



Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) Program

Westchester Institute for Human Development
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Values in Disabilities Summer Reading Assignment 2014-2015

Welcome to LEND and the first LEND assignment of the year

Overview: In order to work effectively with and on behalf of children and adults with disabilities and family members, leaders must develop skills for and commitment to being attuned to the viewpoint, rights and perspectives of people with disabilities and their families. This assignment is one of several LEND experiences designed to help trainees accomplish this goal. During a LEND session on September 11, trainees, faculty, and guests will participate in small group discussions of their assigned book in a LEND session called “Values in Disabilities: Book Club Discussion.”

All LEND Learning experiences are designed with specific learning objectives for trainees in mind. Here are the objectives for this assignment:

Learning Objectives: Through completing this assignment, LEND trainees will:

- Survey the book to examine use of “person-first” language*
- Consider the manner in which “disability” is viewed by the author and/or characters in this book. Is it in line with the newer WHO paradigm concerning disability (see below)?
- Provide examples from the book of the challenges that people with disabilities may encounter in attaining access to desirable/essential services and supports (i.e. convenient and accessible transportation, meaningful employment, making choices, living independently in the community, post-secondary education).
- Provide examples of how to incorporate insights from this assignment into work with children and families
- Describe how attitudes toward considering “ability before disability” might have changed as a result of reading the book





Assignment: As you read the book to which you have been assigned, keep the following points in mind to prepare for discussion at the Book Club session (remember- some of the points may not apply to all books). There is no need to submit anything in writing. It is, after all, SUMMER!

- Did reading this book change your understanding of how people with disabilities can lead self-determined lives? Provide examples.
- Provide examples from the book of the challenges that people with disabilities and their families may encounter in attaining access to desirable/essential services and supports (i.e. convenient and accessible transportation, meaningful employment, making choices, living independently in the community, post-secondary education).
- Describe how reading this book may have influenced you in considering “ability before disability.”
- The World Health Organization recently released its “World Report on Disability” that included this statement: “There has been a paradigm shift in approaches to disability. In recent decades the move has been away from a medical understanding towards a social understanding. Disability arises from the interaction between people with a health condition and their environment. The CRPD [the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities*] reflects this emphasis on removing environmental barriers which prevent inclusion.” (**Home Page:** http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html Full Report: http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf) Was this concept of disability as the failure of the environment to meet the needs of the person reflected in the book you read? Explain.
- Point out examples of exemplary family-centered practice and/or examples of professionals who didn’t work in partnership with families.
- Was “Person-First or People-First” Language* used? What importance do you assign to that?
- What did you learn that will change the way you communicate with children and adults with disabilities and their families?
- Does “disable the label” have any meaning in the context of this book?
- (For those reading a work of fiction): To what extent does the presence of people with disabilities in fiction possibly contribute to viewing disability as one more element of human diversity?





*People First Language “The disability community has developed preferred terminology – People First Language – in order to eliminate prejudicial language and to contribute to the end of discrimination and segregation in employment, education, housing, and our communities at large. People First Language is an objective way of acknowledging, communicating, and reporting about disabilities, eliminating generalizations, assumptions, and stereotypes. As the term implies, People First Language refers to the individual first and the disability second. It is the difference between saying “the autistic” and “a child with autism.” While some people may not use preferred terminology, it is important not to repeat negative terms that stereotype, devalue, or discriminate. Equally important, ask yourself if the disability is even relevant and needs to be mentioned when referring to individuals.”

<http://tcdd.texas.gov/resources/people-first-language/> ;

<http://www.hamiltondds.org/uploads/general-docs/Person%20First%20Language%20Guide%204-2013.pdf> and http://www.asha.org/publications/journals/submissions/person_first.htm

Author last name	Book title
Fadiman	The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down
Kingsley and Levitz	Count Us In: Growing up With Down Syndrome
Palacio	Wonder
Higashida	The Reason I Jump
Grandin	Thinking in Pictures
Meyer	Views from our shoes: growing up with a brother or sister with special needs

