SOC2604

Sociology of Families and Social Problems

Semester 2

Assignment 02

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Declaration

Topic 1

In this essay, I will be discussing the similarities and differences of the four models of disability and impairment, namely the medical model, the tragedy model, the social model and the affirmative model. I will further be discussing the implications of these models by referring to the deaf community.

In **the medical model**, disability is seen as an impairment of a person and therefore that person will need care and if it can be done, it should be cured. This has been the basis on which a range of medical fields of professions have been established. Medical and para-medical professions have provided interventions to which certain disabled people find essential to improve their situations. (French & Swain 2008b: 130-131)
There are however resistances and criticisms of this model of disability, Shakespeare (2009:1815) says that the medical model is sometimes necessary but it requires more training to better ones understanding of the disabilities.

French and Swain (2008b: 131-132) highlighted one of the most bizarre views that some medical professionals have of disability, and that is that disabled children should be prevented from being born in the first place. This shows the extents that some medical professionals will go to in order to prevent disabilities, as well as enforced treatment of disabled people, which they find oppressive and abusive. The author concludes that people with disabilities often see the medical professions as part of the problems they experience. How this applies to the deaf community in the following ways: they need to be in an environment in which they can function efficiently without the need to hear certain things. There are also two levels to this disability, it is being completely deaf or being hearing impaired, hearing impaired people care still eligible for a hearing aid, and it should be made as easy as possible for them to get the necessary equipment, also the cause of the deafness can also be an influence as to whether it can be cured, if the deafness is caused by a problem in the brain, it cant be cured, however cochlear transplants are an option if the cochlear was the cause of the deafness, however this is expensive.

The tragedy model does carry a few similarities to the medical model. It regards a disability as a tragedy instead of a social or political issue. In this model, people with disabilities are given negative words such as "victim" or "sufferer". A more extreme example is the belief that a disability is punishment from a higher power for the wrongdoings of someone, usually the parents of the disabled person. Sometimes when a disabled person is given a positive name, it can have a negative connotation, like they are called "courageous" just for living their lives and not giving up on life. When a disabled person carries out a simple task it is seen by others as an achievement. Disabled people are not seen as normal people who live meaningful and fulfilling lives. The extreme view that relates to the medical model is that would be better if the disabled person wasn't born rather than living with the disability. In the deaf community, the views of the tragedy model are hindering the inclusivity in the workplace, deaf people are able to function effectively in the workplace if the correct facilities are provided.

The social model refers to the fact that people aren't disabled by their impairments, but instead the world that disables them by not making means for them to be a part of the society they wish to function in, such as not putting braille on elevator buttons or wheelchair ramps to access buildings , but it also refers to the society they live in, they can be discriminative and prejudice towards people, underestimating their mental ability when they a physical disability for example. The social model "highlights the social and political nature of disability" (Swain & French 2008:2) which opposes the view of the tragedy model. Davis (2002:12) highlights the clear cut difference between impairment and disability, impairment is the refers to the loss of hearing or use of a leg, disability refers to the impairment becoming a barrier hindering access. The word access can have two different contexts, one is physical access into buildings through wheelchair ramps for example, but also refers to hindrance of access of a social world of shared meaning and opportunity. Riddell and Watson (2003:1) say that culture contribute to the oppression of disabled people but also add that disabled people formed cultures that is described as an act of resistance. Deaf people don't suffer as much as people with motion disabilities in the sense that there is a lot of signage that shows them where to go, but they are still discriminated against, this model also shows resistance to inclusivity.

The affirmative model rejects the views of the tragedy model and adopts the views of the social model. It places the experiences of people with disability at the centre by affirming their identity. Swain and French (2008:68) comment how the media portray people with disabilities as either helpless or brave, and mot in keeping with what society deems as normal or able bodied people. Thus distracting from the richness of human existence and promoting stereotypes of people with disabilities. The affirmative model is made up of three core assumptions: Why affirm an identity if there is nothing to be gained from such an identity. This view is rejected by the affirmative model the model promotes affirming one's identity in society as a central goal. Affirming an identity of disability denies the harsh reality of living impairment, it is very clear that the affirmative model rejects the idea that disability is a tragedy. Having an identity of being disabled has to be viewed in relation to other identities such as gender,

<u>race and age.</u> When the disability becomes so salient all other aspects of living are excluded, it becomes problematic. In the affirmative model, all identities are fractured, multiple, fluid and contested. Society's responses to all marginalized identities should be interlinked: like being marginalized by disability should be the same as being marginalized by gender or sexual orientation (Swain & French 2008:65-76). Deaf people are just as able to function in the workplace as any other able bodied person and should be marginalized based on their disability alone.

