



ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED LAWYERS

Social Model of Disability Briefing

The Association of Disabled Lawyers subscribes to the social model of disability.

Under the social model of disability, the word 'impairment' is a medical condition that affects the person, such as the inability to walk. 'Disability', on the other hand, is used to refer to the barriers in society that restricts people with impairments' ability to participate equally in everyday life.

The social model of disability identifies systemic, attitudinal and physical barriers as the disabling factors in society, not the person's impairment/s. Physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological impairments may cause functional limitation, but these do not necessarily cause disability unless society fails to accommodate. Removing barriers creates equality, independence and control.

On the Contrary

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences. The medical model looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs. We believe it creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice and control in their lives.