

Group Work: Models of Disability

Objective

This tool is designed to improve participants' knowledge about the models of disability and to understand how these models affect people's perception and behaviour.

Material

- Copies of the handouts
- Posters
- Paper
- Small pieces of cards
- Marker pens

Time

About 1½ hours.

Procedure

Divide the participants into three working groups, each of which will work on one model.

Reading the description of their model first, each group should then discuss the following questions:

- *What are the advantages, disadvantages and consequences of this model?*
- *How does this model confirm or differ from your experiences with disability?*
- *How do you deal with your disability or the disability of other persons?*

Based on the result of their discussion, participants should prepare a poster to be presented to the plenary. After the discussion, participants will return to the plenary. Two persons from each group will defend their model in a plenary discussion. Following this debate, all participants should aim to reach a joint conclusion as to which model is the most appropriate.

Handout: The Charity Model

The Charity Model sees persons with disabilities as victims of their impairments. Disability is a deficit. Depending on the disability, the disabled persons cannot walk, talk, see, learn or work. They are unable to help themselves and to lead an independent life. Their situation is tragic, and they are suffering.

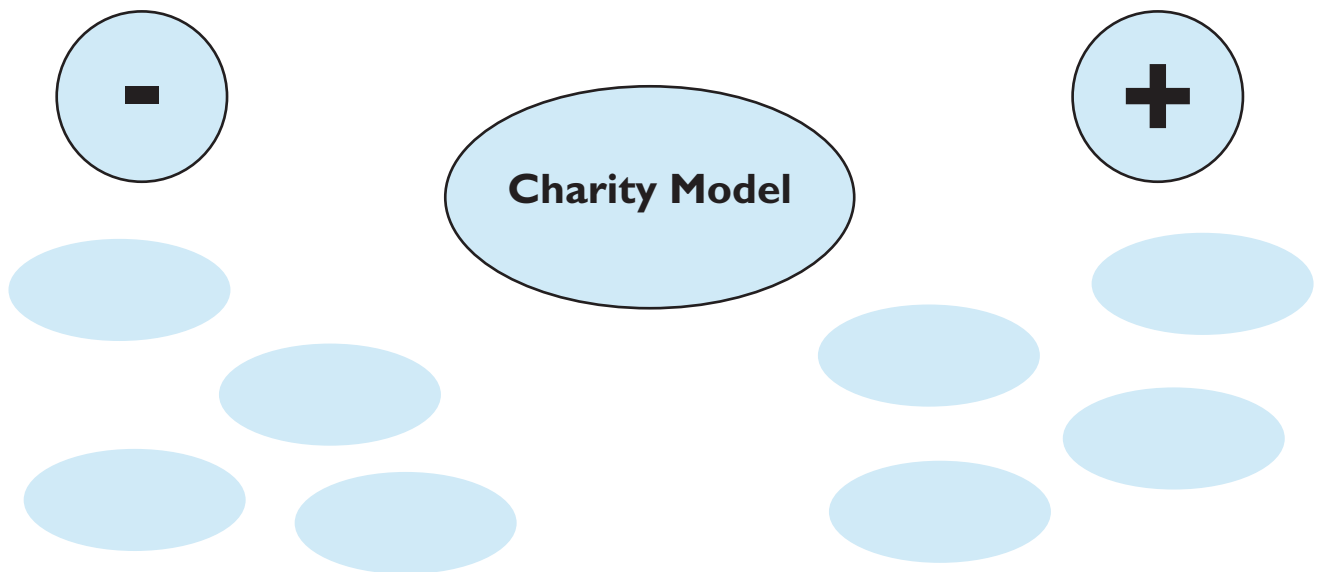
Consequently, they need special services and special institutions such as special schools or living homes because they are different.

People with disabilities have to be pitied and need to be looked after. They need our help, sympathy, charity and welfare.

Sometimes people with disabilities adopt this concept, in which case they usually feel “unable” and have a low sense of self-esteem.

Group work: models of disability

- Read about the model, discuss and develop further associations and examples.
- Discuss the advantages, disadvantages and consequences of this model.
- How does this model confirm or differ from your experiences with disabilities?
How do you deal with your disability?
- Prepare a poster about the model along these lines:



- Choose two persons who will defend this model in the ensuing debate on
“The best strategies for dealing with disability”

