



Be-free Program

For Safe Childhood... Conscious Adolescence ...
Cohesive Family ... and Humanistic Society ...

A Human Being with Disability A Humanistic Perspective...



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A Human Being with Disability

A Humanistic Perspective...



Introduction

The estimated percentage of people with various disabilities around the world is 10% of the entire earth population, and they usually struggle with their own challenges due to their disabilities in addition to the daily life challenges that we all face. Despite the various problems and challenges that face the persons with disability, and makes it difficult to practice some day to day activities, their perspective of themselves, their abilities, their humanity, family, and social position can have a huge impact on shaping their identity, life style and their ability to overcome the challenges they face.

The perspective of persons with disability of themselves is usually affected by their caregivers' perspective of them, and how they were treated in their childhood especially by their parents, families and caregivers.

When parents get a new born baby that is having a kind of disability, this baby's personality, ability to accept herself and how she lives and discover life, depends to a great extent on her parents' perspective about her, her disability, and the meaning they link it with the disability.

This perspective gets affected with a group of elements such as beliefs, opinions, explanations, ideas related to self, life, meaning of disability, social status, personal and societal culture, and other elements that form the base of how caregivers deal with their child.

There are many negative and positive perspectives that parents can adopt. This booklet summarizes some of the most important and common perspectives. It explains each negative perspective, followed by an explanation of the opposite positive perspective and its short and long term effects of each one. The booklet concludes by the humanistic perspective that sums all the positive perspectives and focuses on the humanity of the disabled child first, then at the disability, which will open horizons for parents to realize the beautiful humanistic aspects that can be found in their children and contribute in developing their skills and abilities to help them achieve their humanistic role in life.

- Perspective of Pity vs. Perspective of Ability and Responsibility.
- Perspective of guilt and blaming others vs. Perspective of accepting reality and working to change it.
- Perspective of embarrassment and shame vs. Perspective of respect and human equality.
- Perspective of Imperfection vs. Perspective of human qualification.

This booklet contains some inspiring thoughts, information and success stories that can help caregivers in taking more effective roles.



First moments

The moment that any child is born is an important moment for the parents, as they are longing to see their baby, his face, the color of his eyes, hair, features etc.

After waiting, the moment the child enters this world with a scream and makes his parents happy, arrives. But, those feelings might all change at the moment they discover that their child has a disability. Not all parents respond the same way, some accept this new reality and trust in God, while others the happy moments will suddenly turn into sad moments. Some parents might live in a state of shock and denial that varies some for a short period while others for a longer period of time. Those feelings are not confined at parents who discover the disability of their child the moment they are born, but rather it is common for those who discover it at a later stage of their child's childhood.

Those feelings play a huge role in shaping the way the parents perceive their child, which usually builds the base of how the child is accepted in the family and how he is going to be treated, which in turn affects how the child perceive himself, his disability, his status within the family and in life.

The following are some common perspectives of a child with a disability and the explanation of its effects..

First: Perspective of Pity

All parents love their children and want to see them happy without obstacles that hinder their lives, and social interaction. Some parents of children with disabilities might translate this love into a perspective of pity. Although this perspective carries love and affection, but it can negatively impact disabled children as parents will start doing things out of care, love and affection that might affect the child's personality negatively.

They will start doing the things that the child is supposed to do alone or with the support from someone else, out of fear that he might hurt himself or fail in doing something which usually happens when anybody tries to learn something new. They might also do things for their child to succeed and match the pace of achievement of his peers. If the child was given the chance to do it alone or with little help, he will be more proud of what he did because he will feel that it is his achievement with his own effort.

The perspective of pity can have a negative impact on the disabled child as it will make him a dependent person who can't employ his skills and abilities. There are many things that a child can learn through trying, failing and trying again until he succeeds, this will help him in knowing his abilities and skills. It is human nature to go beyond himself, i.e. overcome the obstacles to move from a level to a better level, in this way the child will feel the joy of achievement even if it was negligible for others, but it is a big deal for the child who achieved it.



Duaa is a child suffering from muscular dystrophy, she has some difficulties in moving her fingers to hold the thread with her right hand and inserts it in the wooden pulley with her other hand. Despite the difficulties, her desire to achieve that motivated her to keep trying, failing at times, and somewhat succeeding at others. With the encouragement of her mother, continuous motivation, and patience she succeeded and felt the biggest joy of her life when she finally inserted the thread in the wooden pulley without any help of others. This made her feel proud of herself, because she was able to overcome the obstacles, and insert the thread in all the wooden pulleys alone.

