



SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COURSE GUIDE

FOR

REL P 2209: Ministry for Specialized Needs

A self-Instructional Undergraduate Course Guide Module

Instructor: Joel Musaasizi

Department of Religious studies

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **RELP 2209 Ministry for Specialized Needs**. RELP 2209 is a three unit course that has minimum duration of one semester. It is suitable for all students of the department of theology and religious studies. The course guide has been developed as a self-instructional module for learners.

It analyzes in details the theology, philosophy, theory and practices for persons with special needs. It handles diverse topics such as Jesus Christ and the special needs persons, mission and goals for ministry for specialized needs, Classification and theories of persons with special needs, world view towards persons with special needs, fostering the wellbeing of persons with special needs, practical implementation, the elderly, retirees and others.

COURSE MATERIALS

The school will provide you with the course guide containing the study units and exercises. You are required to read through the materials prepared in this course guide and to consult more sources related to special needs course from different libraries and other internet academic sources. You are also advised to study in groups for in-depth understanding of the concept of special needs.

This course guide is structured in modules and units. Informing you what the course is all about, what you ought to know in each module and unit, what course materials you need to consult and other available resources specifically produced for persons with special needs to enable them live dignified lives. Study these materials for self-assessment exercise in each unit and submit your portfolio for course work assessment purposes.

ASSESSMENT CRETERIA

Assessment is designed to check knowledge capability, concept competence, practical skills, and reflective integration. All assignments completed during the semester are compiled in a continuous assessment portfolio worth 50% of the course grade. The end-of-semester examination is worth the remaining 50%.

Course-Assesment	Description	Weight
Continuous Assessment Portfolio	Reading the course guide and responding to the self-assessment exercises	50%
End-of-Semester Final Examination	Testing the knowledge and concept competencies	50%
Total		100%

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course explores the theology, philosophy, theory and practices of Special Needs Ministries in fostering the wellbeing of persons with mental, physical, emotional and spiritual special needs. The course surveys biblical principles from Old and New Testaments. The teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ to, for and with people with special needs are used as basic guides in establishing practical principles of the ministry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course the learner should be able to:

- Explain the concept of special needs
- Analyze the theological and philosophical foundations of specialized needs ministry
- Identify the different types of disabilities and models
- Differentiate between medical and social disability models.
- Explain the nature of discrimination against persons with special needs
- Explore different ways of stopping discrimination against persons with special needs in ECD

Expected competence outcomes

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- Outline the different definitions of persons with special needs.
- Articulate the theological and philosophical foundations of specialized needs ministry
- Differentiate the different types of disabilities and models
- Distinguish between medical and social disability models.
- Describe the nature of discrimination against persons with special ne
- Apply the principles of inclusivity in his daily life and ministry

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MODULE 1: THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE MINISTRY OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Unit 1: Introduction to Theological foundation of person with special needs

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1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Definition of Special Needs

3.2 Theological Basis for the Ministry of Special Needs

3.3 Special Needs in Spirit of Prophecy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, the student will examine the biblical passages relating to persons with special needs, noting the various scriptures provided. He/she will also look at the mission, and special needs ministry goals.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Express the theological foundation of the ministry for persons with special needs
- ❖ Explain the special needs ministry goals
- ❖ Implement the mission of special needs ministry

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition and Theological Foundation of Special Needs

Disability has been used either as a synonym for “inability” or as a reference to legally imposed limitations on rights and powers. Encarta Dictionary defines disability as an inability to perform some or all the tasks of daily life or a medically diagnosed condition that makes it difficult to engage in the activities of daily life.¹ A special need is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities which includes walking, communicating, hearing, learning, manual tasks, seeing, or working.

3.2 Theological Basis for the Ministry of Special Needs

The theological foundation for the ministry of special needs rests upon the image of God (**Gen 1:27**); and God’s claims in **Exodus 4:11**; Jesus’ rejection of cultural assumptions that disability is a divine punishment for sin (**John 9:1-3**); Inclusivity and the value of weak parts of the body by Paul (**1Cor 12**); and Restoration of the human dignity by God (**Isaiah 35: 5-6; Luke 4:18**)

3.3 Special Needs in the Spirit of Prophecy

I saw that it is in the providence of God that widow and orphans, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His Church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God’s test of our character 3T p-511.