Handout: The Medical Model

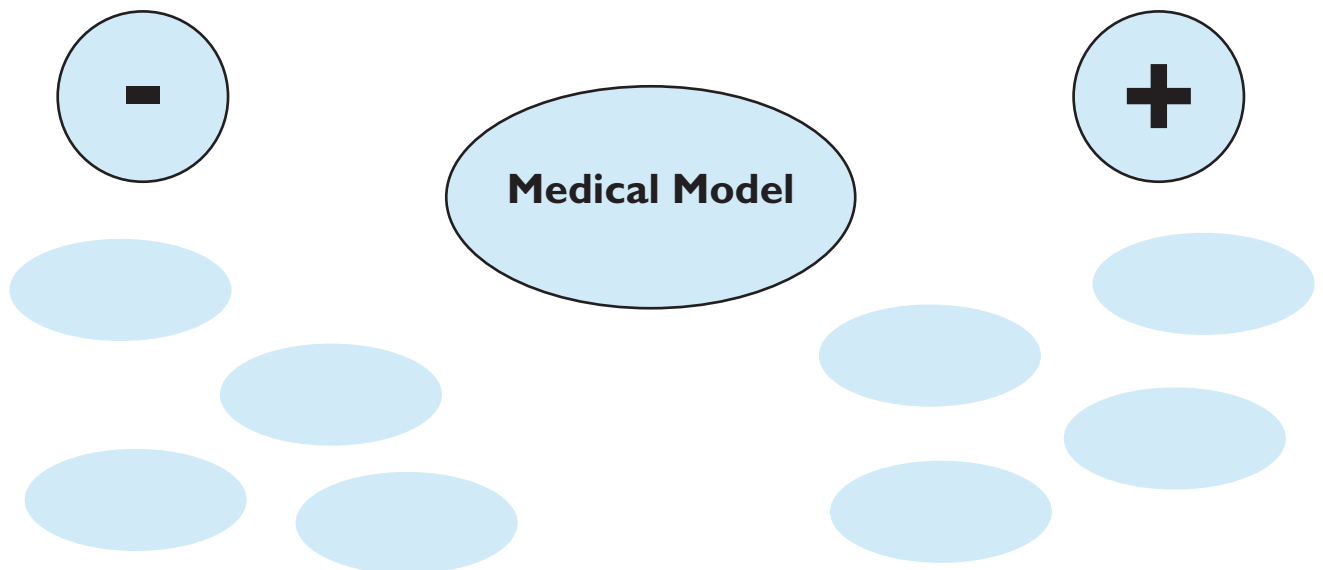
The Medical (or Individual) Model considers people with disabilities as persons with physical or mental problems which need to be cured. This pushes people with disabilities into the passive role of patients.

The aim of a medical approach is to make people with disabilities “normal” – which of course implies that people with disabilities are in some way abnormal. The issue of disability is limited to the individual in question: in case of disability, the disabled person has to be changed, not society or the surrounding environment.

In the understanding of the Medical Model, persons with disabilities need special services, such as special transport systems and welfare services. Society has established special institutions, for example hospitals, special schools or sheltered employment places where professionals (e.g. social workers, medical professionals, therapists, special education teachers) decide on and provide special treatment, education and occupations.

Group work: models of disability

- Read about the model, discuss and develop further associations and examples.
- Discuss the advantages, disadvantages and consequences of this model.
- How does this model confirm or differ from your experiences with disabilities?
How do you deal with your disability?
- Prepare a poster about the model along these lines:



- Choose two persons who will defend this model in the ensuing debate on
“The best strategies for dealing with disability”

Handout: The Social Model

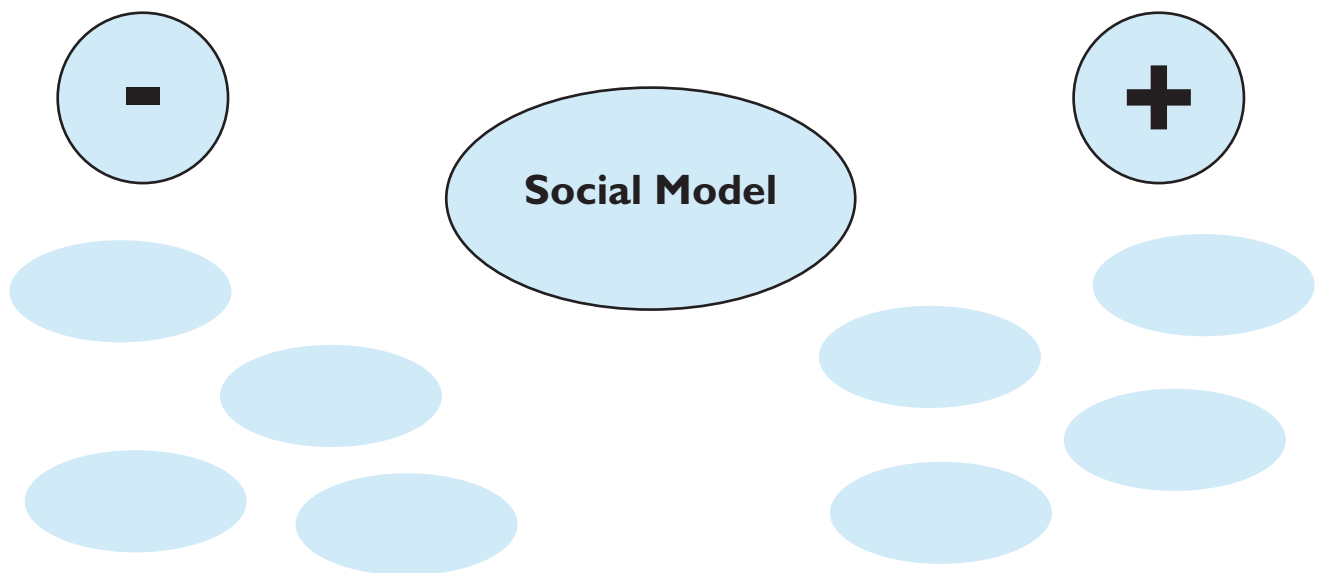
The Social Model regards disability to be a result of the way society is organised. Because of this, people with disabilities face discrimination and barriers to participation:

- Attitudinal discrimination is expressed in fear, ignorance and low expectations. Attitudes are strongly influenced by culture and religion.
- Environmental discrimination results in physical inaccessibility affecting all aspects of life (market and shops, public buildings, places of worship, transport, etc.)
- Institutional discrimination means legal discrimination. Persons with disabilities are excluded from certain rights. For example, in some countries persons with disabilities are not allowed to marry and have children, or are excluded from school.

These three types of barriers make people with disabilities unable to take control of their own lives. According to the Social Model, a disability does not only depend on the individual, but also on the environment, which can be disabling or enabling in various ways. Is a person in a wheelchair still disabled if s/he can drive a car or motorbike and her/his home, workplace and other buildings are accessible?

Group work: models of disability

- Read about the model, discuss and develop further associations and examples.
- Discuss the advantages, disadvantages and consequences of this model.
- How does this model confirm or differ from your experiences with disabilities?
How do you deal with your disability?
- Prepare a poster about the model along these lines:



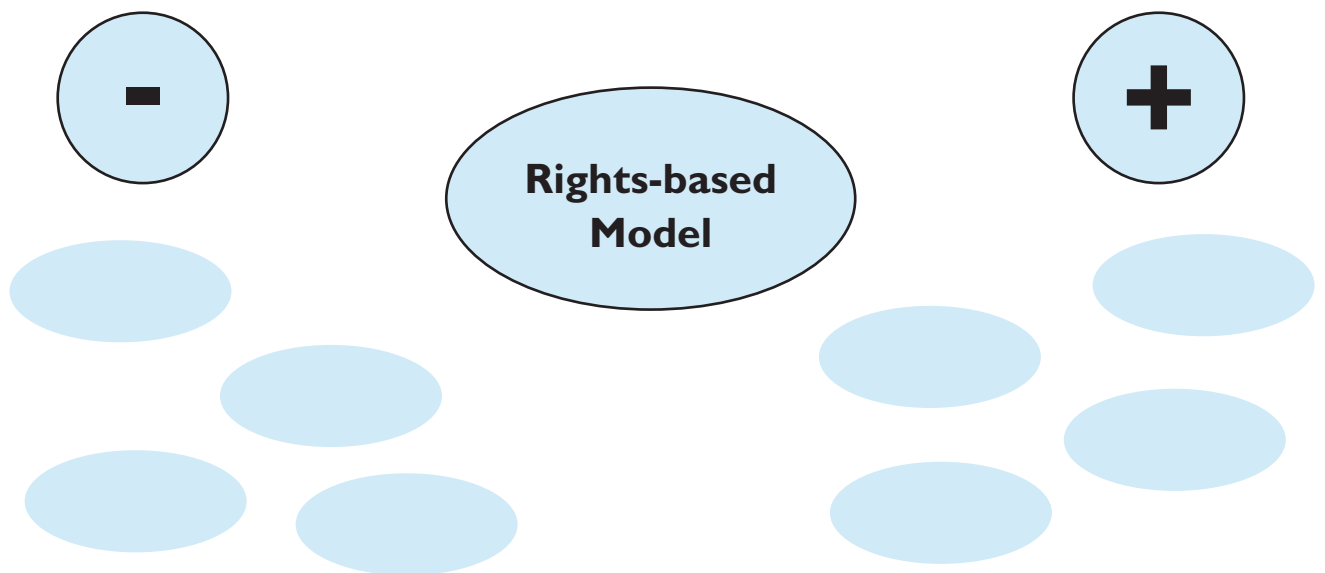
- Choose two persons who will defend this model in the ensuing debate on
“The best strategies for dealing with disability”

Handout: The Right-based Model

The Rights-based Model is closely related to the Social Model. It focuses on the fulfilment of human rights, for example the right to equal opportunities and participation in society. Consequently, society has to change to ensure that all people – including people with disabilities – have equal possibilities for participation. It is a fact that persons with disabilities are often denied basic human rights, for example the right to health (physical and psychological) or the right to education and employment. Laws and policies therefore need to ensure that these barriers created by society are removed. The Rights-based Model states that support in these areas is not a question of humanity or charity, but instead a basic human right that any person can claim. The two main elements of the rights-based approach are empowerment and accountability. Empowerment refers to the participation of people with disabilities as active stakeholders, while accountability relates to the duty of public institutions and structures to implement these rights and to justify the quality and quantity of their implementation.

Group work: models of disability

- Read about the model, discuss and develop further associations and examples.
- Discuss the advantages, disadvantages and consequences of this model.
- How does this model confirm or differ from your experiences with disabilities?
How do you deal with your disability?
- Prepare a poster about the model along these lines:



- Choose two persons who will defend this model in the ensuing debate on
“The best strategies for dealing with disability”