Disability: The Basics by Tom Shakespeare

Disability is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been understood and defined in a variety of ways throughout history. In this article, we will explore the different ways in which disability has been conceptualized, the social barriers faced by disabled people, and the importance of inclusive practices and policies.

There are a number of different models of disability that have been proposed over the years. Each model offers a different perspective on the nature of disability and its implications for individuals and society.

- **The medical model** of disability views disability as a medical problem that needs to be cured or fixed. This model focuses on the individual and their impairments, and it often leads to the exclusion of disabled people from mainstream society.

- **The social model** of disability views disability as a social construct that is created by the barriers that society places in the way of disabled people. This model focuses on the social environment and the ways in which it can be made more inclusive for disabled people.

- **The biopsychosocial model** of disability is a combination of the medical and social models. This model recognizes that disability is both a medical and a social issue, and it emphasizes the importance of addressing both the individual and the social factors that contribute to disability.

Disabled people face a number of social barriers that can prevent them from participating fully in society. These barriers include:

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- **Attitudinal barriers** are the negative attitudes and stereotypes that many people have about disability. These attitudes can lead to discrimination and exclusion of disabled people.

- **Physical barriers** are the physical obstacles that make it difficult or impossible for disabled people to access buildings, transportation, and other public spaces.

- **Communication barriers** are the difficulties that disabled people have in communicating with others. These barriers can make it difficult for disabled people to participate in education, employment, and other activities.

- **Economic barriers** are the financial challenges that many disabled people face. These barriers can make it difficult for disabled people to afford housing, healthcare, and other essential services.

It is essential to create inclusive practices and policies that remove the barriers faced by disabled people. This includes:

- **Changing attitudes** about disability and promoting positive images of disabled people.

- **Removing physical barriers** by making buildings, transportation, and other public spaces accessible to disabled people.

- **Providing communication assistance** to disabled people who need it.

- **Addressing economic barriers** by providing financial support to disabled people and ensuring that they have access to affordable housing, healthcare, and other essential services.

Disability is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been understood and defined in a variety of ways throughout history. By understanding the different models of disability, the social barriers faced by disabled people, and the importance of inclusive practices and policies, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

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