UNIT 2: JESUS CHRIST AND THE SPECIAL NEEDS PERSONS

¹ Encarta World English Dictionary, s.v. “disability,” accessed July 23, 2026, msn.com (archieved version).

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Minister to the least of these

3.2 Christ and Miracles

1.0 Introduction

The New Testament refers to Jesus Christ as a champion of persons with disability. This is a designation justified by Christ's words and acts as preserved in the four Gospels. An in-depth examination of the tradition as presented in the Gospels indicates that He was a revolutionist vocally contending for the rights of persons with disabilities. This is explicitly revealed in the way He lived, taught and worked.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Trace Jesus' miracles that touched persons with special needs in scriptures.
- ❖ Explain the special needs ministry goals
- ❖ Implement the mission of special needs ministry

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Minister to the least of these

Jesus taught that if people wanted to be considered "righteous" and "inherit the kingdom" of God they were to minister to *all* persons, particularly those considered the "least of these."² Many of the people who were considered the "least of these" are still with us. They are the homeless, the disabled, the uneducated, and the terminally ill. They sleep on streets; wander without awareness, ignorant of social Services. Believers are called to minister to the marginalized of society the "least of these."

3.2 Christ and Miracles

² Matt.25:40 (New International Version)

Inaugurating His earthly mission, Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord.....has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18).

Christ is the blueprint for Christian believers both in theory and practice. If He was indeed a champion of persons with special needs, in what sense was He such, and how did He contend for special needy persons? Twenty seven (27) out of thirty five (35) miracles recorded in scriptures touched persons with special needs.

- ❖ Jesus healed the boy who was “unable to speak” (Mark 9:17, NRSV);
- ❖ He healed a man who was paralyzed (Luke 5:18 – 26);
- ❖ Restored a deaf man (Mark 7:32-35).
- ❖ Jesus Christ gives clear evidence and support that His followers should be involved in Special Needs Ministries.

Unit3. Mission and Special Needs Goals for Ministry for Specialized Needs

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Mission for Specialized Needs Ministry

3.2 Special needs goals for specialized Needs Ministry

1.0 Introduction

In this unit, the student will be made to understand the core mission of specialized needs ministry. Also in this unit, different special needs goals will be explained.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

- ❖ Study the mission of special needs ministry
- ❖ Analyze the different goals of special needs ministry
- ❖ Implement the mission of special needs ministry in his/her community

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Mission for Specialized Needs Ministry

The ministry mission and goals affirm that special needs persons are equally loved, redeemed, gifted and called to serve Him in His vine yard.³

- ❖ ***Teach and proclaim the everlasting Gospel to all people*** in the context of the three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14; 6-12.
- ❖ ***Encourage the inclusion*** of all members in the church and to use their God given talents to grow God's Kingdom.
- ❖ ***Educate the church and the special needs persons*** about the ways that people with special needs can contribute to the mission of the church.

3.2 Special Needs Goals for Specialized Needs Ministry

The ministry has earmarked to fulfill which include:

- ❖ ***Inclusivity/Accommodation***: This goal aims at helping the church family to be inclusive to all people. The church need to use sign language for the deaf, braille or recorded information for the blind, wheel chairs for those who cannot walk and meet the needs of other categories.
- ❖ ***Accessibility***: The goal is to provide Conducive environment and space where everyone feels welcome regardless of his or her physical or mental condition. All architectural and attitudinal barriers should be eliminated. Church facilities-from door entrances to the entire structure of the building and toilets-should be accessible by all including ramps for people with wheel chairs.
- ❖ ***Education***: The goal is to educate people who do not have special needs and those with special needs to work together in building God's kingdom. Special needs ministries should sensitize and educate the church to the needs of people with special needs, develop resources for those who are supporting them, and enhance their worship experiences.
- ❖ ***Encouragement/empowerment***: This goal is to promote participation of people with special needs in all aspects of church life. Providing a safe, loving environment at all levels of the church structure for all people is the privilege of every believer.

