Funny Looking Kid

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FLK
Occupational Folklore

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 an 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.

Brooke says she learned this abbreviation term during her work at a hospital. She believes the term was originally a true medical diagnosis for children that looked differently than other children that was later deemed inappropriate and therefore the use of the word was absolved on the record and its use was publicly discouraged. Off the record the term still circulates in the medical, educational, and therapy fields. This term is only used when speaking to others within these fields and is not used while talking with the children or their parents.

Text:
So FLK is like stands for “funny looking kid” and it’s not like meant as a mean…thing.

Texture:
Brooke emphasized that when using this term it is meant purely indicatively and that it is absolutely not derogatory. She says that she uses FLK when conveying a message she might not otherwise know how to articulate to describe a suspected syndrome or genetic condition when she is referring children to a doctor or when she is discussing a child with a colleague.