When parents give their disabled children a chance to learn through trying, failing and learning from their mistakes, they are helping them in walking on the right path that will lead them to self fulfillment, self confidence and to realize that they can do it.

A perspective that will develop the disabled person ...

A perspective of ability and responsibility

When you look at your child with the perspective of ability and responsibility, it will motivate you to encourage your child to achieve more and monitor his development patiently. Your focus will be on your child, his personal development, skills, and performance without comparing it with the abilities, skills and performance of his peers. So your measurement of his achievement will be by comparing his current status, with what he was before. True success is when the child exceeds his current development status to better and more developed levels, even if it was relatively small.

When the common perspective of a child is pity:

The child:

- Loses the chances to depend on himself within his possible capabilities.
- Loses many chances to learn which affects gaining life experiences.
- Stops at certain development level that he can't exceed.
- Starts believing that he can't achieve and succeed.
- Develops feelings of weakness and low self-esteem that deepens in him.
- Starts believing that success doesn't come from failure trials.
-



When Pity Perspective turns into a Perspective of Ability and Responsibility that contributes in developing the disabled child:

The Child:

- Starts depending on himself within his possible abilities.
- Begins using the chances that he has and learns new things that will add up to his success.
- Starts appreciating himself and respecting it.
- Tends to appreciate the support and encouragement of others.
- Develops a bigger ability and motivation to face new challenges in life.
-

Inspiring story:

Abdulrahman Bin Hasan Al-Hamdan, is a ten years old Saudi child that became famous in foreign media. Many Arabic and International athletic organizations have praised his performance, he was an example of determination, and persistence in challenging the difficult situations. His father trained him to swim since he was 3 years old, since then he achieved many outstanding results, including his participation in the Chinese Olympics 2006.

Abdulrahman has two disabilities, mental and physical disability, which required strong will, persistence, and determination that his parents nourished him with. They played a big role in his life, to support him in achieving something that will make him feel capable. They were encouraging him continuously to face the challenges and complete his training sessions that will help him to swim skillfully. Now he is a Saudi champion that makes his country and family proud every time he represents them officially.



Second: Perspective of Embarrassment and Social Shame

This perspective carries parents' feelings of embarrassment and shame with people and society because of their disabled child, which leads to withdrawal from the society. Parents with this perspective isolate their children from the community to avoid any comments, attitudes, and hints that others might do intentionally or unintentionally, that parents can't take it or cope with it.

Those parents usually care a lot about what others think about them and their child and how they evaluate them. They always feel that others are looking at them in an inappropriate and offensive way and put them in a situation lower than where they want to be in the eyes of others, and that's why they don't feel comfortable in introducing their disabled child to the society and prefer not to take the child with them to public places such as gardens, and shopping malls. They try to avoid exposure to ridicule, staring, looks of fear from the disabled child, and all the other attitudes that usually people do unintentionally, and they don't mean to hurt the parents or the child but it is a result of lack of awareness.

Thus, parents who are embarrassed from their disabled child will only take him to the necessary places such as doctor visits or educational institutes they study at. This will have a negative effect on the child's personality, as children usually understand many things that we think they don't. Children understand emotions very well, especially those with disabilities as they are usually sensitive towards how others feel about them and most importantly how their parents and family feel about them.



Perspective of embarrassment and shame reinforces in the disabled children the thought that they are different in a negative way from other children, family members, and others, and no one wants them the way they are. On the other hand, isolating disabled children contributes in depriving them from communicating with others and blending with the society, which is one of the most important factors in healthy personal and social development of the child.

Parents who are dominated by the perspective of shame and social embarrassment, are busy paying attention to what others think and say, in a way that they become unmindful to the fact that their disabled children are human beings with feelings, wants and needs just like other children, and that it is one of their rights to get equal chances just like others to play and communicate with others and blend with the society without getting isolated or marginalized.



Perspective that builds the disabled human being ... A perspective of respect and human equality

When you treat your disabled child with the perspective of respect and human equality instead of the perspective of shame and social embarrassment, you are helping him in becoming a confident person that can communicate with others, blend with the society, do the best he can and develop through his experiences with the society without fear or embarrassment. This can also benefit the society, as people will start getting used to having disabled children in the society as a normal part of it that can contribute in the developments of the society and themselves.

