



# Student Perceptions on Disability: An Interprofessional Education Event with People with Disabilities

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## Healthcare & People with Disabilities

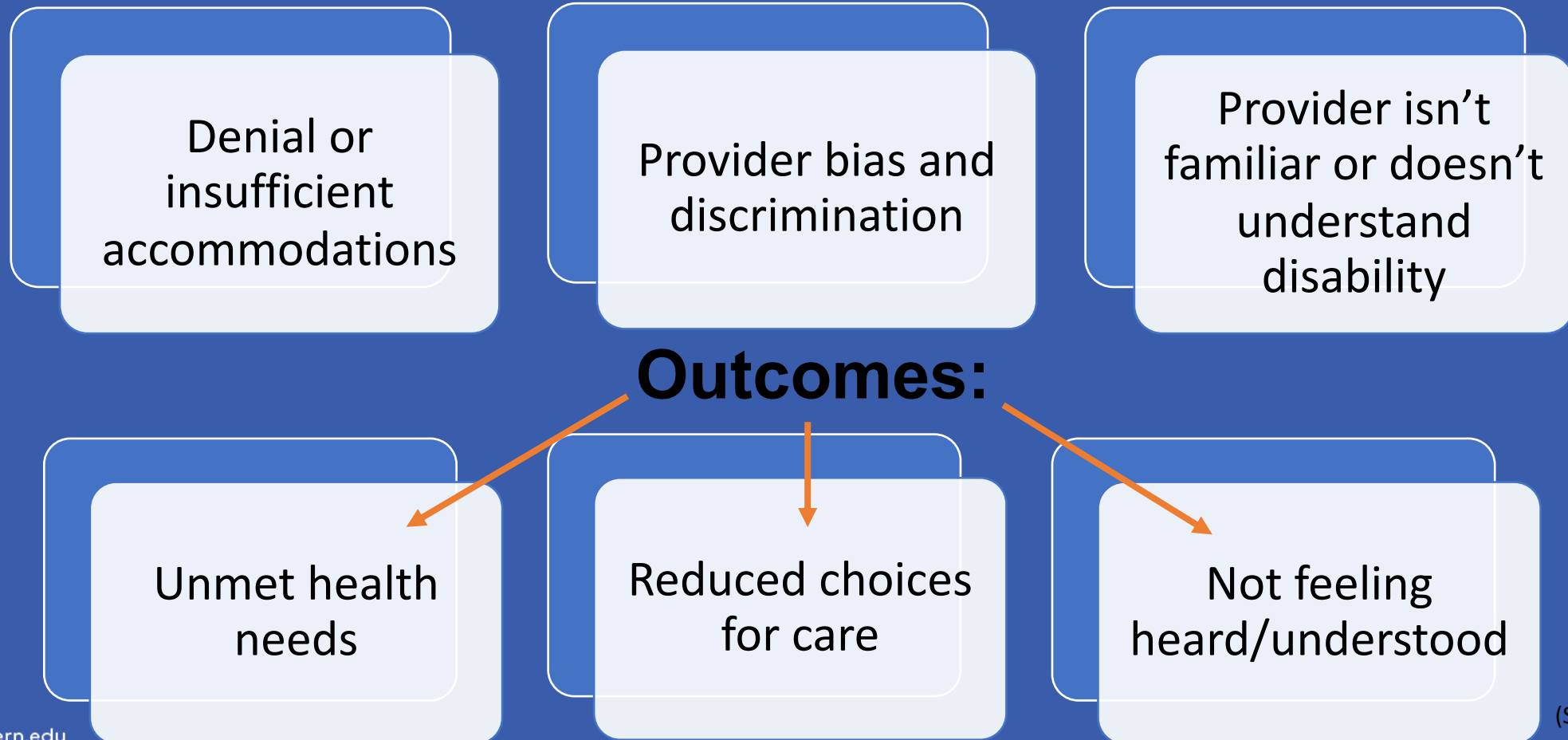


# Health and Healthcare for People with Disabilities (PWD)

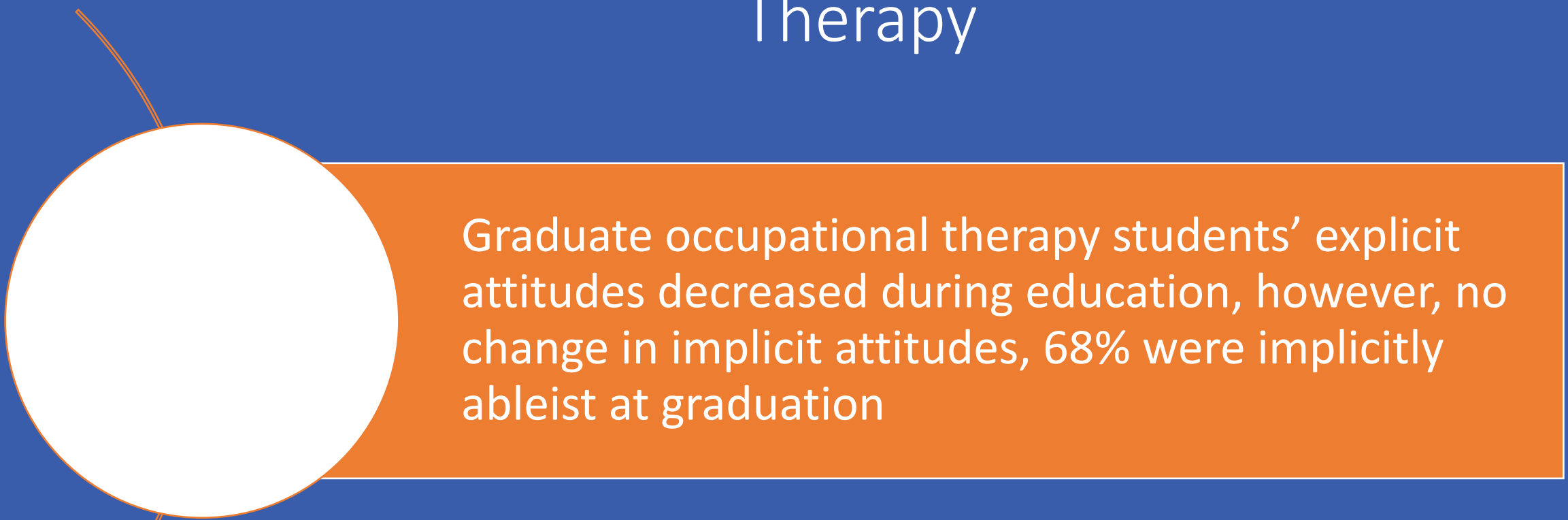
(WHO 2022; WHO 2023)

- Approximately **16% of global population (1 in 6)** identify as having significant disability
- PWD **2'xs more likely** to develop chronic diseases and poor health conditions due to facing many health inequities and barriers
- Reduced life expectancy, **up to 20 years**, compared to people without disabilities
  - **40% of cases** are due to a health systems level cause for lower life expectancy

# Healthcare Barriers due to Disability Incompetence:



# Literature on Disability Attitudes in Occupational Therapy



Graduate occupational therapy students' explicit attitudes decreased during education, however, no change in implicit attitudes, 68% were implicitly ableist at graduation

# Literature on Disability Training Globally

(Rotenberg et al., 2022)

**Lectures\***-most widely utilized; more engaging when combined with other programs

**Simulations**- often single session, use of actors or volunteers with disabilities to act as patients; useful to increase knowledge, comfort, and competency

**Experiential/Community-based**- benefits of working with people with disabilities over extended period of time; non-clinic placements emphasized the nonmedical and lived experiences of people with disabilities outside of healthcare system

**Case studies\***- most commonly used to improve care without presence of patient; has been combined with multi-media simulated interactions for greater engagement

