

the modern pursuit of human perfection: defining who is worthy of life

a public dialogue
on bioethics, medical
ethics and the
implications for people
with disabilities

October 23, 2008
7:00 pm

University of Alberta,
ETLC 1-013,
The Suncor Lecture Theatre
Edmonton, Alberta

Hosted by

Canadian Association for Community Living,
Alberta Association for Community Living
and the What Sorts Network

See www.whatsorts.net for related
activities October 23-25th.

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In Canadian history, debates have raged over mercy killings, euthanasia and selective non-treatment. As new medical technologies are developed, new debates are emerging as to what sorts of people there should be. Increasingly these practices and the ethics governing them are being developed and applied with little opportunity for public debate. Yet, the implications are not only affecting the world tomorrow but are impacting the lives of people with disabilities today.

In many ways these are not new debates. Throughout history different cultures have called for the elimination of people with disabilities, while others have argued that people with disabilities are human and necessary to the human race. In Alberta, the embrace of eugenics and the mass involuntary sterilization of thousands of Albertans (individuals with developmental disabilities, Aboriginal women, immigrant women) is but one reflection of the desire of some to perfect the human race.

For many, the uncomfortable history of the eugenics movement and its relationship with genetic technologies, have raised flags of concern about the potential harms that could arise for people with disabilities from the use of the tools of genetic technologies. This raises many profound questions about health care policy and practice.

This FREE public dialogue will explore the above critical questions and others, such as: Is genetic information neutral? Who should decide what constitutes valued human life? What values should govern bio-ethics and medical ethics? What does it mean to imagine a world without people with disabilities? How does the modern approach to bio-ethics and medical ethics differ from past eugenic practices?

Join us to engage in this dialogue and share your thoughts, experiences and opinions on these critical issues.

This public dialogue is part of a national series, *A Matter of Diversity*, happening across Canada as part of CACL's 50th Anniversary. The purpose of the public dialogue series is to speak with Canadians and to create a public space to promote the values and beliefs that foster inclusive communities, and to explore common ground with others who may share different views and perspectives.



50 years

Canadian
Association for
Community Living

Diversity includes.