Anti-Discrimination Working Group

Meeting #6

Wednesday, 1st of November 2023

9.30, NCRR main meeting room (and online)

How are you feeling today?

Agenda

1. Introduction to ableism and disablism

2. Ableist language

3. Microaggressions

4. Positive psychology and ableism

5. How to be a better ally!

6. Goodbyes and ideas for next meeting

Aims of the group

1. To strive for **equality**

2. To strive for **diversity**

3. To be **open & transparent**

4. To be mindful that **the topics we discuss may be triggering and upsetting**, impacting on people in different ways.
   - This is not a passive intellectual topic. It takes time to install the correct support and find solutions. This is a learning process.

5. To discuss ongoing issues with **discrimination in research**

6. To recognize **harmful structures and practices** of discrimination in research

7. To **advocate for changes** that promote equity in research

Ableism and disablism

What do you understand about the meaning of the word "ableism"?

Ableism

"Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as 'less than', and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities."

From: https://www.accessliving.org/newsroom/blog/ableism-101/

Disablism

**What do you understand about the meaning of the word "disablism"?**

Disablism

*"Disablism is a word for **negative** opinions, behaviour, or **abuse** against disabled people. You are being disablist if you **treat someone differently**, or choose to offend or hurt someone, because of their disability."*

From: https://www.sense.org.uk/information-and-advice/ableism-and-disablism/

The difference between ableism and disablism
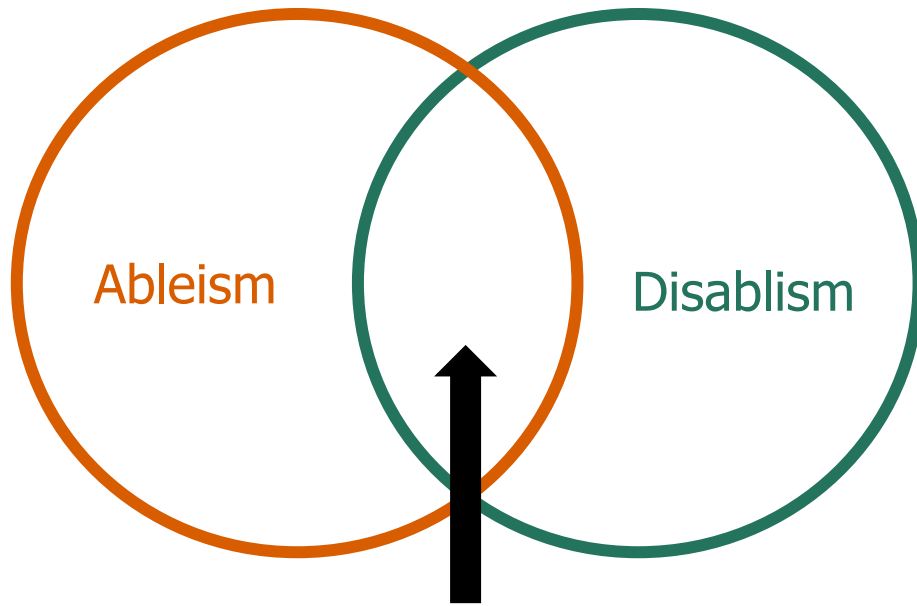
Ableism

Disablism

There is some overlap between ableism and disablism and what they can look like.

- Disablism is a newer word.

- Some disability activists prefer the word "disablism" to "ableism" because they believe it makes it clear that disablism has nothing to do with the disabled person's "ability". It's a form of discrimination like racism or sexism.

- In general, ableism can be used to describe the way society and people tend to favour able-bodied people.

- Disablism can be used to describe more direct, conscious acts of discrimination or abuse against people with disabilities.

- However, many people use these words interchangeably.

From: https://www.sense.org.uk/information-and-advice/ableism-and-disablism/

How does ableism manifest?

Ableism can take many forms...

- Abusing someone because they have a disability

- Choosing an inaccessible venue for an event

- Not having subtitles on videos

- Not having braille versions of text

- Talking to a person with a disability like they are a child

- Talking about a person with a disability, rather than to them

- Assuming people need to have a visible disability to be disabled

- Assuming somebody is less competent at their job because they are disabled

- Using ableist language

Ableist language

We need to be mindful of the language we use day-to-day.

