ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Perceptions of Disabilities
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ABSTRACT: Participants (N=76) were given one of three scenarios where they were approaching a person waiting at the same bus stop as them. The person they approached was either an able-bodied person, a person with a mental disability, or a person with a physical disability. They were then asked to answer a series of 5 questions about their perceptions of that person on 1 to 10 scale. Each scenario contained the same questions about perception. A One-Way ANOVA test suggested that individuals were more likely to sit by someone with a physical disability than a mental disability (M=2.84, SD= 2.06), p=.000. Participants were also more likely to converse with an individual with a physical disability than a mental disability (M=3.48, SD=1.83), p=.000. Also, participants were more likely to offer assistance to a person with a physical disability than a mental disability (M=8.35, SD=1.50), p=.000. Participants perceived people with a physical disability as having a higher intellectual ability than people with a mental disability (M=6.95, SD=1.43), p=.013. There was no significant difference of perceptions of productivity in society between the physical disability and the mental disability (M=5.60, SD=2.04), p=.369. Overall, the results provided evidence that people in general have a more negative perceptions towards individuals with a mental disability than with a physical disability.