When the common perspective of the child is the perspective of shame and social embarrassment...

The Child:

- Loses his self-respect.
- Becomes confused, and loses his Humanistic Identity.
- Becomes weak in his communication skills, and appropriate attitudes.
- Starts believing in some negative conceptions about himself, such as isolation, and withdrawal is the natural situation for him.
- Withdraws and his social role shrinks.
-



When the perspective of shame turns into a perspective of respect and human equality that contributes in developing the disabled child:

The Child:

- ♥ Feels he is a human and starts developing self respect.
- ♥ Starts seeing his right as a human being to integrate with the society.
- ♥ Becomes more capable of communicating with others, and better at dealing with the different others.
- ♥ Behaves naturally without feeling embarrassed or afraid.
- ♥ Develops the ability to adapt and interact positively with people and life.
Learns different ways of thinking, and different life skills through watching others, interacting and learning from them.
- ♥



Inspiring Story:

Amar Boqis, a Saudi whom his disability did not stop him from excelling in his studies and working in sports journalism. At the first moments of his life, the doctor told his parents that he is disabled and suffers from total paralysis, thus he will not be able to move any part of his body except his head. His father reply was: “ All is good!” and he meant what he said and believed in his son. Since then, he took his son everywhere and didn’t care about what others might say even though sometimes what others did or said was hurtful. He believed that Ammar had equal rights just like others, he has the right to learn, to have fun in his life and to be in harmony with the society because he is an integral part of it. Ammar and his parents faced many challenges but this didn’t depress them, they never gave up. Ammar continued his university studies and passed with excellence. Today he is a successful sports journalist, proud of himself, his family, and his country is proud of him.

Third: Perspective of Guilt and Blaming Others

This perspective focuses on blaming, either one's self or others. The following is a brief about each one:

A. Feelings of guilt and blaming one's self:

Some parents might blame themselves because they believe that they caused the disability of their child. That might happen for various reasons such as the mother might blame herself for not committing to her doctor appointments during her pregnancy, or not taking the medicine regularly, not taking care of her diet, etc. The father might blame himself because he didn't take care of his wife during her pregnancy or after. Both of the parents think that they are the reason for the child's disability and blame themselves.

B. Blaming others:

Some parents might blame others because they think that they caused, in a way or another, the disability of their child, such as the doctor, the supervising nurse, or even the processes of the hospital. Some parents might blame each other for not taking care of the baby during pregnancy or during childbirth, or for genetic reasons from the spouse.

Parents can go too far in blaming, such as blaming social conditions, absence of health education, and social prevention awareness. Blaming could also be casted on the creator. There are many explanations, and meanings that are different from one person to another, which are influenced by their cultural and social awareness, perspective of life, and explanations of incidents, and the meanings they conclude with.



Feelings of guilt and self-blame, or blaming others, do not help parents in dealing positively with their disabled child and supporting him. Those feelings work sometimes as a sedatives to escape from dealing responsibly with the situation, and working seriously to deal with their reality to find out ways that will help. Their energy will be wasted on blaming themselves and blaming others which in turn will cause negative feelings that will affect the family and the disabled child. When parents focus on building their child's personality with love, care and a united vision to reach the best possible care and attention for the child, the feelings of guilt and blaming start fading away and the parents start focusing on what is best for the child.

Perspective that builds the disabled human being ... A Perspective of accepting the reality and trying to change it.

When you accept the fact that you have a disabled child and that it is your parental and humanitarian responsibility to develop your child, and change his reality into a better one, it will help you to move away from blaming yourself and others, it will also help you in directing your abilities towards developing your child's personality, socially, and educationally. You will have the ability to overcome the difficulties and to work towards the future with great power without the chains of blaming others that ties you to the past.



