

Title: We Belong Here

Subtitle: A Community-Lead Conversation: Raising Diabetes Awareness and Destigmatizing Disability Identity

Description:

We Belong Here is a community-lead conversation hosted by the UMBC Delta Alpha Pi (DAPi) International Honor Society and lead by fellow student members of the UMBC College Diabetes Network Chapter.

Disability (defined by the ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment ^{1,2}) lives along a spectrum of visibility and exists in many forms, including but not limited to physical, intellectual, sensorial (e.g., speech, vision, hearing), social, and psychological/psychiatric. ³

Diabetes is included in many working definitions of ‘disability’ and under federal law, Diabetes is protected as a disability.⁴ However, peoples living with Diabetes (of all forms) often report feelings of exclusion from disability-aligned communities and experience difficulty accessing community support due to the high amounts of social stigmatization, harmful stereotyping, and the common (false) assumptions of Diabetes to be a ‘nonserious’, ‘poor lifestyle’, and/or ‘laziness-driven’ disease. ^{5,6,7} These damaging sociopolitical misconceptions and rhetoric about the Diabetes community effect those on the inside by making it more difficult to integrate Diabetes into one’s health management behaviors and personal identity, often leading to poor clinical outcomes and self-management practices. ^{6,8,9,10}

To address these barriers in which make it more difficult for peoples with disabilities / disabled peoples show up in the world, including those with Diabetes, the UMBC Delta Alpha Pi (DAPi) International Honor Society is hosting a community dialogue on Friday, April 29th from 6-7 pm (via. Google Meets). This event is offered as a space to welcome: (1) cultivation of conversation aimed to generate community and a greater sense of belonging through the act of sharing of lived experiences with disabilities, (2) raise awareness of the negative impacts of stigma as it pertains to disabilities and Diabetes, and (3) explore the dynamic interplay between factors which influence how connected we feel to the disability community through a series of pointed questions that are inspired by discussion topics from various media publications (e.g., blogs, podcasts, research articles, etc.)

All are welcome to attend this event as long as those attending support peoples with disabilities / disabled peoples and respect their lived experiences with disabilities.

Citations:

- [1] https://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm
- [2] <https://adata.org/faq/what-definition-disability-under-ada>
- [3] <https://www.nds.org.au/disability-types-and-descriptions>
- [4] <https://www.diabetes.org/tools-support/know-your-rights/discrimination/is-diabetes-a-disability>
- [5] <https://www.diabetes.org/tools-support/diabetes-prevention/diabetes-myths>
- [6] <https://www.drugwatch.com/featured/diabetes-stigma/#:~:text=Diabetes%20Stigma%3A%20The%20Blame%20and,study%20conducted%20by%20Jessica%20L.>
- [7] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5241772/>
- [8] <https://diatribe.org/diabetes-stigma-everywhere-you-can-do-something-about-it>
- [9] <https://childrenwithdiabetes.com/clinical-director/diabetes-identity/>
- [10] <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1049732320984740>