

13th World Congress on
Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease
September 16-17, 2019 | Paris, France

Applying the social model of disability to Dementia

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In this presentation, I will review the social model of disability and its relevance to dementia, as well as explore social attitudes and understanding of disability, disablism and ageism, in relation to dementia. I will discuss the impact of these on the medical model of care currently being used globally for people diagnosed with dementia, and how this model is ensuring dependence on families, communities and the health care system, as well as increasing stigma. Since the World Health Organisation Global Action Plan: A public Health Response to Dementia, it is now clear we must think outside the box, beyond the lack of health and social care, which currently is not aligned to human rights and the CRPD. The empowerment and involvement of people living with dementia in the last few years has ensured human rights in dementia have moved

away from pure rhetoric, and this also means society has a legal and moral obligation to change the model of care it is currently applying to dementia care, from the time of diagnosis. Applying the social model of disability to dementia will also lead to important insights and will help explain some of the barriers many people with dementia currently face in terms of poor care. I will close by outlining a new social and disability model of support based on rights, and why I believe it will not only improve outcomes for people with dementia and their families by promoting independence and a higher quality of life, it will ensure the currently expected high economic impact on governments and health care systems by dementia will be minimised.

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