"When we verbally describe the things, experiences, and people around us we are also assigning value to them and that value impacts how we interact with each other." - Rakshitha Arni Ravishankar
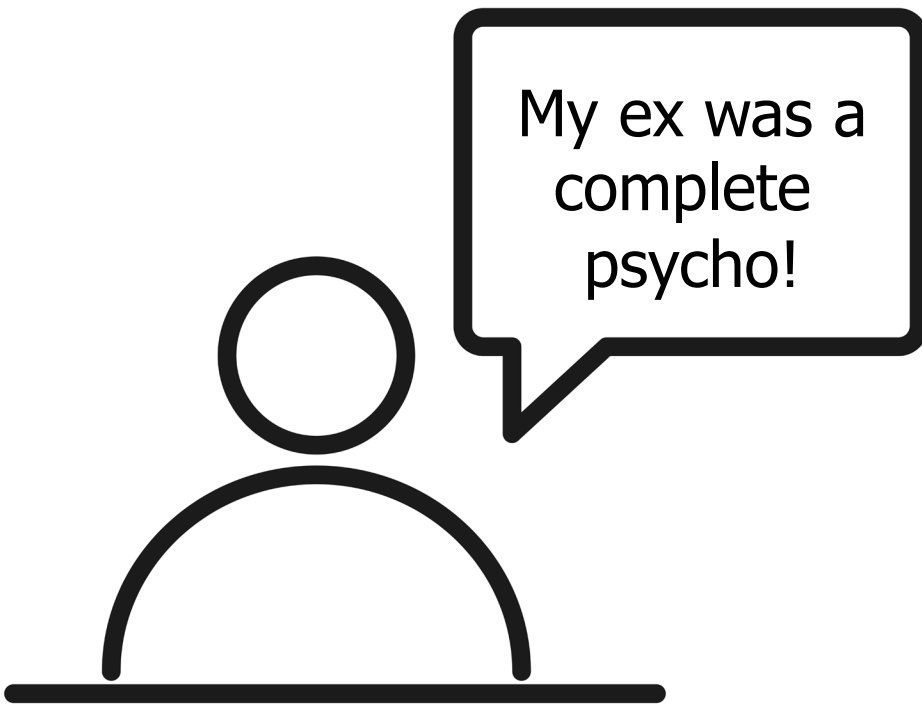
https://hbr.org/2020/12/why-you-need-to-stop-using-these-words-and-phrases

Ableist language

That film was so lame!

Icons Vectors by Vecteezy

Ableist language

My ex was a complete psycho!

Icons Vectors by Vecteezy

Ableist language

I'm super OCD about keeping my room clean.

Icons Vectors by Vecteezy

Ableist language

My boss
went crazy
at me today!

Icons Vectors by Vecteezy

Ableist language

That was such a dumb comment!
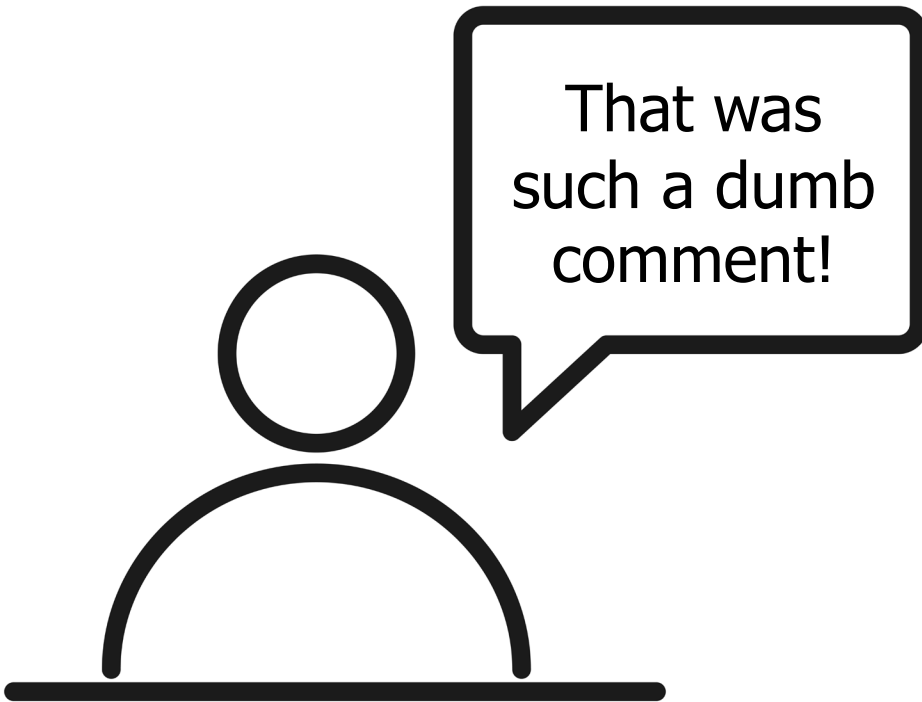
Icons Vectors by Vecteezy

