



Disability Support Work in Tertiary Education



Introduction

- Presenters
- Support Worker Project
- Future focus



Why professionalise support in education?

- High quality support services
- Compliance with legislation
- Facilitating independent learning
- Genuine opportunities
- Raising social expectations
- Education to employment outcomes
- Improved life chances and outcomes

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Disability Types

- Learning disability (i.e. dyslexia)
- Physical
- Intellectual
- Medical
- Psychiatric
- Mental health
- Sensory
- Acquired brain injury
- Temporary impairment
- Neurological disorders

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Disability Support Roles

- Participation Assistant
- Notetaker
- Sign interpreter
- Adaptive Technology Support
- Alternate format support
- Library / research assistant
- Tutor
- Alternate examination arrangement
- Orientation & mobility guide

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Legislation

- Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Disability Standards in Education (2005)

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Historical context – Medical model

- People with a disability finding a way to fit
- Experts making decisions
- Stereotypes
- Dependence
- Power with authorities
- Cures
- Environmental control
- Exclusion


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Medical Model



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National Disability Coordination Officer Program

Social Model of Disability

- Cure is in the environment
- Attitudes are biggest barrier
- Prejudice is learned

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National Disability Coordination Officer Program

Social Model of Disability



The diagram features a central globe with six green arrows pointing outwards to various social barriers. On the left side, the barriers listed are: Badly Designed Buildings, Hypocrisy, No Parking Spaces, Segregated Education, Poverty and low Income, and Lack of Enablers. On the right side, the barriers listed are: Inaccessible Transport, Isolated Families, No Lifts, Prejudiced Attitudes, and Poor Job Prospects.

Badly Designed Buildings
Hypocrisy
No Parking Spaces
Segregated Education
Poverty and low Income
Lack of Enablers

Inaccessible Transport
Isolated Families
No Lifts
Prejudiced Attitudes
Poor Job Prospects

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The Disability Support Worker

What are the defining attributes of an effective Disability Support Worker?

- Strong interpersonal, communication skills
- Genuine commitment to unobtrusive support
- Respect for the rights of students
- Ability to provide support while facilitating independence.

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An Effective Disability Support Worker

- Understands inclusive practices
- Manages complex situations
- Appreciates the difficulties students face
- Excellent communication skills
- Able to work with minimal supervision
- Reliable, punctual, responsible
- Respectful of difference
- Respects the rights of individual students
- Facilitates independence and self-determination

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Career pathway for Disability Support Staff

1. Certificate I Work Preparation - induction
2. Certificate 3 – entry level support worker
3. Certificate 4 – autonomous, senior role in support worker team
4. Diploma – entry level DLO
5. Advanced Diploma – Coordinator of Disability program

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