

Pioneer Scheme Day-release programme

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Horselethill Road, Glasgow

Social model of disability

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What is disability?

The understanding of disability has evolved over time and remains a contested issue. It has been framed as a health issue, a discrimination issue, and a human rights issue.

In 2008, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) outlined general obligations for Member States to adhere to, including protecting the right to health (Article 25), the right to rehabilitation and habilitation, the right to live in the community, and the right to have a say in their own treatment.

Statistics of disability

- WHO estimates there are 1 billion disabled people globally i.e. 1/7
- 13 million disabled people in UK
- Females more affected than males
- Prevalence highest amongst the most deprived

Classification:

This has been contentious and has ranged from the more biomedical approach of the WHO (1980), which focussed on functional limitation and development of services around dependent and needy individuals, to the more social models of disability, which frame it as a societal issue. These were driven by strong social and civil rights movements and women's movements in both Europe and the USA.

"We are society, as much as anybody, and cannot be considered in isolation from it."

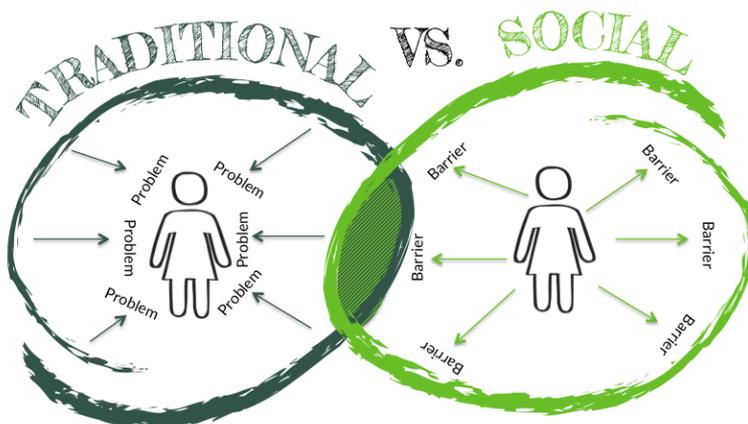
- Paul Hunt

"Disability is an evolving concept... and results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others"

- UNCRPD Article 1

Paradigm shift: the Social model of disability

Social Model



Disablism

A form of social oppression involving the social imposition of restrictions of activity on people with impairment and the socially engendered undermining of their psycho-emotional wellbeing (Thomas, 2007: 73)

Reconfigures disablism as another form of oppression similar to heter/sexism and racism.

Legislation

Disabled people recognised as a social group in:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Equality Act 2010
- UNCRPD 2008

Disability as social justice

Two distinct forms of Justice:

- Redistribution
- Recognition

Redistribution – relates to socio-economic injustice. Rooted in political-economic structures. Struggle over redistribution of resources (exploitation, economic marginalisation, deprivation)

- Data from Joseph Rowntree Foundation showing that 5million disabled people in the UK live in poverty (60% below median income)
- Regardless of disability benefits, 30% of people in families containing a disabled person are in poverty and this has risen in the last year. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/data/percentage-people-poverty-disability-status>
- 59% of households with children with a disabled person in material deprivation
- Under occupancy charge ('bedroom tax') affects disabled households disproportionately
- *Work and Education:*
- Poverty as cause and effect of Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Children with SEN are more likely to be excluded
- Disabled adults are 3 times less likely as others to have no qualifications
- From the 1970s the chances of a low qualified disabled male working halved from 77% to 38% in the 2000s
- <https://www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015/disability>
- *Disability and Austerity:*
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) replaced with PIP
- Independent Living Fund closed
- Employment and support allowance: 580% increase in sanctions from March 2013-14
- UK is 1st country in the world investigated by UN for grave and systematic violations of the disabled people's rights; damning report findings released in 2016
- Critique of WCA, based on Waddell & Aylward's appropriation of Engel's bio-psycho-social model – not tested empirically – now a causal explanation of sickness absence:
- *"For most people with common health problems, decisions about being (un)fit for work, taking sickness absence or claiming benefits are conscious and rational decisions, free choices with full awareness and intent, for which they must take responsibility."*
- Many of those concerned about disabled people's rights feel this approach is very much blaming the victim all over again:
https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/58235/1/1351_Shakespeare.pdf

Recognition – cultural and symbolic injustice, involving: cultural domination, non-recognition, disrespect

"Misrecognition is social subordination in the sense of being prevented from participating as a peer in social life" (Fraser, 2001: 24)

'Supercrrips'

Yes, I can

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=locLkk3aYlk>

Yes I can, if

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjvYZ2jvvp8>

Health of disabled people

Disability is not a health issue but disabled people are more likely to experience health inequalities... why?

- Some health conditions or impairments involve increased risk of secondary health conditions
- Exposed to social determinants of health increases the risk of both health conditions or impairments associated with disability and poor health
- Disablism increases the exposure to social determinants of poor health
- Disablism reduces access to effective health care
 - Greater risk of premature death, violence, unintentional injury
 - Confidential inquiry – over 1/3 deaths deemed avoidable
- Unmet health needs:
 - Sexual and reproductive health services
 - Dental care
 - Mental health care
 - 'Diagnostic overshadowing' – e.g. "it's all due to your Downs...."
 - Communication issues: third party
 - Staff attitudes
 - DNACPR status; physical & chemicals restraints

Further Resources/Reading

Meet the Superhumans: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NY7Zp96jYZM>

Contrast this with scenes of protesters against ATOS (sponsors of Paralympics) outside DWP: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcbEtSATE_U

What is the social model of disability? (Video by Scope): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0e24rfTZ2CQ&feature=trueview-instream>

Don't Look Down on Me: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mD_PWU6K514 (A documentary by Jonathan Novick about his experiences in New York City as a little person with dwarfism).

Things people with downs syndrome are tired of hearing BBC3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAPmGW-GDHA>

Where are disabled health professionals? Rachael's story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwBzb7m2n64>

Thomas, C (2007) Sociologies of Disability and Illness, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Briant, E., Watson, N., and Philo, G. (2011) Bad News for Disabled People: How the Newspapers are Reporting Disability. Project Report. Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research and Glasgow Media Unit, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK. <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/57499/>