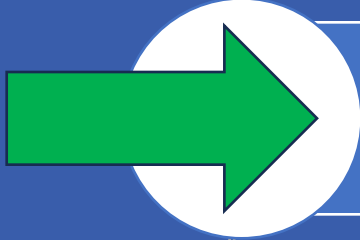
\*= most utilized teaching methods

# Literature on Disability Training Globally

(Rotenberg et al., 2022)



**Clinical encounters-** often single clinical experiences with patients with disabilities as part of training focusing on practicing specific clinical skills



**Multi-pronged approach-** most common approach to address different learning styles and increase learning (case studies, lectures, simulations, people with disabilities); focus on integrating across curricula and immersion



**People with disabilities-** provide lecture, share lived experiences in health care system; hired in simulated patient programs; use of nonmedical activities, e.g., self-advocacy theater group ran simulation and icebreaker activity

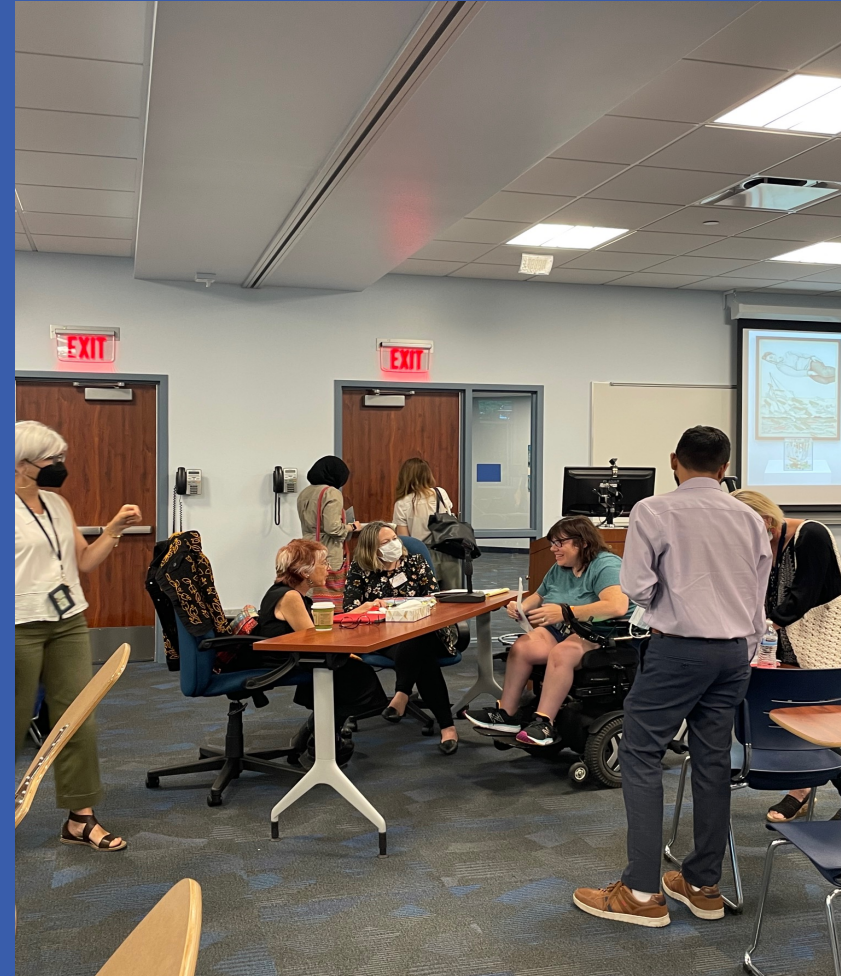


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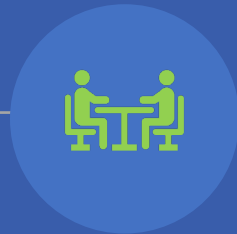
## Interprofessional Education Event: Collaborating with People with Disabilities



