SoCIAl And CulturAl fACtS thAt ContrIBute to dISABIlIty froM tdSj2e

Social and Cultural Environmental Factors That Create or Contribute to Disability*

War, terrorism
Violent crime — shootings, rapes, knifings, beatings
Drug and alcohol abuse
Lack of basic resources — water, food, clothing, shelter
Tolerance of dangerous working conditions
Neglect of children
Low public safety standards
Degradation of the environment by contaminating water, air, food
Daily grind, overwork and stress of poverty
Lack of medical care, inappropriate medical care — prenatal care, inoculations
Improved medical techniques and practices increase the numbers of people with disabilities who live or people live long enough to become disabled


• Increase in the pace of life that leads to accidents, stress, alcohol, and drug abuse, increased performance/output expectations, lack of rest, and recreation
• Physical structure and social organization of society – physical barriers in architecture, inadequate public transportation, communication systems, inflexible work arrangements
• Failure to give people the amount and kind of assistance needed to participate fully in public sphere, especially work and school
• Assumption that temporarily able-bodied people do not receive assistance (for example job training, social support, child care, transportation, and communication assistance is taken for granted)
• These social factors affect some groups more than others because of racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism

### Cultural Factors Contributing to the Construction of Disability

- Lack of representation and experiences of people with disabilities
- Pervasive stereotypes of people with disabilities
- Stigmatization of physical and mental limitations
- The cultural attitude that physical or mental differences that deviate from “normal,” but do not in and of themselves affect ability, are disabling (eg., facial scarring)
- Invisibility, stigmatization, stereotypes of disabilities and people with disabilities feed fear, ignorance, and pity in temporarily able-bodied people
- Assumption that disability is a personal, family problem rather than a matter of social responsibility