Why is this important?

1) It reveals our unconscious biases

2) It makes us internalise harmful biases about disabilities

3) It stigmatizes people with disabilities

https://hbr.org/2020/12/why-you-need-to-stop-using-these-words-and-phrases

More to come… November 20th

Next NCRR Junior Seminar

➢ Considering ethnicity, stigma, gender and inequality in your research

with Zeynep and Preben

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are everyday verbal or behavioural expressions that communicate negativity towards or insult someone's identity (e.g., gender, race, sex, disability).

- Asking someone "How did you become disabled?"
- Questioning if somebody is "actually disabled", or "how much" they are disabled
- Telling somebody that they "don't look disabled"
- Using someone's wheelchair to lean on

| End of WWII | 1947 | 1950s – 1960s | 1980s – 1990s |

- Historical trends in psychology and disability

- Challenges that serve as barriers to progress

- Actions

The Future of Positive Psychology and Disability

Michael L. Wehmeyer*

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For much of the history of the application of psychology to disability, the research and clinical focus of the field was deficits-oriented: documenting what people with disability could not do, proposing theories of why they could not do these things, creating measures to assess this incapacity and incompetence, and building interventions and treatments predicated on disease and pathology. It has been only in the last few decades that conceptualizations of disability allowed for consideration of strengths and positive attributes along with the presence of disability and only in the past two decades that a positive psychology of disability has emerged. This article will briefly summarize the factors that led to the emergence of a focus on the positive psychology of disability and a strength-based approach in the field, examine the state of knowledge and practice as it pertains to the positive psychology of disability, and will examine challenges that serve as barriers to progress in this area and opportunities for advancement. Among these is examining how "optimal human functioning" can be understood in ways that includes, and not excludes, people with disability. The importance of shifting the disability research and practice focus to emphasize flourishing, well-being, and self-determination of and for people with disability will be discussed, as well as the necessity for the field of positive psychology to more aggressively reach out to include people with disability among those populations whom the field values and includes.
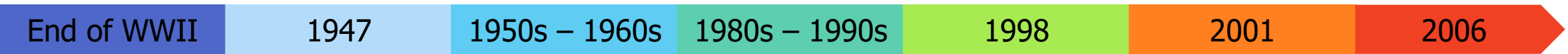
Keywords: disability, strength-based, self-determination, quality of life, optimal human functioning

Historical trends in psychology and disability

End of WWII | 1947 | 1950s – 1960s | 1980s – 1990s | 1998 | 2001 | 2006

Historical trends in psychology and disability
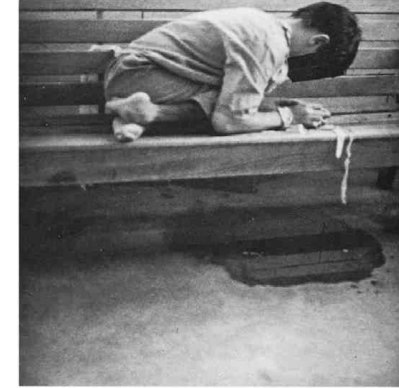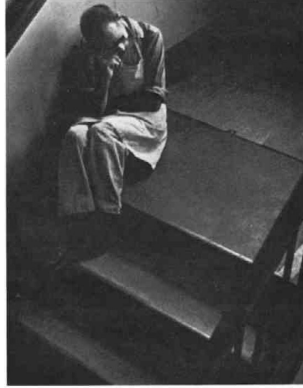
| **End of WWII** | 1947 | 1950s – 1960s | 1980s – 1990s | 1998 | 2001 | 2006 |

Psychology was deficit-oriented and focused on repairing damage ("Fixing what is wrong").

