



# Design, Diversity, Disability & You

Melanie Thompson, Director  
Office of Learning Assistance Programs  
& Disability Support Services  
UC 302

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**DISABLED**



# What Comes to Mind?

“dumb”

“deficient”

“sad”

“weird”

“different”

“pitiful”

“dangerous”

“special”



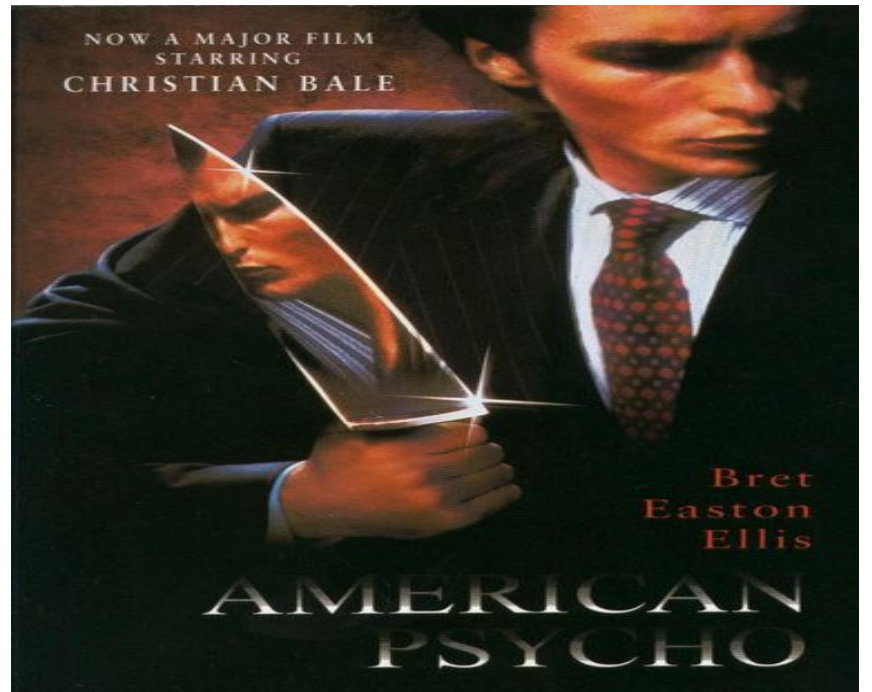
# Stereotyping Disability

- From media sources
- From language
- From historical perspectives



## “Disability” Stereotypes in Media

- Pitiabile and pathetic: “I Am Sam”
- Object of violence: “Silence of the Lambs,” “American Psycho”
- Sinister and evil: Captain Hook from “Peter Pan”
- Curiosity: “Hunchback of Notre Dame”
- Super-human ability: “Daredevil”
- Own worst enemy: “Good Will Hunting”





# (mis)Use of Language in Society

- “Let’s Get Retarded” Black Eyed Peas
- We all have disabilities; I don’t see disabilities
- “retarded” as slang
  - Tropic Thunder
  - The Hangover
  - Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story
- “special”
  - Special Education
  - Isn’t that special?

# The Democrat-Reporter

75¢  
per copy

Thursday  
April 6  
2006

127th Year of Dedicated Newspaper Service to the People of Marengo County

Volume One Hundred, Twenty-Seven

Number Twenty-Two

Two Sections — Sixteen Pages

Published in Linden, County Seat of Marengo, Alabama, USA

## Residents reject retard housing



This is the house retarded and mentally unstable people would live in if Linden City Planning Commission and Linden City Council approves rezoning in Pinecrest neighborhood. Residents in the area voiced their protests at Linden City Council meeting Tuesday, April 4. The house is located near the homes of Mayor Pat Vice and Councilman Alvin King.

Residents of Pine Crest presented a petition to Linden City Council Tuesday evening, April 4, to protest moving three mentally retarded people into a home in the neighborhood.

The petition, presented by spokesman Sylvan Mutschler, voiced concern over the purchase of a house by Arc of Fayette-Lamar, a non-profit company which provides residential services for developmental and disabled people.

The home is zoned as single family dwelling. To have three unrelated people living there would put the house in violation of city ordinance as it would then be classified as group home, according to Mutschler.

Residents of the neighborhood said the company gave an impression of trying to sneak into the community instead of researching the zoning laws first.

One person said he was concerned over the danger of having mentally-ill people living next door. There are many children who play unattended in backyards and in the streets of Pine Crest. In the past the people have enjoyed an atmosphere of relative safety.

Wade Reese, program director for the company, was at the meeting in order to answer the questions.

