

Steps towards Changing Students' Attitudes to Disability

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Abstract : The aim of this study was to explore the changes that may happen in students attitudes regarding disability after attending the module 'Disability: theories, nature and experiences' designed around reflective self-awareness exercises. Literature indicates enhanced knowledge does not automatically lead to changes in attitude. Health care professionals are the most significant people to instil hope in their clients to pursue a happy life. As an advocate for people with disability, health care professionals need to believe themselves in people with disability being able to pursue a happy life as an abled body does. Researchers aimed to explore the impact of the 'Disability' module using discussion and reflective exercises, on students' way of thinking and possible changes in attitude towards disability. Students were asked to write stories from the beginning and after completing the module. A thematic analysis was applied to identify the students' way of communicating their thoughts and feelings about disable-bodied /disability before and after the module. Three major themes were identified to represent the differences before and after attending the module as: problem /solution oriented approach towards perceived problems, separating/ integrating disable/able-bodied, passive/ active role of disable-bodied and society.

Keywords : qualitative study, reflection, rehabilitation, thematic analysis

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