Central focus:
- Documenting what people with disability could not do.
- Proposing theories of why they could not do these things.
- Creating measures to assess this incapacity and incompetence.
- Building interventions and treatments predicted on disease and pathology.

Historical trends in psychology and disability
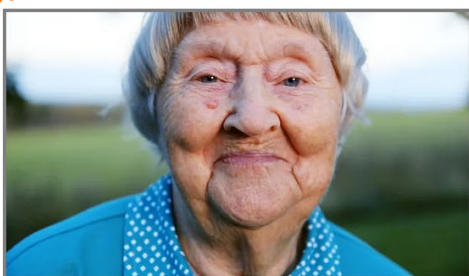

| End of WWII | 1947 | 1950s – 1960s | 1980s – 1990s | 1998 | 2001 | 2006 |

De åndssvages historie

1. De farlige gener
30. DEC 2015 | 28M
Karoline blev anbragt på en institution som teenager, og da hun fyldte 18 år blev hun tvangssteriliseret. Overlægerne var nemlig bange for, at de åndssvage ville…

2. De ustyrlige
30. DEC 2015 | 29M
Karoline stak ofte af fra anstalten, og det blev straffet hårdt. Derfor blev hun deponeret til Sprogø, en ø-anstalt for åndssvage kvinder. Lone gjorde også oprør mod…

3. Det store opgør
30. DEC 2015 | 28M
Oprøret begyndte at ulme nedefra i åndssvageforsorgen i starten af 60'erne, og en gruppe skolelærere tog sagen i egen hånd. Nu skulle de åndssvage leve "et liv så nær de…

https://www.dr.dk/drtv/serie/de-aandssvages-historie_112517   2023-11-01

Historical trends in psychology and disability

End of WW	1947	1950s – 1960s	1980s – 1990s	1998	2001	2006

NIH National Institute of Mental Health

Empirical focus ≫ Assessing and curing individual suffering

Historical trends in psychology and disability
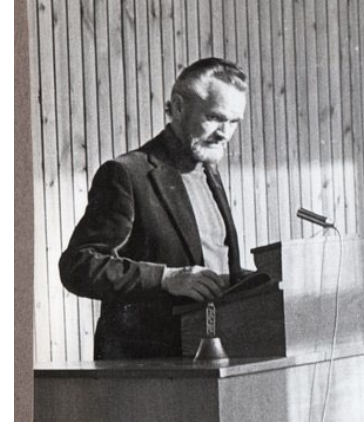
End of WWII	1947	**1950s – 1960s**	1980s – 1990s	1998	2001	2006

- 1952: Parent associations were established. Parents and family members demanded for alternatives (smaller housing units, personalized care, leisure, and education).

- 1959: Niels Erik Bank-Mikkelsen's Mental Retardation Act

  » Legislation and civil protections!

Historical trends in psychology and disability

End of WWII	1947	1950s – 1960s	**1980s – 1990s**	1998	2001	2006

➢ Movement away from a deficit-based or medical model of disability.

• 1981: The International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) - "Full participation and equality"

Historical trends in psychology and disability

End of WWII	1947	1950s – 1960s	1980s – 1990s	**1998**	2001	2006

- 1999: Martin Seligman established the term 'Positive Psychology'

- 2000: Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi introduced positive psychology in a special issue of American Psychologist

Historical trends in psychology and disability

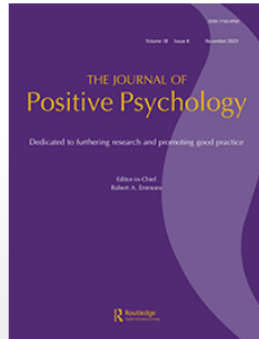| End of WWII | 1947 | 1950s – 1960s | 1980s – 1990s | 1998 | **2001** | 2006 |

- The World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF).

- ICF is based on the same foundation as ICD.

- ICF provided a language for a strength-based approach to disability!

Historical trends in psychology and disability

The Journal of Positive Psychology

Dedicated to furthering research and promoting good practice

🔓 Publish open access in this journal

📊🏅✅ This journal supports Open Science Badges

Publishes research on positive psychology, facilitation of well-being, and the professional application on states of optimal human functioning and fulfillment.

