

The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Social and Medical Models of Mental Health

The social model of disability

The social model of disability is the way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people.

This model says that an individual is disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things.

(Scope, 2019)

The medical model of disability

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences.

The medical model looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the individual needs. They believe it creates low expectations and leads to people losing their independence, choice and control in their lives.

(Scope, 2019)

Mental health

Mental ill-health is very common. It affects one in four people in the course of their lives. The impacts start early as the onset of mental ill health often starts in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. But access to skilled assessment and excellent treatments is limited. The majority go untreated as on average just thirty per cent of those with mental ill health access care.

Dr Geraldine Strathdee OBE (2015)

Social model thinking

- Individual is valued
- Strengths and needs defined by self and others
- Relationships nurtured
- Identity barriers and development solutions
- Diversity welcomes all
- Society evolves

(Adapted from Micheline Mason, 1994, R. Rieser 2000)

Medical model thinking

- individual is faulty
- Impairment becomes focus of attention
 - Diagnosis
 - Labelling
- Segregation and alternative services
- Ordinary needs put on hold
- Re-entry if normal enough or permanent exclusion
- Society remains unchanged

(Adapted from Micheline Mason, 1994, R. Rieser 2000)

Social model

- Voice of individual heard
- Self defined goals

(Adapted from Larkin, 2011: 46)

Medical model

- Dependent on medical care
- Individualistic model

(Adapted from Larkin, 2011: 34-35)

References

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