Understanding Disability

Outline

1. Introduction to Disability
2. Categories of Disabilities
3. Characteristics and Needs of Persons with Disabilities
4. Legal and Social Contexts
5. Final Projects and Reflections

Introduction to Disability

Impairment refers to a physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory condition.

Barriers are things such as inaccessible infrastructure, discriminatory attitudes, or lack of support that limit an individual's ability to function and participate fully

*"Without these **barriers,** the **impairment** alone does not result in **disability.***

Disability is a substantial functional limitation of a person's daily life activities caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment and environment barriers, resulting in limited participation in society on equal basis with others.

Disability = Impairment + Barrier

Disability Models

Human rights is a framework that views persons with disabilities as rights-holders and active members of society who are entitled to full participation and equal treatment in all aspects of life.

It focuses on **dignity**, **autonomy**, **equality**, **non-discrimination**, and inclusion rather than seeing disability as a problem to be "fixed" or as a personal tragedy. on equal basis with others.

Disability Models

Charity models is an outdated and disempowering framework that views persons with disabilities as passive recipients of help, pity, or benevolence rather than as individuals with rights and potential.

Sees disability as a **tragedy**, promotes **dependence**, **Supports segregation**. Instead of empowering persons with disabilities, it encourages reliance on charity, donations, or welfare.

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Medical models is a traditional way of understanding disability that sees it as a problem or defect within the individual, something that needs to be **treated, cured**, or **fixed** by medical professionals.

Sees disability as a **medical condition**, focus on **diagnosis and treatment**, the **individual is the problem**, **professionals as decision-makers**: Doctors and specialists are seen as the experts who know what is best for the person with a disability.

Disability Models

Model	View of Disability	Focus	Role of Society
Medical	An individual problem	Cure or treatment	Passive not expected to change
Social	Created by societal barriers	Removing barriers	Active must remove barriers
Human Rights	A diversity issue and rights matter	Equality, dignity, inclusion	Obligated to ensure rights and inclusion

Key Terms

- Impairment and Disability

- Persons with disability

- Disabled person (It's always a person first and then the disability not the disability first)

- **Multiple Disabilities:** Individuals who have more than one type of disability. For instance, a person may have both a physical and sensory disability.

Physical Disability: This includes impairments that limit physical function, mobility, dexterity, or stamina. Examples include cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and spinal cord injuries.

The Role of ICT: ICT supports persons with physical disabilities by: Removing communication and access barriers. Enabling education and employment. Enhancing independence and participation.

Sensory Disability: This involves impairments related to the senses, such as vision and hearing. Examples include blindness, low vision, deafness, and hard of hearing.

The Role of ICT:
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can greatly enhance the lives of persons with sensory disabilities such as those who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing by promoting accessibility, inclusion, communication, education, and independence.

Intellectual Disability: This refers to significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, covering social and practical skills. Examples include Down syndrome and developmental delays.

The role of ICT: ICT can empower persons with intellectual disabilities by making learning easier, communication possible, and everyday life more manageable.

Mental Disability: This includes a range of mental health conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behavior. Examples include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia.

Characteristics of Persons with Disabilities

Identifying persons with disabilities involves recognizing various characteristics based on the type of disability

Physical Disability: May use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, crutches, or prosthetics. There might be visible signs such as difficulty walking or performing tasks requiring fine motor skills.

Sensory Disability: For vision impairment, individuals may use canes, guide dogs, or Braille. For hearing impairment, they might use hearing aids, cochlear implants, or rely on sign language.

Intellectual Disability: May show developmental delays, difficulty with problem-solving or understanding complex concepts, and challenges with daily living skills.

Mental Disability: Signs include changes in mood, behavior, or thinking. Individuals might have difficulty managing emotions, maintaining relationships, or functioning in daily life. Difficulty in specific academic skills, noticeable discrepancies between potential and actual performance in reading, writing, or math.

Each category of disability has unique learning needs that must be addressed to facilitate effective education and development:

Physical Disability: Adapted physical education, assistive technology (e.g., speech-to-text software), and accessible classrooms.

Sensory Disability: For vision impairment, materials in Braille or large print, audio books, and screen readers. For hearing impairment, sign language interpreters, captioned videos, and hearing aids.

Learning Needs for Each Category

Chronic Illness: Flexibility in attendance and deadlines, homebound instruction, online learning options, and health management support.

Multiple Disabilities: Comprehensive, interdisciplinary approaches that combine strategies from the relevant categories, personalized support plans, and the integration of multiple types of assistive technologies.

Neurological Disability: Medical management, therapies (physical, occupational, speech), structured environments, and adaptive devices

Intellectual Disability: Simplified instructions, hands-on learning, consistent routines, and the use of visual aids.

Mental Disability: Supportive counseling, stress management techniques, accommodations for time and space to manage symptoms, and flexible deadlines.

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By understanding these concepts, categories, and characteristics, as well as the specific learning needs of each category, educators, employers, and society can better support and include individuals with disabilities.

Q&A