When the common perspective towards a child is the perspective of guilt and blaming others:

The child:

- ☀ Feels that he is a problem or a cause of a problem that others are trying to find who caused it.
- ☀ Will be deprived from parents' natural positive feelings.
- ☀ Will find difficulty in exploring areas to develop.
- ☀ Learns to blame others for everything, and might use it as a style of living.
- ☀ Gets confused with some concepts of taking responsibility, repairing errors, and developing the situation into a better one.
- ☀

When perspective of guilt and blaming others changes into a perspective of accepting the reality and turning it to a reality that can contribute in developing the disabled child:

The Child:

- 🟡 Starts developing his personality, taking responsibility without blaming himself or others.
- 🟡 Becomes ready to change his reality into a better developed reality.
- 🟡 Learns from his previous mistakes and focuses on the present.
- 🟡 Can contribute in protecting himself from negative feelings and motivate himself to work effectively.
- 🟡 Starts facing challenges, and works towards overcoming difficulties to reach his goals.
- 🟡



Inspiring Story

Abeer is a Bahraini child born with a hearing disability that was discovered later when her mother noticed that Abeer doesn't react quickly and had issues in speaking. When the doctor diagnosed Abeer with a weakness in her hearing nerve, her parents accepted it, and dealt with it with faith of being able to change her reality into a better one. They believed that it is one of her rights to learn, so they took her to a kindergarten despite her hearing and speaking impairments, and supported her in surmounting the difficulties and challenges and in finding new chances to learn.

Abeer excelled in her studies, and her mother discovered that she is gifted in drawing, so she started motivating and supporting her to advance in it. Abeer lived her life like any other child that likes to learn despite the mocking that she faced from other children because of her disability, but her parents' encouragement gave her a big motive to continue her studies. Abeer knew what she wanted to be, she finished her studies and specialized in law for her bachelor's degree, now she is a youth activist that participates in many areas.



Fourth: Perspective of Deficiency

Some parents feel inferior because they have a disabled child, they think that their child's disability indicates their deficiency. On one hand they consider their children to be a reflection of their reality and personalities, and on the other hand, their children are their extension and legacy in this world after leaving it. They are afraid that their disabled children might not end up as they planned for them to be.

Parents who feel inferior suffer from negative feelings, and sometimes frustration. They tend to compare their children with their peers, with concentration on the aspects that degrade their children, rather than the special aspects of their children. This will lead parents to miss the positive and Human aspects of their disabled children, and consequently neglecting it until it fades away.

This perspective will cause an emotional burden on the parents, which will get reflected on their expectations from their disabled child and the way they treat him. It will also place a child in a negative position towards himself, which could lead him to lose his self-confidence and doubt his human identity. This will lead the child to prove himself through negative ways that might reinforce his perspective of deficiency in his human identity. Consequently, this will cause the child to withdraw from life.

Parents are the mirror through which children see themselves, and disabled children are not different, they evaluate themselves through their parents evaluation; how they are accepted and how much faith do they have in them. This will contribute in shaping children's personality, their self- confidence and how much faith they have in their abilities.



A perspective that will build the disabled person ... A perspective of human qualification

When you treat your child through perspective of human qualification despite his disability, its type and its strength, only then will your expectations of your child become larger than the shortcomings related to his disability. Your expectation will suit his role as a human being, and will help him in building his own strong human identity. He will start feeling his humanity and self appreciation in a bigger and stronger way. Only through the parents' love will the children be able to respect themselves and take their role in life, which will create harmony, and stronger relationship between the parents and their children.

When the common perspective of a child is deficiency:

The Child:

- ♣ Loses his self confidence.
- ♣ Forms a negative image of himself, in which his shortcomings becomes bigger and his human and positive aspects decreases.
- ♣ Areas of strength will weaken and might fade away by time due to lack of development.
- ♣ Starts developing feeling of self-pity, and playing the victim game, which could lead him to put certain expectations from others that stems from these feelings.
- ♣ Loses his feeling of belonging to family and society.
- ♣

When the perspective of imperfection becomes a perspective of human qualification that contributes in developing the disabled child:

The child:

- ✦ Develops self confidence.
- ✦ Creates a positive image about himself, in which he does not focus on his shortcomings, instead he sees that he is able to challenge himself to achieve his goal.
- ✦ Sense his human dignity, and that his disability doesn't decrease his self-respect.
- ✦ Develops his areas of strength.
- ✦ Communicates with his family and with others easily, and blends with the society.
- ✦

Inspiring story:

Yasmeen is a 9 years old Egyptian child that was born with a congenital malformation of the face and visual impairment. Although her mother was facing contempt from the society and annoying comments, she saw something special in her daughter that was growing with her day after another. Yasmeen has a musical ear, once she hears a song she directly memorizes its tune. This discovery motivated her mom to work hard to develop this talent, she started training her on different musical instruments, and today she plays piano skillfully. Her mom focused on the strength areas that Yasmeen had instead of focusing on the shortcomings in her personality, this contributed in enhancing Yasmeen's talent and developing it.



