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Essentials of Community-based Rehabilitation



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Forewords
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CHAPTER

3

Community-based Rehabilitation and Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is an ongoing process, which enables an individual to fulfil his duties, responsibilities and protect her/his rights in the society.

COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment of people with disabilities is the ultimate goal of any community-based rehabilitation (CBR) program. The road to empowerment compels the community to create and promote equal opportunities, so that people with disabilities get an access to: Health services, education, housing facilities, work placements, emotional security, family bonds, marriage, leisure/free personal time, recreation and other needs.

And above all, the right to choose-full participation in decision-making on, issues concerning self, family, community.

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PROGRAM OF ACTION CONCERNING DISABLED PERSONS

1981 was declared the International Year of Disabled Persons by the United Nations. This year was not recognized by the South African government. It was, nevertheless, promoted by the NGO sector whose adopted theme was 'Full Participation and Equality'. It was this that gave rise to the development of a disability rights movement in this country. The most important outcome of the International Year of Disabled Persons was the adoption of the World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons during the UN Decade of Disabled Persons (1983–1993). The purpose of the World Program of Action was to promote effective measures for the prevention of disability, rehabilitation and the realization of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

NATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

1986, the International Year of Peace, was also not recognized by the South African government, which, apparently in an attempt to divert attention from the violence raging in the country at the time, declared a National Year of the Disabled.

Investigations carried out on the circumstances of disabled people by NGOs [including the Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) and the Government] revealed the complete absence of any workable policy on disability. Gross discrepancies in the few existing services were also revealed, in terms of both racial and rural/urban distribution.

Following the 1986 investigation, an Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for the Care of the Disabled (ICCD), involving state departments and the NGO sector, was established. Its role was to implement the various recommendations arising out of the 1986 investigation. Because by the end of 1991, it had not succeeded in implementing a single one of its tasks, it was disbanded and a restructured South African Federal Council on the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (SAFCD) was given responsibility for policy development. In doing so, it was to build on the experience and creative interaction between service providers and representatives of

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organizations of disabled people over the preceding seven years. It was also decided that the Federal Council should interface with the political negotiating process rather than the government of the day. However, this structure also struggled due to lack of capacity and other factors.

RULES ON THE EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The UN facilitated the drafting of the Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled Persons to provide governments with clearer guidelines on actions to be taken. The Standard Rules were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993.

AIMS OF THE STANDARD RULES

The aims of the standard rules are as follows:

1. They imply a strong moral and political commitment by the State to take action for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.
2. They offer an instrument for policy-making and action. The purpose is to ensure that all persons with disabilities may exercise the same rights and obligations as other citizens.
3. They outline crucial aspects of social policies in the disability field, and provide models for the political decision-making process required for the attainment of equal opportunities.
4. They propose national mechanisms for close collaboration between the State, organs of the UN, NGOs and DPOs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STANDARD RULES

The objectives of the standard rules are to:

1. Stress that all action in the field of disability presupposes adequate knowledge and experience of the conditions and special needs of persons with disabilities;
2. Emphasize that the process through which every aspect of the organization of society is made accessible to all is a basic objective of socioeconomic development;
3. Outline crucial aspects of social policies in the field of disability, including, as appropriate, the active encouragement of technical and economic cooperation;

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4. Provide models for the political decision-making process required for the attainment of equal opportunities, bearing in mind widely differing technical and economic levels, and the fact that the process must reflect keen understanding of the cultural context within which it takes place and the crucial role of persons with disabilities in it, and
5. Propose national mechanisms for close collaboration among states, the organs of the UN system, other inter-governmental bodies and organizations of persons with disabilities.

POLITICAL AND MORAL FOUNDATION

The International Bill of Human Rights comprises the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the World Program of Action concerning Disabled Persons. It constitutes the political and moral foundation for the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. We should learn management from the local community, and principles of community work from existing co-operatives and development committees; we should learn to respect the abilities and experience of the local people, and listen carefully to their views. Hence, the principle is to look for what there is already and to learn from the people. This should be the point of departure of any development effort.

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Essentials of Community-based Rehabilitation

Salient Features

- A needful book on the subject
- Presents the text in a simple and easy-to-understand manner
- Deals with the principle, criteria, components, and concept of community-based rehabilitation and its practical significance
- Provides a comprehensive text on prosthesis and orthosis, professional ethics of physiotherapy, functional assessment scale and measures, international organization and industrial health and ergonomics
- Fulfills the needs of undergraduate students of physiotherapy and rehabilitation
- Helpful for physiotherapists and rehabilitation professionals to assess disability and implement CBR program.



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