ADA Audio Conference Series
September 15, 2015

This session is scheduled to begin at 2:00pm Eastern Time

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Listening to the Webinar, continued

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Please note: This webinar is being recorded and can be accessed on the ADA Audio Conference Series website at www.ada-audio.org within 24 hours after the conclusion of the session. The edited written transcript will be posted at this same site within 7 business days following the conclusion of the session.

Customize Your View

- Resize the Whiteboard where the Presentation slides are shown to make it smaller or larger by choosing from the drop down menu located above and to the left of the whiteboard. The default is “fit page.”
Customize Your View continued

- Resize/Reposition the Chat, Participant and Audio & Video panels by “detaching” and using your mouse to reposition or “stretch/shrink”. Each panel may be detached using the ☐ icon in the upper right corner of each panel.

Technical Assistance

- If you experience any technical difficulties during today’s session:
  1. **In webinar platform:** Send a private chat message to the host by double clicking “Great Lakes ADA” in the participant list. A tab titled “Great Lakes ADA” will appear in the chat panel. Type your comment in the text box and “enter” (Keyboard - F6, Arrow up or down to locate “Great Lakes ADA” and select to send a message ); or
  2. **By Email** webinars@ada-audio.org; or
  3. **Call** 877-232-1990 (V/TTY)
Welcome!
Reporting Clearly and Accurately About Disability

Wendy Gower, Cornell University
Hannah Rudstam, Cornell University
Mary Catt, Cornell University
Peter Quinn, Cornell University
Dot Marinaccio, ACCES-VR

Our Partners

ADA Audio Webinar
Reporting Clearly and Accurately about Disability
9-15-2015
Northeast ADA Center

1-800-949-4232

Northeast ADA Center

...providing training, consultation and materials on a broad range of topics related to disability in the United States

www.northeastada.org

Our Panelists

John Robinson
President
Our Ability, Inc.

Allison Weiner Heinemann
Lecturer, Dept of Labor Relations, Law & History, ILR School, Cornell University

Peter Quinn
Multi-Media Specialist
Employment & Disability Institute, Cornell University
Our purpose & plan

Part I (30 min): Nuts & Bolts
– What you most need to know about reporting about disability
– Your questions

Part II: Panel Discussion (60 min)
– Deeper Issues: Reporting about disability
– Your questions

Disability in America

• About 57 million Americans have a disability*
• Nearly 20% of the US population
• One of the largest diversity populations in our country today
• Many disabilities are not obvious to others
• Number of people with disabilities is likely to increase in the future

Disability in America

Rate of 2013 full-time/full-year employment:

- With disabilities: 20.9%
- Without disabilities: 56.4%

Of people with disabilities who are unemployed, nearly 70% are striving to work**

The most significant barrier faced by people with disabilities seeking work is not the disability itself...

It’s the attitudes of others*


The nuts and bolts: Five key points

What do media professionals most need to know when reporting about disability?
The nuts and bolts

1. Use person-first language

Phrases to avoid

How can museums help the blind to learn about their world?

How do the disabled fare when travelling on airplanes?

Many insane people have been forced to live on the streets after de-institutionalization.

The paraplegic was forced to crawl up the stairs to the courthouse.

Epileptics now can do almost anything other people can do.
And what about these?

How can museums help people with visual disabilities to learn about their world?

People with psychiatric disability have been forced to live on the streets after deinstitutionalization.

How do people with disabilities fare when travelling on airplanes?

A man who uses a wheelchair was forced to crawl up the stairs to the court house.

People with seizure disorders can do almost anything other people can do.

“The disabled”

- It’s all about the disability
- They’re all alike
- Their talents, likes/dislikes, achievements all take a back seat
The nuts and bolts

2.
Avoid a victim mentality

What’s wrong here?

When he communicates, he is bound to a computer.

The man in question is confined to a wheelchair.

The doctor, who is herself is a stroke victim, pledges to make life better for people like her.

Two of the children in the family are cripples.

The teacher who was named in the suit suffers from epilepsy.
And what about these?

He uses a computer when communicating.  The man in question uses a wheelchair.

The doctor, who has had a stroke herself, pledges to make life better for others who have had strokes.

The teacher who was named in the suit has a seizure disorder.

Two of the children in the family use mobility devices.

Avoid these loaded terms...

Normal  Handicapped
(as opposed to “disabled”)  (as opposed to “normal”)

Lame  Retarded
They hit like a hammer for people with disabilities

Crippled  Insane

Deaf & Dumb
The nuts and bolts

3.
Not objects of inspiration; not sources of pity

The pity/heroism paradigm

Pitiful

Brave Heroes

What about just being human?
What’s wrong with these pictures?

When you google “disability”
Subtle But Powerful Negative Messages

- People with disabilities held to a higher moral standard
- It’s all about the disability
- All people with disabilities are desperately wishing they were “normal”
- “If she can do it, anyone can!”
- “Jerry’s Kids” presumably would all grow up to live lives of sweetness and dependency.

This automatic mindset about disability has cost people with disabilities innumerable jobs, opportunities and independence.

The nuts and bolts

4. About disclosure: Ask before you tell
Disability disclosure

For legal and human reasons, do not disclose a person’s disability without their permission.

Ask the person how and whether they want a disability to be portrayed.

- Some do not want to identify as a person with a disability.
- Others take an “out and proud” stance.
- Many are somewhere in-between.

Consider the role of disability in the story—Is it relevant to the story? Is it necessary to include it?

The nuts and bolts

5.

People with disabilities succeed every day; this shouldn’t be a surprise.
Why is it so surprising when we’re successful?

“I’m a lawyer and I have an obvious visual disability. So many times I’ve had people be surprised by this. It’s like people are going...Wow! He’s blind and he can think too!”

“Even though he has a disability, he exercises three times a week.”

“She doesn’t let her disability get her down. She shows up for school everyday and completes her homework.”

“Even though these people have disabilities, they’re working just like anybody else.”

“Despite being disabled, she completed a college degree!”
New Fact Sheet:
Guidelines for Writing about People with Disabilities
https://adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing

Directrices Para Escribir Acerca De Personas Con Discapacidades
https://adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing-esp

And now...

Any questions or thoughts?
Meet Our Panelists

John Robinson  
President  
Our Ability, Inc.

Allison Weiner Heinemann  
Lecturer, Dept of Labor Relations, Law & History, ILR School, Cornell University

Peter Quinn  
Multi-Media Specialist  
Employment & Disability Institute, Cornell University

Panel Discussion

What are the major issues/challenges/dilemmas you see when disability is reported in the media?

Any real-life examples?

What is the mindset or the assumptions that give rise to these issues?

What needs to happen to bring about change?
What is Our Ability?

• Creating New York Business Leadership Network (USBLN)
• Mentoring People with Disabilities
  – Employment
  – Entrepreneur opportunities
  – Education
• Disability Etiquette
• Self ID Campaigns
• Video Production
And now...

Your thoughts/questions?

Contact for More Information on this Topic:

ADA National Network
800-949-4232 (V/TTY)
wwwadata.org
(to locate the Regional Center that serves your area)
Thank you for participating in today's ADA-Audio Conference Session

The next scheduled session is:

October 20, 2015
“Social Media and Accessibility”

Register at: www.ada-audio.org or call 877-232-1990 V/TTY