

# Ethical Dilemmas of Teachers with Physical Disabilities for Integration into Schools

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# Teachers with disabilities in the education system

- There are no formal assessments of how many teachers with disabilities are in the Israeli education system.
- Teachers with disabilities make a unique contribution to pupils who are perceived as "different"
- Teachers with disabilities have a positive effect on the ways that children perceive of people who are disabled

Anderson, Keller & Karp, 1998; Duquette, 2000; Dvir 2013;

Vagel & Sharoni, 2009



# What Is an Ethical Dilemma?

- An ethical dilemma is a choice between several options, in which each specific option has its disadvantages and obstacles that make the decision harder.
- An ethical dilemma always contains different values that contradict each other.

Glanz, J. (2010). Justice and caring: Power, politics, and ethics in strategic leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 38(1), 66-86.

Burkhardt, M. A., & Nathaniel, A. K. (2002). *Ethics and issues in contemporary nursing* (2nd ed.). New York: Delmar.



# Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative Research
  - ▶ Data collection: Multiple In-depth interviews
  - ▶ Participants: 20 teachers (4 men & 16 women) with physical disabilities
    - ▶ Teachers with a motor disability
    - ▶ teachers with a sensory disability
    - ▶ Teachers with health disabilities (chronic illnesses)
  - ▶ Data analysis based on Ground Theory
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# Ethical Dilemmas of Teachers with Physical Disabilities

- ▶ Personal well-being dilemma
  - ▶ Coming-out-of-the-disability-closet dilemma
  - ▶ Classroom management dilemma
  - ▶ Equality dilemma
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# Coming-out-of-the-disability-closet dilemma

- Whether or not to reveal the disability to the school staff?

*"I had many dilemmas, especially whether or not to tell the staff and the school principal. On the one hand, I was carrying this really big secret which was very hard, and on the other hand, there is a price for telling." (Dana).*

# Classroom management dilemma

- ▶ How to conduct a lesson without letting the disability interfere in any way

**“In the first class, they [the kids] had so many questions about my blindness. So, I decided to dedicate the whole first lesson to this subject” (Gal).**

**“Once, my insulin pump started beeping during class. The beep is relatively quiet and sounds like a cell phone [...]. I looked into my bag, as if I was looking for the phone ringing. I spoke louder. Much louder” (Rachel)**



# Equality dilemma

- Should one try to appear "like all the other teachers" or take advantage of the legal rights regarding reasonable adjustments?

**"Because of my disability, I know I have to be a hundred times better than all the others." (Sofia)**

**"When there was a field trip scheduled, I came with my private car and took the crutches in the back of the car." (Jonathan).**

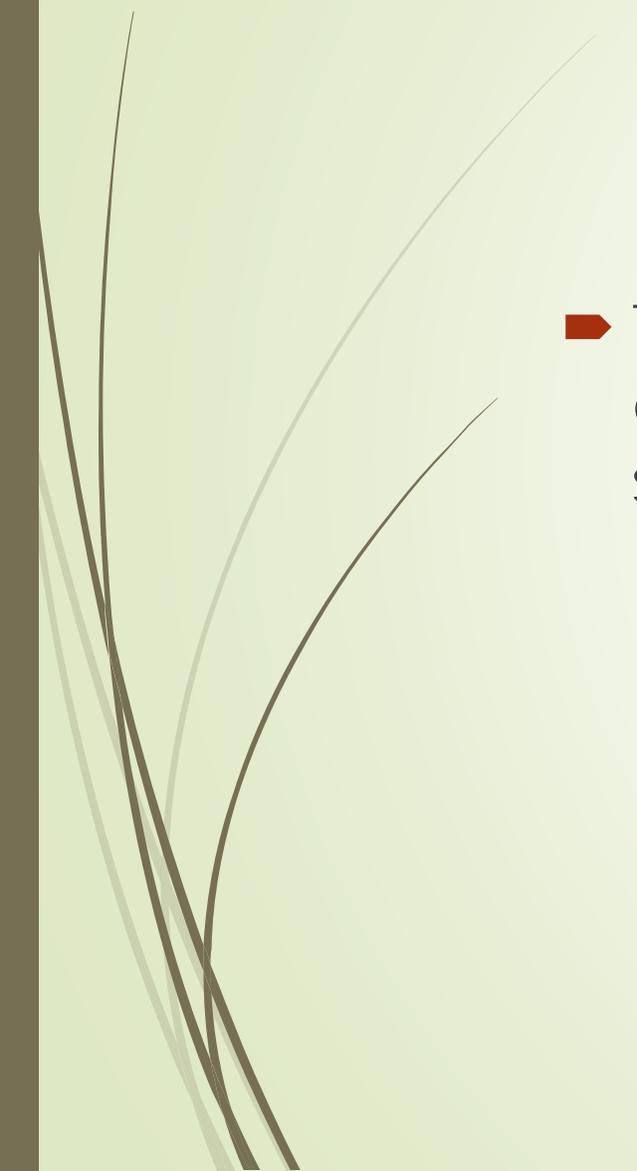


# Conclusions

- ▶ Even though teachers' dilemmas are diverse and complex, most of them concern how the teacher is perceived by others
  - ▶ Many teachers fear that if their disability becomes to "obvious" they would be rejected by their colleagues
  - ▶ Teachers who have an invisible disability struggle more with allowing their disability "to have a place" in their professional life
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# Recommendations

- ▶ The education system should provide support and consultation to teachers with disabilities, and to the school staff who work with them
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**Thank you**