

Disability Awareness: Perceptions About Disabilities

Est. Time: 4 Hours

Objective

Understand how different world views can influence people's perceptions about disabilities and those who have them.

Overview

Perceptions about disabilities vary from person to person, as they are shaped by an individual's beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and experiences. Though our perceptions are frequently accurate, at other times these inwardly held beliefs are based on misinformation or misunderstanding. Knowledge of common perceptions and misperceptions can have a significant impact on the way in which an educator interacts with students with disabilities and their families. Recognizing misperceptions can aid educators in providing high-quality services to students as well as actively engaging parents in their child's education.

Activity

Interview three of your closest friends and ask them to offer a definition of "disability" and what it means to have one. Next, interview three acquaintances and ask the same questions. Summarize your responses to the following questions in a two-page paper.

1. How were the responses you were given different? How were they the same?
2. Was it easy for people to discuss this topic? Was it difficult? Explain.
3. Did you find it easier to discuss disabilities with friends or acquaintances? Elaborate on your answer.
4. What conclusions did you draw from this experience?