

Designing
Disability
Ministry

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INTRODUCTION

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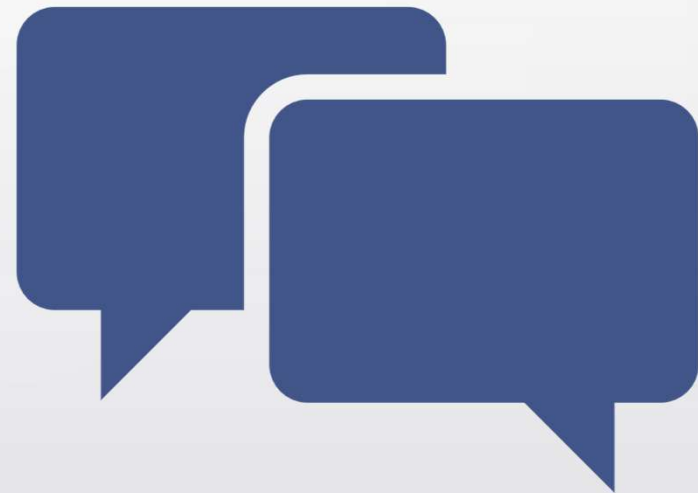


Please use the chat!

Questions

Topics

Stories





Outline

1. Representation
2. Language
3. Definitions
4. Disability ministry design
5. Discussion

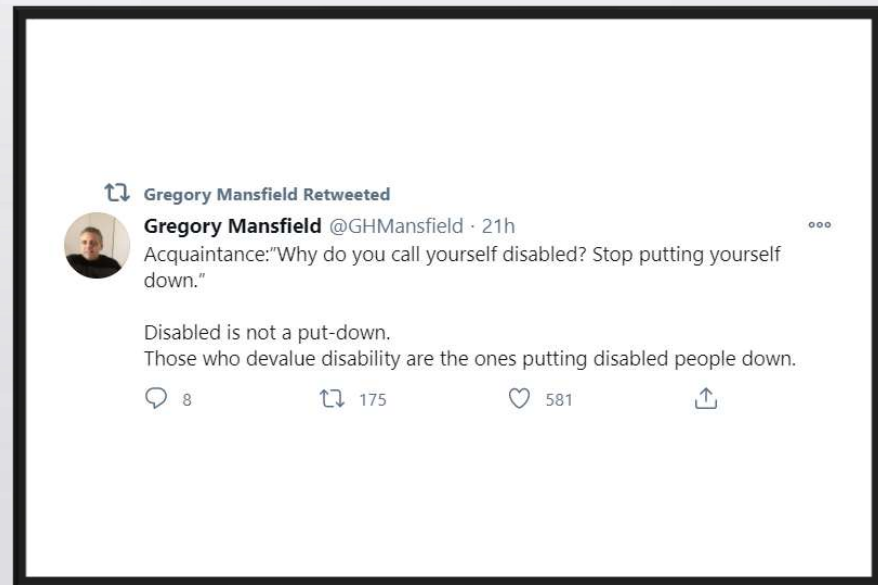


Disability representation in Scripture

- Moses
- Jacob
- Goliath
- King Saul
- Women with infertility
- Mephibosheth
- Zacchaeus
- Woman with the issue of blood
- Many of Jesus' healings

Language

- Always evolving, at different rates for different environments
- Euphemisms for disability are now considered unacceptable
- “Disabled” and “disability”





“Special needs”

“It crosses diagnosis, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. and the argument it makes, is that as people with disabilities (or disabled people) our NEEDS aren’t special. We need the exact same things that nondisabled people need, to eat, to sleep, to live, to thrive, to engage in society and more. There’s not a need you have, that a person with a disability does not. Our needs maybe more complex, or require skillsets the ableds don’t have (such as ability to cut through pages of bureaucratic morass, the ability to deal with patronizing ableist microaggressions), but they’re still just basic needs.”

~ Rebecca Cokley



Disability ministry and anti-racism

- Ableism is a tool of racism
- If healthcare and education are difficult for white, disabled families—how much more so for black and brown families!

Language

- Avoid phrases that imply disability is necessarily a form of suffering
 - “suffers from”
 - “unfortunately”
 - “is a victim of”





Reasons to use “disability” ...

... and avoid “differently abled”, “challenged”,
“handicapable”

1. People with disabilities want you to
2. ‘Special Needs’ as an educational term is outdated
3. All the other words make us gag

Meriah Nichols of www.meriahnichols.com



What is disability

- ADA definition: “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities”
- My definition: Any challenge to a person’s ability to participate in a ministry area without accommodation.



Hidden disabilities

- “significant emotional, behavioral, developmental or neurological conditions lacking outwardly apparent physical symptoms” (Key Ministry)
- Don’t get caught with a narrow understanding of disability
- Discovering and accommodating hidden disabilities:
 - Earn and offer trust
 - Speak openly



What does disability ministry look like?

- Representation at the decision-making table
- Diverse ages, noises, faces, reactions, and needs in primary worship
- Mainstreaming vs. segregation
- RECIPROCITY
- Sacraments
- One person at a time
- Practical implementations



Spaces





Approaches



Questions & discussion

Seeking input?

Topics?

Questions?

Stories!



Disabled voices to follow

Rebecca Cokley

- Twitter: @RebeccaCokley
- <https://medium.com/@rebecca.cokley>

Disability Ministries of the UMC

- umcdmc.org
- [Facebook.com/disabilityministriesum](https://www.facebook.com/disabilityministriesum)
- [Instagram.com/dmc.umc](https://www.instagram.com/dmc.umc)

Steven Grcevich, author of *Mental Health and the Church*

<https://keyministry.org/>



Thank you!

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