

## **Book Review**

**Title:** *Aging With A Disability: What the Clinician Needs to Know*

**Editors:** Bryan Kemp & Laura Mosqueda

**Publisher:** Johns Hopkins, 2004

Paper, ISBN: 0-8018-7817-9, 307 pp.

**Cost:** \$24.95 USD

**Reviewer:** Patricia Duffley-Renow

Increased life expectancy as a result of advances in medical treatment and technology has also extended the life span of individuals with disabilities. Clinicians, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities need to be aware of cognitive, physiological, and “Quality of Life” factors that may be affected as a result of the aging process.

*Aging With A Disability: What the Clinician Needs to Know*, takes a comprehensive look at aging in individuals who have a disability. The editors have extensive backgrounds in geriatrics and rehabilitation. They provide not only their perspectives but also those of aging and disability from individuals with disabilities.

Stated goals of the book include: “The desire to influence rehabilitation practice and to make practitioners aware that aging is a lifelong process not one that begins after a certain age. It is written primarily for clinicians but individuals who have disabilities and their caregivers will benefit from it as well” (p. 4). The book provides a comprehensive view of living with a disability and possible changes from aging. Changes may occur sooner in individuals with disabilities. Being aware of some dynamics of the aging process may enable a person with a disability, clinician, or caregiver to prepare for those changes.

The book is divided into five sections. Within each section are several chapters. Vignettes by individuals with disabilities are dispersed throughout the book to remind the reader that individuals with disabilities lives are affected by these changes.

Section One focuses on the perspective of an individual who lives with a disability and continues with the family’s perspective. Section Two introduces physiological changes and “Quality of Life” issues for families and caregivers. In Section Three, treatment options are discussed and functional changes are addressed that pertain to specific impairments, working as we age, and assistive technology. The section on assistive technology is limited to wheelchairs and daily living devices. This area needs to be expanded to include devices that can assist in the work environment and devices that can enhance quality of life, such as augmentative communication devices. Specific conditions are discussed in Section Four, but there is a lack of information on sensory impairments and neuromuscular disease. The book concludes with discussion of health care policy and opinions from providers and consumers of this service.

In closing, *Aging With a Disability: What the Clinician Needs to Know* is a primer on disability issues for clinicians. It should be included in Vocational Rehabilitation Programs as required reading. Information for the book was derived from research studies and discussions with individuals with disabilities over the past twenty years. Awareness of the aging process can

help individuals make informed choices about their vocational goals and prepare for the future. Family members and caregivers of an individual with a disability will find this book valuable as an ongoing reference.