

**My clinician has a disability? Client perspectives on professionalism of clinicians with disabilities suggest greater impact with diversity.**

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**Introduction:** Clinicians with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in healthcare professions, including occupational therapy. Literature suggests that professional competencies are established from an ableist viewpoint, forming institutional barriers for clinicians with disabilities. Often 'the safety of the client' is raised when discrediting the competencies of clinicians with disabilities. However, the client's perspective on the professional competency of clinicians with disabilities has yet to be investigated.

**Objectives:** This research sought to investigate the client's perspective of the professional behaviours of clinicians with disabilities.

**Method:** Through focus groups and interviews, 27 participants, both with and without a disability, were asked about their expectations and perceptions of professionalism from clinicians with disabilities. Participants who had interacted with clinicians with a disability shared their actual experience. Themes were developed through a thematic analysis of the qualitative data.

**Results:** Preliminary themes include '*I prefer to have a clinician with a disability*' where participants discussed the advantage of the lived experience on the clinician's professionalism, '*It depends*' where participants set boundaries of when disability might interfere with the clinician's professionalism.

**Conclusion:** This research may assist in decreasing the stigma towards clinicians with disabilities and increase diversity within occupational therapy. Exploring the client perspective of clinicians' professionalism may enable the participation of clinicians with disabilities, by shifting the definition of professionalism, thereby decreasing their marginalization in their profession. This may position the profession to adopt an inclusive non-ableist viewpoint of clinicians with disabilities and professionalism.