End of WWII	1947	1950s – 1960s	1980s – 1990s	1998	2001	**2006**

- The journal of positive psychology published its first issue

Aims:
'*Positive psychology is about scientifically informed perspectives on what makes life worth living, focussing on aspects of the human condition that lead to happiness, fulfillment, and flourishing. [...] The Journal is devoted to basic research and professional application on states of optimal human functioning and fulfillment, and the facilitation and promotion of well-being.*'

Historical trends in psychology and disability

| End of WWII | 1947 | 1950s – 1960s | 1980s – 1990s | 1998 | 2001 | 2006 |

Psychology

"Fix what is wrong"

Segregation

Positive Psychology

"Identify and nurture the strongest qualities"

Inclusion
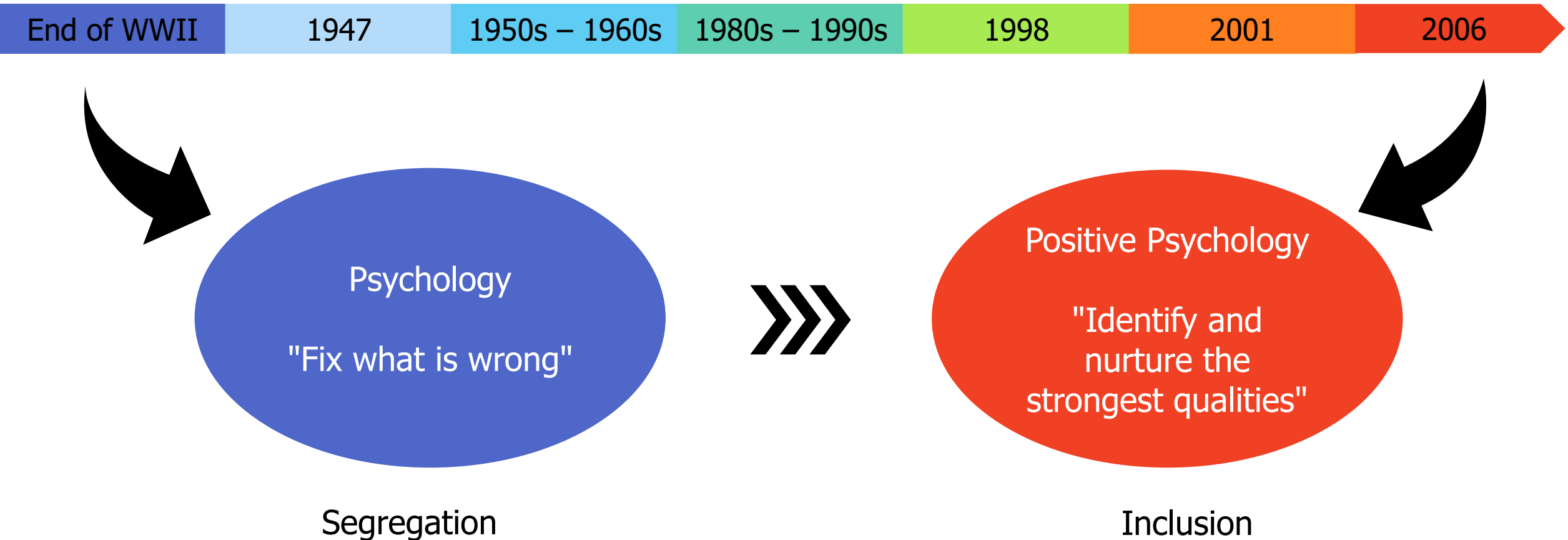
Challenges that serve as barriers to progress...

1) The isolated nature of academic and clinical disciplines

2) Limited funding for research in this area

3) How disability is understood in society **!**

People with disabilities continue to experience stigma associated with others' views about and understandings of disability and continue to pity or, sometimes, fear people with disability. The inevitable results are not only discrimination and marginalization, but also the inability of others to see that people with disability possess strengths and can, indeed, flourish and experience well-being.

Wehmeyer ML, 2021

Actions
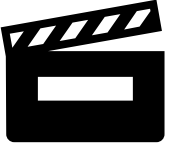
1) Researchers and practitioners must more aggressively reach out to include people with disability.

2) Psychologists with disabilities need to have an active voice in shaping the field of positive psychology.

