

ADVOCACY

People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter



Diagnostic Bias

By Quinn Thomas

While the definitions of health conditions are based in science, determining which one-- if any-- that someone has is up to a doctor's judgment. Doctors are very well trained and do the best they can, but they also sometimes make mistakes. Like all people, they have biases. Biases are beliefs about certain types of people. You may not even know you have biases.

Some people are biased against disabled people. But people can be biased against others for just about any reason. Common reasons include race and gender. For example, a doctor may diagnose a black child with Oppositional Defiant Disorder for having the same symptoms that they would diagnose a white child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

UPCOMING EVENTS

STORYTELLING WORKSHOP

Tuesdays, 6:00-7:30,
Waterville Branch Library.

NIGHT TO SHINE

February 9, 6:00-10:00, at
Cornerstone Church in Toledo.
Ages 14+.

GAME NIGHT

February 12, 5:30-7:00, at the
Ability Center. Ages 13-17.

SUPPORT GROUP

Begins February 20, 10:00 or
21, 5:00. At 1155 Larc Lane.
For parents with disabilities.

DISABILITY RIGHTS TOWN HALL

February 23, 1:00-3:00, at the
Ability Center.

STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE

February 27, 6:00-7:30,
Waterville Branch Library.

This is not an imaginary scenario. It happens every day. Black and Latino children are eight times more likely than white children to get diagnosed with ODD or CD rather than ADHD. This happens even when you account for other factors like adverse childhood experiences, socioeconomics, and prior juvenile offenses. Doctors may view the same traits between these groups differently.



Experts think there is even more bias than normal when it comes to diagnosing mental health conditions in people with intellectual disability. All of the regular biases are there, but with more, new, specific ones on top. What these experts have found is that people with intellectual disability are more likely to have mental illnesses, but also more likely to have a hard time getting assessed.

Doctors are biased against people with disabilities in other ways, too. A recent study found that 82% of doctors think

people with disabilities always have a worse quality of life than people without disabilities. Just a little more than half (56%) strongly agreed that they would welcome patients with disabilities, and even less (40%) said they were very confident they could provide the same quality of care.

There are solutions to this. Better training and different methods of screening could prevent these problems. This situation isn't hopeless, we just need doctors to put in the work.

OUR NEXT MEETING

February 8th, 6:00-7:30, virtually on Zoom or in-person at Courageous Acres at 12701 Waterville-Swanton Road, Whitehouse. Meeting dues are \$5 or \$50 for twelve months.

State Representative Michele Grim will be our guest speaker, talking about disability-related topics and what she does as a legislator.