# Interprofessional Education Event & Research Activities

Featured Presentation  
Led by Person with  
Disability

Large Group  
Discussion &  
Debriefing



Pre-test

Facilitated  
Discussion Groups  
Led by People with  
Disabilities

Post-test

Focus Group

# Competency Guidelines Informing Content of the Event



# Featured Presentation by Riva Lehrer, Author of “Golem Girl: A Memoir”

## Lived experience of an artist with spina bifida



- Read key passages from her book
- Displayed art work depicting the disability culture and challenging perceptions of “normalcy”
- Shared her experiences with health care and disempowerment from providers and healthcare system
- Reflected on the lack of expectations from society to have a meaningful future and impact of ableism

# Small Group Discussions

People with disabilities sharing their experiences with healthcare

- Utilized healthcare scenario as an example demonstrating implicit and explicit biases to facilitate discussion.
- Explored prompted questions.



# Large Group Debriefing & Discussion

## Students shared their experiences about the event



- Expanded discussion by small group facilitators on their experiences with healthcare
- Relayed new insights from presentation and small discussion groups
- Shared new knowledge that was gained from other peers/ outside disciplines



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## Student Perceptions on Disability: Study Design & Results



# Convergent Mixed Methods Design Study

Pre-test Survey: Demographics & Attitudes and Perspective Toward Persons with Disabilities (APPD) Scale (Myong et al., 2021)

IPE Education Event: Centered on people with disabilities teaching and sharing their lived experiences with students

Post-test Survey: APPD Scale

Focus Group informed by:

- APPD Scale Domains (Myong et al. 2021)
- Core Competencies on Disability for Health Care Education (Alliance for Disability in Health Care Education, 2019)
- Core Competencies of Interprofessional Education (IPEC, 2023)

# Results: Discordant Findings

Quantitative (n=13) APPD Domain Scoring		Qualitative Findings	Mixed Methods Comparison: Discordant Findings
Mean (SD) Post- Pre	p-value	Categories with Sub-category Quotes	Students demonstrated insights within the qualitative findings regarding the reasons behind the lack of community integration and overall sense of burdening about people with disabilities which is not evident in the quantitative findings.
<b>Community Integration</b>		<b>Ongoing needs for healthcare education on disability</b>	
.154. (3.236)	.867	<b>Ableism:</b> <i>"...And a lot of what contributes to the difficulty of their day to day life is the fact that a lot of people in places don't provide them with those accommodations that they need. So just like I think that's kind of the perspective that I gained was a lot of what comes to making their day to day life challenging isn't the disability..."</i>	
<b>Sense of Burdening</b>		<b>Raising disability awareness:</b> <i>"...disability has been treated as if it's to be fixed rather than considering the environment and society and how that influences how they live their life"</i>	
-0.538 (1.127)	0.110	<b>Systemic change:</b> <i>"When are we going to listen to the disability community because there's clearly a disconnect in terms of regular traditional practice and what the needs actually are..."</i>	

# Results: Concordant Findings

Quantitative (n=13) APPD Domain Scoring		Qualitative Findings	Mixed Methods Comparison: Expansion of Findings Confirming Change in Attitudes
Mean (SD) Post- Pre	p-value	Categories with Sub-category Quotes	
		<b>Students' perception of growth</b>	Students were able to recognize that their own perceptions of growth and their ability to honor and respect the experiences of people with disabilities had changed their attitudes about their level of discomfort towards people with disabilities and their sense of charity.
<b>Discomfort</b>		<b>Interprofessional education:</b> <i>"Yeah, so I think just being able to, again, be in this interprofessional situation, but also have an individual with a disability here, because often times, there is a lot of stigma around that."</i>	
-1.923 (2.362)	.012	<b>Increased sense of self-efficacy in students:</b> <i>"I think I definitely have like a base level of confidence that I can provide care for a patient with disability competent care that they would be satisfied with but I also feel like I learned more about where I can get information to further my knowledge"</i>	
		<b>Advocacy:</b> <i>"...and so I think it really does take an entire team, our entire interprofessional team, to be there to end the stigma and to help advocate for these individuals and just be here to listen to those individual and assist them in ways that they want to be assisted and...that they feel comfortable with being assisted."</i>	
<b>Charitability</b>		<b>Honoring and respecting experiences of people with disabilities as individuals</b>	
		<b>Patient-centered care:</b> <i>"...and just being more cognizant of not only treating patients with autonomy, but making sure to reinforce that their perspective and their goals of care trump anything that we necessarily think or want to try or want to do..."</i>	
-2.615 (1.758)	<0001	<b>Learning from lived experiences:</b> <i>"...and what I kind of took away and heard from them speaking on their life experiences is that they are active members of their community, and there are places they need to be, but then also, that they want to be."</i>	
		<b>Communication needs:</b> <i>"...there's just like a level of disconnect through communication. I think what I've learned also from today's event was that you can't have too much communication, you can't have too much understanding..."</i>	

