balcazar, F. E. (2007). Disability, race/ethnicity and gender: Themes of cultural oppression, acts of individual resistance. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 39*(1/2), 145–161.

The authors, researchers in the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, investigate the intersectionality between different abilities related to learning and other sociopolitical statuses historically linked to oppression – that is, race, gender, and class. Through their analysis of qualitative data generated by 13 college students, the authors found – among other results – that individuals who are differently abled in the area of learning are perceived to have lower than accurate learning abilities, are seen as less worthy, are able to combat a degree of discrimination by not disclosing their invisible challenges, are faced with negative gender expectations, often avoid oppressive environments, and replace devaluing cultural messages with positive self-concepts and self-talk. Furthermore, the authors believe that intervention on the individual level is important for helping clients with learning challenges to develop their sense of dignity and self-worth, and to use their personal strengths for resisting societal oppression, which may eventually become a collective effort within the community. Thus, implications for micro and macro social work practice are evident.

Moin, V., Duvdevany, I., & Mazor, D. (2009). Sexual identity, body image and life satisfaction among women with and without physical disability. *Sexuality and Disability, 27*(2), 83–95.

The authors, researchers for the School of Social Work at the University of Haifa in Israel, describe the data gathered from their study that sought to compare the variables of sexual identity, body image, and life satisfaction for 70 women with physical different abilities and 64 women who were not differently abled. Unlike the previously mentioned study on sexual identity, the present authors found that women with physical different abilities have similar sexual desires to their counterparts who are not differently abled. However, the sexual self-esteem and satisfaction, body image, and overall life satisfaction was significantly lower for the former group, particularly for young women. The authors argue that sexual identity is an important subject that must be addressed when working with women who are differently abled. Further social work implications are inherent in the discussion of differences within the target group.

Noonan, B. M., Gallor, S. M., Hensler-McGinnis, N. F., Fassinger, R. E., Wang, S., & Goodman, J. (2004). Challenges and successes: A qualitative study of the career development of highly achieving women with physical and sensory disabilities. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 51*(1), 68–80.

The authors, researchers at Stetson University and the University of Maryland, used qualitative data generated by 17 women with physical and sensory challenges to engage grounded theory in analyzing the women's career development experiences. The authors perceive that the women's *dynamic self* is composed of their identity constructs, which incorporates their different abilities, genders, and ethnicities; their personality characteristics; and their degree of self-efficacy. Furthermore, the authors describe their thorough analysis of the participants' developmental opportunities, family influences, the impact of their respective different abilities, social support, career attitudes and behaviors, and sociopolitical context. Implications for social work practice are observed in the utility of the study's data for understanding how these constructs affect the achievement and identity formation of women with physical challenges.

Ostrander, R. N. (2008). When identities collide: Masculinity, disability and race. *Disability & Society, 23*(6), 585–597.

The author, a researcher for the Social Work Department at DePaul University, investigates another application of intersectionality – again using grounded theory – within the differently abled community. More specifically, the study involved interviewing men with spinal cord injuries who were faced with the process of reconciling their differently abled selves with their former masculine roles and racial/ethnic identities. Accordingly, the author found that the dependence resulting from their injuries made it difficult for the men to integrate their injuries into their racial/ethnic identities – that is, as men from cultures in which dependence goes against social definitions of what it means to be a man. Further findings are delineated, and the author advocates for cultural competence and sensitivity when working with this population.

Schwartz, M. A. (2010). Disability angst. The search for belonging – filling the hole in my soul. *International Journal of Leadership in Public Services, 6*(1), 21–23.

The author, an associate professor of law at Syracuse University, describes his personal struggles with identity formation and stigma as a man who is a member of the deaf community. More specifically, the author explains how his initial attempts to ignore his deafness produced significant psychological pain, which was eliminated only when he reconciled his different ability with his desired identity, thus becoming complete. Nevertheless, the author shares that he is still confronted with obstacles daily, because not everyone knows American Sign Language and many functions of society remain inaccessible to those who cannot hear. Accordingly, it is important for social workers to acknowledge and address the author's view and his credible authority on the issue, and that it is the responsibility of society to help members of the deaf community achieve social integration and access that is equal to those who can hear.