A Humanistic Perspective

A humanistic perspective is a positive perspective, that can replace all the previous negative perspectives. It turns a disabled person into a "Human with Disability" where his humanity comes before his disability, rather than a "Disabled Human" where his first identity is the disability, and then comes his humanity.

The humanistic perspective of a disabled person focuses at his strength as a human being and not at his disabilities. Humanity does not weaken with disabilities and doesn't detract it. Humanity is complete with or without disability, as God honored the human being regardless of his body or disability.

When parents deal with their children based on a humanistic perspective, they send a direct and clear message to their children that they are loved and wanted for themselves and that disability is just a challenge in some areas that doesn't detract anything from themselves, or their parents' love and respect for them. Children with disability deserve to be loved and respected just like those children without any discrimination.

Moreover the parents' adoption to the humanistic perspective towards their children, directly affects the way they think and deal with them. This perspective helps them in focusing primarily on the humanistic side of the child with all what it contains of determination, ability, strength and potential power. The challenges and problems that they face because of the disability is secondary to them and the child. It helps the child as well, through investing his determination, his moral strength and his parents support to overcome some of those challenges and live with other challenges positively.

On the other hand, the humanistic perspective contributes in helping the family to overcome the difficulties and challenges in a better way, as the existence of a disabled child can bring some economic and physical burdens, that can sometimes be tiring especially when there is no appropriate support.

When parents deal with children with disability on this base, it will help them in focusing on building the child's personality effectively and bringing out the best in him, it becomes a motive to seriously start thinking of solutions to their problems and challenges.

This motive will be built on the hope to build a humanistic personality for their child through which he can embrace life in his own way, and not to bear their disabled child until he grows up peacefully without seeing his impact and value in life. The humanistic perspective gives parents a big motive to find serious solutions for their problems and challenges according to their abilities.

Parents who deal with their children based on the humanistic perspective, can direct their focus towards building and developing their strength rather than focusing on the negative points and the disability. It becomes easy for the child to find their effective role in life, to have faith in themselves and that they are worthy of living a respectful life. Thus, they start living their lives with full confidence in themselves despite what they see and hear from others.



Moreover, this perspective motivates and encourages the children to have an effective role that they activate gradually, even with simple things, and they consider themselves as effective and influential, and that their role in life is not measured by their ability to do a certain skill, but measured with the values that they applied, spread and motivated others to do, as well as the positive influence that they can leave in their family and society no matter how simple or small it is.

When you treat your disabled child based on the humanistic perspective, you move him from just living and doing the routine daily activities such as eating and sleeping into living life with its suspense, challenges and hopes. Life involves movement, renewal, hopes, opportunities, ambitions, feelings and much more that can give the child a meaning, motive, and desire for the day and tomorrow. Here his disabilities become a challenge that needs different solutions and many attempts to get to the appropriate solution to overcome the different challenges every time, but they are challenges and not a barrier in front of his dreams, capabilities, and achievements. There are many stories about people who are disabled but who challenged their circumstances and did what no one expected they could.

When the negative perspective for a disabled child transfers into a Humanistic Perspective:

The child:

- Feels his humanistic qualification which gets reflected on his self-confidence, and his faith in equality in dignity, rights, and integration with the community.
- Pivots his life around his capabilities, his strength to develop, work and achieve with what suits him and doesn't pivot it around disability nor his shortages.
- Believes that he has a humanistic role in this life, so he seeks it, to achieve it.
- Becomes a more interactive member in the society, as he considers himself to be effective and not a burden on the society even if he has some special needs.
- Tends to help others to overcome their challenges, especially those who are disabled.
- Becomes an example of hope and determination for everyone who faces challenges in his life, and contributes in motivating, and charging other with hope.
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In conclusion..

The humanistic perspective for the disabled and dealing with him on the bases of a "human with disability" can motivate the child, revive the flame of hope in his heart, and move him towards future with determination , will, and joy. Parents are more loving, and caring for their children than anyone else, and closest to them, therefore anything parents do to their children to stress their capabilities, can have a deep impact and beautiful outcome.

When parents believe that the value of any person is not what he can do in comparison to others, but what he can do according to his abilities and skills, only then will their way in treating children who are disabled, become more positive, strong and effective which will contribute in building strong confident personalities that will move steadily in life, challenge their difficulties using hope and effort to develop it to the better.



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