#disABILITY

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Logan Utah  
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#disABILITY  
e-lore: Hashtag

Informant:  
Brooke D is a 28-year-old woman who loves working with children. She holds the following degrees: Bachelor's of Science with a Psychology Major and a Pure Mathematics Minor and Masters of Occupational Therapy. Brooke has worked with people with disabilities since 2005 in a multitude of settings. She is passionate about making a difference in people's lives and feels strongly that her first focus should be on building rapport and getting to know the goals of the people with whom she works. Since 2015, she has worked as an Occupational Therapist (OT) in a public school in Illinois and provides home health therapy services for children ages 0-3. Prior to that, she worked for two years as a OT in a pediatric outpatient hospital setting.

Brooke lives in Illinois with her dog and fiancé. She enjoys spending time outdoors. During the summer, most of her weekends are spent fishing and staying at a lake house in central Wisconsin. During the winter, she enjoys shooting on an archery league with her fiancé and curled up inside with a warm drink and a book. Brooke is close to her family and feels it is a priority to maintain good family relationships.

Context:  
I interviewed Brooke over the computer using a program called Zoom in order to record the interview. She was at her home in Illinois at the time and I was at home in Logan in my living room. I chose to talk to Brooke because of her involvement with the disability community. This because I am currently enrolled in a social justice course so when it came time to collect folklore I decided I would turn to the disability community for my content.

The reason this particular hashtag qualifies as folklore is because “#disability” has a widespread use on both Facebook and Twitter and because of the unique twist to this particular hashtag. The emphasis created by the contrast of upper and lowercase letters is a great example of the dynamic element of folklore. Brooke came across this hashtag on Facebook and has seen it used by different people. She unfortunately didn’t have a specific example for me, but she did mention that one particular business, Gigi’s Playhouse, was one account that had used the hashtag. I got her interpretation of the hashtag and then found some examples of the hashtag in use as shown below.
I thought that was really interesting the way people are hashtagging disability like the “d-i-s” is lowercase and the “ability” is uppercase. (Oh okay) Um so it’s like “look what I can do with my disability” or like “look at all my abilities”.

Brooke seemed quite happy about this hashtag and said that all the interactions she saw with the hashtag were positive. Her attitude toward the hashtag was optimistic and she appreciated the focus on accomplishment rather than incapability as the word “disability” might imply. She said that she personally wouldn’t use the hashtag, but not because she didn’t like it. She just doesn’t post much on social media in general and so didn’t see herself as using the hashtag. She said that she might search for the hashtag specifically to see what is being said on the topic.