

Intro to Disability Arts

Frameworks for understanding the lives of disabled creatives



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Problematising Housebound

Although it can be a useful term in some contexts, we try not to use the word Housebound

This is because it can be stigmatising, and tends to exclude lots of the people we want to help

Today we will mostly be using the term “people who struggle to leave their homes” instead



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Person First vs Identity first language

When we use identity first language, we refer to someone's identity markers as an adjective. E.g:

A nonbinary person

A white man

A disabled person

When we use person first language, we usually refer to those markers as nouns

E.g:

A person with nonbinary

A man with whiteness

A person with disability



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Person First vs Identity First Language

The intention of person-first language is to encourage us to think of people with disabilities as people first, and our impairment second.

This is to avoid defining us by our condition, so that others might focus on our identity outside of our disabilities instead.

Some people with disabilities feel that the failure to separate our personhood from our conditions leads to dehumanisation and stigma.



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Person First vs Identity First Language

Advocates of person first language (like me!) feel that It's OK to be defined by and proud of your disability.

I also believe that disability is not a modifier to personhood. My identity as a person is not separable from my identity as disabled.



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Person First vs Identity First Language

It's important to remember that this is not a resolved issue. There is still a lot of intra-community debate over what term to use, and people have different preferences.



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The Social Model of Disability

Under the social model of disability, we understand disability not as an inherent trait of individual people, but as the consequence of an inaccessible society.

Historically speaking we have understood disability by medical models, which view disabilities as defects that should be “cured” or “fixed”

The social model is useful because rather than pressuring disabled people to change, it places the onus on society to accommodate us.



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Spoon Theory

Originally created by Christine Miserandino, Spoon Theory is a metaphor designed to help nondisabled people understand the basics of energy management

Spoons represent the finite amount of energy that chronically ill people have to work with in their daily lives. Basic activities use different amounts of spoons, and usually people with chronic illnesses don't have enough of them to get through a "normal" day.



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The Spoon Theory



The Spoon Theory is a creative way to explain to healthy friends and family what it's like living with a chronic illness. Dysautonomia patients often have limited energy, represented by spoons. Doing too much in one day can leave you short on spoons the next day.

If you only had 12 spoons per day, how would you use them? Take away 1 spoon if you didn't sleep well last night, forgot to take your meds, or skipped a meal. Take away 4 spoons if you have a cold.



get out of bed



get dressed



take pills



watch TV



bathe



style hair



surf the internet



read/study



make & eat a meal



make plans & socialize



light housework



drive somewhere



go to work/school



go shopping



go to the doctor



exercise

The Spoon Theory was written by Christine Miserando, which you can check out on her website www.butyoudontlooksick.com.

www.dysautonomiainternational.org



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Crip Time

Crip Time refers to the ways that disabled people experience time differently to nondisabled people.

If disabled people are able to do less with our time, practically speaking we don't have as much time to work with as nondisabled people.

This results in disabled people feeling out of sync with nondisabled time, and struggling to keep up with the nondisabled timeframes that dictate our lives as artists.



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