3) Models of disability that emphasize disability as part of the human experience must drive research and practice.

[My Body Doesn't Oppress Me, Society Does](#)

Tags: ableism, capitalism, disability justice, heteropatriarchy, racism, white supremacy

MY BODY DOESN'T OPPRESS ME, SOCIETY DOES

Disability justice activists Patty Berne and Stacey Milbern discuss social models of accessibility and the social, economic, and physical barriers that render physical impairments disabling in an ableist society.

Further reading

The Oxford Handbook of positive psychology and disability

https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398786.001.0001
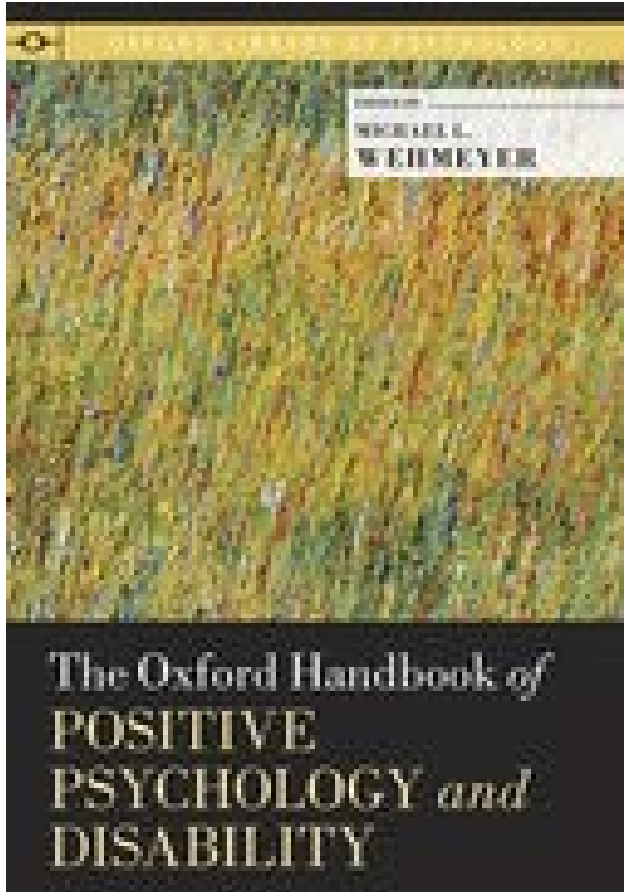
How to be a better ally!

1) Acknowledge the disability around you

2) Make a conscious effort to improve your vocabulary

3) Think about how your choices could indirectly discriminate against a person with a disability

4) Don't make assumptions about people's identity, just ask them!

5) When you make a mistake, genuinely apologise and learn better for next time

6) Correct the language of people around you

How to be a better ally

Question 1

You are on the organising committee of a conference to be held at Aarhus University. What things could you suggest to the committee to make the conference accessible to all?

GO TO
menti.com

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How to be a better ally

Question 2

Somebody starts in your research group and discloses that they have dyslexia. What could you do to make sure they feel comfortable in the group?

How to be a better ally

Question 3

You are just about to present your recent research findings at a patient advocacy group. What things could you do to make sure you are being sensitive about the subject of your research?

Remember: November 20th

Next NCRR Junior Seminar

➤ Considering ethnicity, stigma, gender and inequality in your research

with Zeynep and Preben

Goodbye from Jess & Hannah

- Jess is going back to the UK

Ideas for next meeting

- Discrimination at the workplace (academia/research)?

- Genetic counselling?

- Equity and access to genetic testing/research?

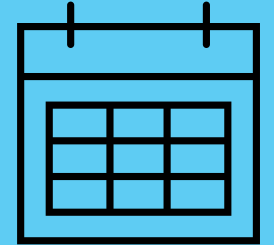- Other emerging technologies?

- Promoting genetic literacy?

Working Group Website

https://ncrr-adwg.github.io/

- Slides
- Linked journal articles
- Additional resources: Movies, podcasts, books, etc.

Share with colleagues at other institutions!

Next meeting: December?

Thanks!

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References & further resources

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- https://www.accessliving.org/newsroom/blog/ableism-101/

- https://hbr.org/2020/12/why-you-need-to-stop-using-these-words-and-phrases

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