



SPEAKER:
PROFESSOR BRIAN
WATERMEYER

GLOBAL HEALTH WEBINAR SERIES

Professor Taryn Young, Head of the Department of Global Health at Stellenbosch University, cordially invites you to a seminar on

Health Sciences Training for Disability Inclusion: The Need to Engage with Emotion

Facilitated by Associate Professor Lieketseng Ned,
Division of Disability & Rehabilitation Studies, Stellenbosch University

JOIN HERE

Thursday, 13 June 2024, 12:00 – 13:30 SAST
via MS Teams

All are welcome!

**For queries contact Ms Chanelle Windvogel
on chaneller@sun.ac.za**

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ABSTRACT

Material aspects of disability inequality, such as access to quality services, housing and employment, are an urgent, worldwide concern. Less recognised though, are psychological layers of prejudice and discrimination, which play a significant role in cementing marginality. Against this backdrop, health practitioners can fill influential roles in shaping the self-identity and citizenship entitlement of people with disabilities. Yet, these professionals are, like the balance of society, socialised in environments where ableism is intrinsic, invisible, and unquestioned. Disability prejudice has both an emotional and unconscious basis, and overcoming its effects is argued to require a personal engagement with feelings relating to bodily frailty, universal dependency, mortality, and other prickly aspects of the human condition with which it is associated. These aspects are all at play in the clinical encounter between a health professional and a patient with disability, but the layered and consequential nature of such interactions for the flourishing and empowerment of people with disabilities, as well as the disability movement as a whole, are poorly understood. Evidence suggests that mere tuition in social justice has limited effects on behaviour in relation to issues of inequality and exclusion. In this paper I reflect on how socialisation in an ableist world can shape how disability is positioned in the clinical encounter, potentially leading to interactions which embed inequality. Drawing on my own experience as disability studies scholar and disabled person, I then describe a teaching method for facilitating shifts in the personal relationships which health sciences students have to disability, in the context of broader attempts to create clinical spaces and relationships in which empathy and self-compassion are encouraged.





ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Brian Watermeyer is associate professor at the Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies, in the Department of Global Health at Stellenbosch University. He trained as a clinical psychologist (M.A. {Clin. Psych.}) at the University of Cape Town, before completing a doctorate in psychology (D. Phil), focusing on disability studies, at Stellenbosch University.

He was first editor of South Africa's first major text in disability studies, entitled *Disability and Social Change: A South African Agenda*, published in 2006 (HSRC Press). His second book, *Towards a Contextual Psychology of Disablism*, was published internationally by Routledge in 2013. His most recent book is *The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Citizenship in the Global South* (New York: Palgrave), edited by B Watermeyer, J. McKenzie and L. Swartz (2019). Prof Watermeyer (who himself lives with severe visual impairment) has an extensive list of international journal publications, book chapters, and media appearances as a disability scholar and activist.

He has taught on a host of postgraduate programmes at Stellenbosch University, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape, in disability studies, clinical psychology, general psychology, medicine and rehabilitation science.