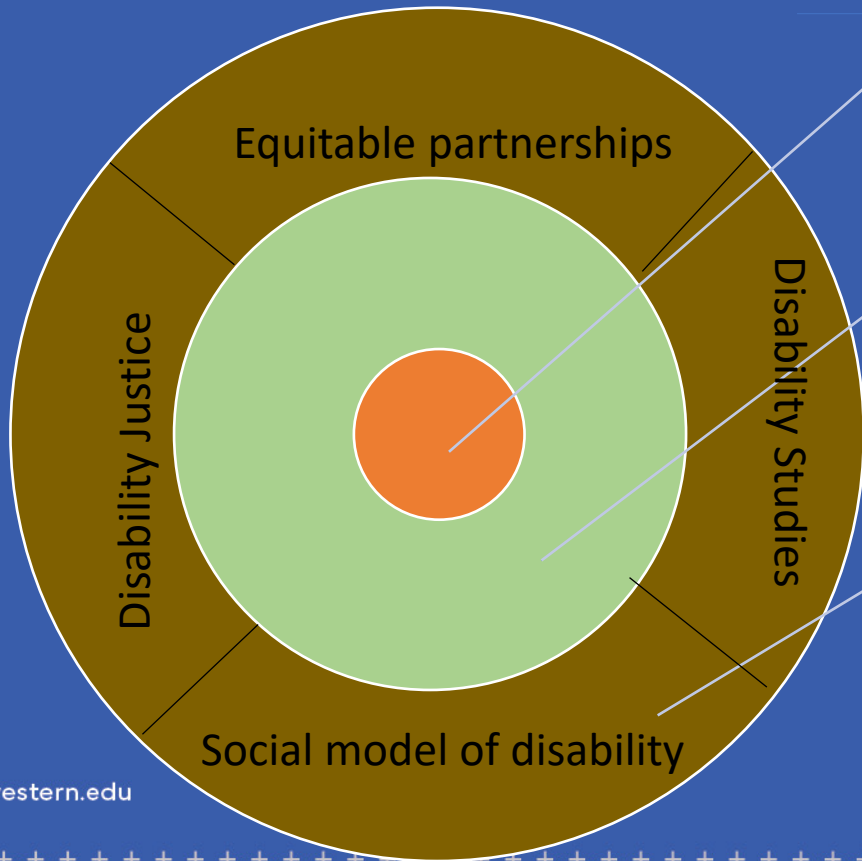
# Implications: Disability Consciousness

(Smeltz et al., 2024, p. 55)

Ableist Assumptions and beliefs

Educational Exposure: Teachings

Disability Consciousness



# Other Recommendations: Specific to OT Programs

- Incorporate disability studies in occupational therapy programs, including critical disability theory
- Promoting presence of people with disabilities as educators/faculty and practitioners in occupational therapy profession
- Create accreditation standards that include disability education and training (e.g. disability rights, justice and culture) (Harrison et al., 2021)
- Address the “hidden curriculum”, e.g., case studies in textbooks presenting tragedy/charity and negative impact of disability (Grenier, 2021)
- Including identity-affirming disability content in course curriculum (Grenier, 2021)

# Thank You!

Any questions?

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