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Professional Certificate in Disability Studies in Coaching and Mentoring

## Foundations of Disability Studies

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**Accommodation:** An adjustment or modification made to the environment, equipment, or tasks to enable a person with a disability to participate fully in an activity or program. Accommodations can include providing assistive technology, changing the physical layout of a space, or altering the way instructions are given.

**ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act):** A comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The ADA ensures that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

**Advocacy:** The act of supporting or promoting the rights of individuals with disabilities, including speaking up for their needs, fighting for their rights, and working to create a more inclusive and accessible society. Advocacy can take many forms, such as lobbying for policy changes, raising awareness, or providing direct support to individuals in need.

**Assistive Technology:** Any device, tool, or equipment that helps people with disabilities perform tasks that they would otherwise have difficulty or inability to accomplish on their own. Assistive technology can range from simple tools like magnifying glasses to complex devices like speech-to-text software.

**Accessibility:** The degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is usable by people with disabilities, including those with mobility, sensory, cognitive, or other impairments. Accessibility ensures that everyone, regardless of ability, can access and use the same resources and opportunities.

**Barrier:** Anything that prevents or restricts the full participation of individuals with disabilities in society. Barriers can be physical (e.g., stairs without ramps), attitudinal (e.g., stereotypes and discrimination), or systemic (e.g., inaccessible policies and practices). Removing barriers is essential for creating an inclusive and equitable society.

**Disability:** A physical, cognitive, sensory, or emotional impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent, visible or invisible, and may require accommodations or support to enable individuals to fully participate in society.

**Disability Rights:** The legal, social, and political rights of individuals with disabilities to equal treatment, equal access, and equal opportunities in all aspects of life. Disability rights movements advocate for the recognition and protection of these rights, including the right to education, employment, healthcare, and independent living.

**Disability Studies:** An interdisciplinary field of study that examines the social, cultural, political, and historical aspects of disability. Disability studies challenges traditional medical and individual models of disability, focusing instead on the social construction of disability, the impact of societal attitudes and structures, and

the experiences of disabled people.

**Empowerment:** The process of enabling individuals with disabilities to gain control over their lives, make their own choices, and advocate for their rights. Empowerment involves building self-confidence, developing skills, and fostering independence to promote self-determination and equal participation in society.

**Inclusion:** The practice of ensuring that individuals with disabilities are fully involved and respected in all aspects of life, including education, employment, recreation, and social activities. Inclusion promotes diversity, equity, and belonging by valuing and accommodating the unique abilities and perspectives of all individuals.

**Intersectionality:** The interconnected nature of social categories like race, gender, class, and disability, which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage. Understanding intersectionality is essential for recognizing the multiple dimensions of identity and addressing the complex barriers that individuals with disabilities face.

**Neurodiversity:** The concept that neurological differences like autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other cognitive variations are natural and valuable forms of human diversity. Neurodiversity challenges the pathologizing and stigmatizing of neurological differences, advocating instead for acceptance, accommodation, and support for neurodivergent individuals.

**Reasonable Accommodation:** An adjustment or modification made to enable a person with a disability to perform essential job functions or participate in a program, as required by law. Reasonable accommodations are individualized, effective, and not overly burdensome on the employer or organization, ensuring equal access and opportunity for all.

**Social Model of Disability:** A framework that views disability as a result of social barriers, attitudes, and exclusion, rather than the individual's impairment or condition. The social model emphasizes the need to remove environmental, communication, and attitudinal barriers to enable full participation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities.

**Universal Design:** The design of products, environments, and services that are usable by all people, regardless of age, ability, or status. Universal design principles aim to create inclusive and accessible spaces that accommodate diverse needs and preferences, minimizing the need for special adaptations or accommodations.

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