These four models of disability give a sense of the development of the formation of people's identity with disabilities. There is opposition and interlinking throughout all the abovementioned models, all contributing to the better understanding of the inclusivity and the plight of a person living with a disability.

Topic 2

In this essay, I will be discussing motherhood and fatherhood ideologies, I will continue to compare the similarities and dissimilarities of these ideologies as I expand on the topic.

The motherhood ideologies is an idea and perception that is created about women, that they have been given a role and life purpose of being a mother and raising children. Newman (1998:268) stated that women have been made to think a certain way about themselves through society convincing them that having children is a primary source of self-identity. Bruce, Lloyd and Leonard (1995:55) have stated that cultural belief may even prevent father from being directly involved in their children's lives. Bruce et al (1995:49) also state that as much as women's lives are characterised mostly by motherhood, men's lives don't seem to be characterised mostly by fatherhood. The term 'intense mothering' refers to the fact that need constant, undivided attention of their

mothers (Hay in Ranson 2004:88). The link between mother and children is therefore regularly taken for granted, while the link between father and their children is downplayed and not given much attention. This ideology dates back to the 1950s, after WWII, the role of mothering was to be taken serious. Even when black women were striking against pass laws in 1956, it was labelled as mothers fighting for their children. Downe (2004:165-178) points how many people tend to perceive stepmother as 'not real mothers' and encourages that we accept the wider categories of motherhood.

In the fatherhood ideology, it is clear that there are many roles that a father plays. The roles linked to a father are moral overseer, sex role model and nurturer (Lamb 1986:4-7; Marsiglio 1995:3). In South African literaturefathers are described as important role models (Viljoen 1993:155; Lesejane 2006:176), heads of households (Walker 1995:421), being in charge of family rituals (Ramphele 1993:53) and being the reinforce of discipline (Campbell 1994a:41). Fathers are most often seen as a patriarch and a breadwinner and lately associated with "new fatherhood". The patriarch refers to being the head of the household or tribe, the father has been pictured in this role within the household for a very long time, he is seen as the person who everyone in the household or tribe goes to for guidance and advice. It is safe to say that we are moving away from the idea that the men are the patriarch in the household, in two different ways, one being that many women all around the world are breaking away from these norms within households and companies. Another being that in a lot of cases nowadays, fathers simply aren't present in their children's lives and in the household anymore. Being the breadwinner in the household means you are either earning the most money to support your family or you are the sole provider in the household. The breadwinner in the household usually is the father as due to historical reasons, men have always had better jobs and we are still seeing some after effects. However this is also an idea that is being abolished slowly but surely as many women are becoming the heads of companies and getting fantastic jobs. In my household, both my parents have excellent jobs, however my mother is earning noticeably more money than my father is earning and can be seen as the breadwinner. Even though my mother and many women

around the world are breadwinners instead of their husbands, it is still clear that the fathers are still the heads of the household. New fatherhood refers to the idea that fathers are ever so slightly becoming more and more involved in the different phases of the lives of their children, it is a concept that has started coming into being since the late 20th century. According to (cf Lamb 1986:7; Bronstein 1988:3; Segal 1990:26ff; Coltrane 1995:266; Hochschild 1995:219; Knijn 1995:5), the fathers are involved in the physical and emotional care of the child.

There are more differences between the two ideologies than there are similarities. The mother is seen as a caretaker and the father is seen as the provider. However, a very clear similarity is the idea of new fatherhood, it shows that fathers are becoming more involved in the lives of their children and are also becoming carers and not just the mothers doing it alone.

Sources:

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