He said that it was not the intentions of the company to sneak in. The pretext for settling on this par-

ticular house had to do with time constraints and financial reasons. He explained the people just need a place to live and this was their cheapest option. He understood that Linden has had group homes in the past and he did not think at the time there would be a problem. If he had known there would be complaints, things would have handled differently.

He also stressed to the audience that they were in no danger and that the people, other than giving strange looks or constantly staring, would pose no problem.

Once they moved in, the three would receive 24 monitoring by one or more employees. There would also be frequent visits from family. The residents of the house would not be allowed to leave the premises without stringent supervision, he pointed out.

Mayor Pat Vice discussed the rezoning process with Reese and told him that in order to continue he would have to initiate a request for rezoning. If the request made it through a planning committee, it would be presented to the city council. Vice said the process would take no longer than thirty days to get approved.

Reese is scheduled to meet with City Administrator Cheryl Hall in order to initiate the request.



## Stereotypes Focus On:

- Individuals who “succeed” in overcoming disability, rather than focus on majority who live with theirs.
- Disability is a challenge to overcome, to be “normal.”
- People feeling better about the condition of persons with disabilities, without having to “accommodate” them.
- Notion that disability can be overcome if only the person would “try hard enough.”
- “Hero” roles often played by non-disabled actors, presenting a false picture of disability.



# Historical Perspectives

- Contributed to stereotypes:
  - “Freak Shows”
  - Disability as charity (i.e. Jerry Lewis telethon)
  - Normalization - moved out of hospitals/institutions and into community settings; many became homeless
  - Civil Rights - legislation; based on medical model
- Leaders are shifting away from medical model (basis of historical perspective) to a social justice model.

# Philosophical Perspectives

<b>Medical Model</b>	<b>Social Justice Model</b>
Disability is a deficiency or abnormality.	Disability is a difference.
Being disabled is negative.	Being disabled, in itself, is neutral.
Disability resides in the individual.	The remedy for disability related problems is a change in the interaction between the individual and society.
The agent of remedy is the professional.	The agent of remedy can be the individual, an advocate, or anyone who affects the arrangement between the individual and society.



## Disability as a Component of Diversity

- Social Justice movement is associated with multiple tenets of diversity
- At simplest level, protected through Civil Rights legislation
- Diversity within disabilities
- Disabled people in all diversity “categories”



# Legislation

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . .”  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990, amended 2008) “...a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities...” [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)



# Legalistic Confusion

- Supported through medical model
- Segregation
- Sense of obligation; scares people from using common sense
- K-12 versus post-secondary
- Shifting from guidelines as ceilings to guidelines as minimums
- Shifting to Universal Design and reducing barriers



Disability Rights Advocate with sign stating "I can't even get to the back of the bus." Example of barrier encountered by people who use wheelchairs.



# BARRIERS



## Examples of Barriers at Southeast

- Raised entrance into student body president's office.
- Accessible entrances in back of buildings with no signage indicating where entrances are.
- ADA Parking spots across Broadway.



Cartoon depicting janitor shoveling snow off of steps for students without disabilities, telling student using wheelchair that he'll have to wait for the ramp to be cleared. Example of concept of Universal Design.



# What Can Be Done About Barriers?

- Implement Universal Design
- Reduce barriers, increase inclusion
- Look at needs of many
- Acknowledge that UD is not a “one size fits all” approach
- Make existing systems work versus creating separate systems



# Examples of Universal Design

- Classroom tables/chairs vs. desklets
- Captioning
- Automatic door openers and curb cuts
- Signage with visuals and words
- Text description of images
- Varied format of information
- High contrast colors
- Adjustable tables
- Wide doorways
- Ramps instead of stairs



# Brainstorming Activity

- How do you “see” disability at Southeast?
- What barriers to think students encounter?
- What can you do as a student leader to decrease barriers and increase access?



# Leadership in Action

- Be cognizant of terminology
- Identify barriers within organizations
- Take actions that increase accessibility
  - Power point
  - Advertising
  - Location of meetings
  - Format of materials (print, technology)
  - Advocate for diversity
  - Review existing systems, policies, procedures
  - Collaborate with other organizations



# Conclusion

Thank you!

Questions – please contact any one of us

Phone: 651-2273

TDD: 651-5927

Office Website: [www.semo.edu/lapdss](http://www.semo.edu/lapdss)

Office Email: [lapdss@semo.edu](mailto:lapdss@semo.edu)

Personal Email: [mvthompson@semo.edu](mailto:mvthompson@semo.edu)