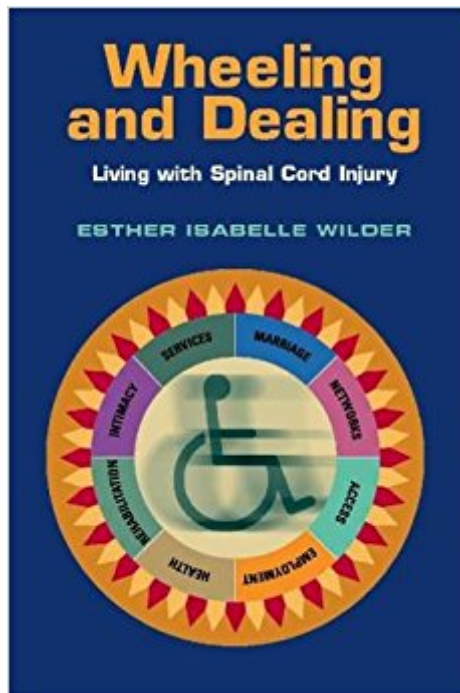




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# Wheeling And Dealing: Living With Spinal Cord Injury



## Synopsis

Before his motorcycle accident, Travis saw himself becoming a pro football player. Now, paralyzed from the nipple down, he says, "At times it's a pain in the ass-literally and figuratively. But it allows me to not be as threatening to some people [the way I was when] I was still an athlete. Because a lot of times male interaction is done on the basis of pissing contests: I'm bigger, I'm tougher, I'm stronger, I'm smarter. When you're in a chair, they don't look at you like that." • At the same time, Travis complains that many people are uncomfortable interacting with him because of his disability. "I would rather you make a mistake and deal with me than not deal with me at all." • Meghan is a high-level quadriplegic, living alone, who uses a power wheelchair and requires daily attendant care. She laments, "There are so many people who think we're asexual, we're not pretty, and we're creeps and weirdoes." • To dispel this myth, she envisions a fashion show of women in wheelchairs parading down a runway. Meghan has been involved in a number of sexual relationships since sustaining her injury. While she doesn't think her disability has diminished her sexual pleasure, she feels that it has affected her sexual performance: "Well, you can't move it. You can't, like, bump and grind." In 32 unusually frank in-depth interviews like these, the men and women in this book freely discuss their sex lives, their beliefs about God, how they want others to treat them, and whether they want to walk again. In each chapter the author presents their complex voices and comprehensive research about different facets of spinal cord injury (SCI). *Wheeling and Dealing* explores the extent to which people with spinal cord injury locate their challenges in their physical impairments or in the social environment. Some disagree with those disability activists who focus almost exclusively on the latter, but the author examines this issue in depth. Topics include:--Physical health from degrees of loss of function to problems like pressure sores, temperature regulation, and bladder control.--The stages of psychological adjustment and rehabilitation.--Obstacles to sexual intimacy, treatment of erectile dysfunction, and new sources of sexual pleasure and emotional intimacy.--Religion and spirituality.--Social and political beliefs, with those with SCI weighing in on everything from welfare services to embryonic stem cell research.--Dating, marriage, and parenting.--Friendship networks and social supports; concerns about transportation and accessibility; stigma.--Education, employment, and economic consequences. This book is the recipient of the 2004 Norman L. and Roselea J. Goldberg Prize from Vanderbilt University Press for the best project in the area of medicine.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is very well researched and covers a wide range of theories relating to disability and impairment - social, psychological and biological. A diverse range of issues are discussed including, education, friendship, psychological adjustment and sexual identity. Central to the book are 32 in-depth interviews with people with spinal cord injuries. Quotations from these interviews are interspersed throughout the text bringing the theories and the topic of each chapter to life in a powerful way. --Sally French, Open University  
A meticulously researched study of physical disability. What is particularly useful about this book is that Wilder marries social science and biomedical perspectives in her analysis. Moreover, the range of topics covered by the author will make this a useful text in the disciplines of nursing, social work, and health studies. --Jacqueline Low, University of New Brunswick - Fredericton

Esther Isabelle Wilder teaches sociology at Lehman College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. Current research focuses on women's reproductive health, the sociology of disability, and ethnic and religious differences in healthcare. Her work has appeared in more than a dozen journals. She is co-author of *Voices from the Heartland: Needs and Rights of Individuals with Disabilities* (Brookline, 2005).

I have read many books on spinal cord injury and this one ranks very high. The discussions of statistics on spinal cord injury are great. I have not seen a better discussion of the psychological and sociological aspects of spinal cord injury. If you are doing research on spinal cord injury, this book is

a definite must in your collection.

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