4.0 Conclusion and Summary

³ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Special needs Ministries: Keys to Special Needs Church*, (Silver Spring, MD: Adventist Possibility Ministries, n.d), 12-13 Adventist Possibility Ministries

In this module we have established the theological foundation of the ministry, understood its mission and goals which are all rooted in the word of God. In the next module we shall discuss the different categories of people with special needs and the evolution of the term “special needs”

Ministry to special needs persons is not an option but a biblical mandate of love and inclusion. By removing all barriers for all people the church fulfills the command to love all people regardless of their status which is deeply rooted in God’s character.

Self-Assessment Exercise for Module 1

1. Describe how you are going to implement the mission and goals of special needs ministry in your mission field?
2. Identify possible challenges in implementing the mission and goals of this ministry
3. Suggest possible solutions for each challenge identified in no.2 above
4. **Visit a family with a special needs person and share your experience with them. Attach a p**

Reference Material for Further Reading

Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies for the church, vol. 3*. Complete
Published Works of Ellen G. White Writings [CD ROM] (Silver Spring,
MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2012).

General conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Special needs Ministries: Keys to
Special Needs Church*. Silver Spring, MD: Adventist Possibility Ministries,
n.d Adventist Possibility Ministries

MODULE 2: CLASSIFICATION AND THEORIES OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Unit 1: The philosophy/Concept of Persons with Special Needs

Unit 2: Classification of Persons with Special Needs

Unit 3: Major models of Persons with Special Needs/Disability

Unit 1: The Philosophy/Concept of Persons with Special Needs

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 The motto of the ministry

3.2 Evolution of the Concept of Special Need

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, the student will adapt to the motto of the ministry. He/she will also analyze the various definitions of persons with special needs.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Explain the motto of the ministry for specialized needs
- ❖ Define the concept of persons with special needs
- ❖ Promote the core elements of the motto of the ministry

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The motto of the ministry

The philosophy of Special Needs Ministries widely termed as “**Adventist Possibility Ministries**” in Seventh-day Adventist church,—is built on the core motto: *"All are gifted, needed, and treasured"* which focuses on inclusion, care and services to all regardless of their impairments.

3.2 Evolution of the Concept of special Needs

Disability/inability has been one of the most dominant excuses for inequality in society, and yet it has been rarely studied by scholars. “Some persons are born with disabilities, while others develop them later in life according to World Book Encyclopedia (2004). Such persons have been labeled; Disabled, Hand capped, impaired or dysfunction, retarded, lame, wheelchair-bound invalid, sufferer, defect. Some persons are offended by such terms on one hand and on the other; others are offended by the replacement.

Statutes like the Education for all Handicapped children Act of 1975 and the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) established rights for individuals with disabilities rather than redefining them under special needs umbrella. The divergence of the various terms used in describing individuals with disabilities or inabilities, have led to various writers accepting the term “*special needs*” as the functional descriptive term for individuals with various forms of disability/inability.

The exact phrase was “Special Educational Needs” which evolved into the short form “Special Needs.” This terminology was formally promoted and brought into official policy by the Warnock committee led by a British Philosopher Mary Warnock in its annual government report of 1978.

While other provisions were in existence the committee insisted that the term should replace all other medical labeling that were stigmatizing; subnormal and handicapped.⁴

Unit 2: Categories of Persons with Special Needs

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 categories by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

3.2 Possible causes of impairments

3.3 Preventable measures

1.0 Introduction

In this unit the student will be exposed to different classifications of special needs according to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other classifications outside IDEA. **Objectives**

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Identify the different types of special needs
- ❖ Evaluate possible causes
- ❖ Analyze preventive measures

⁴ Committee of Enquiry into the Education of the handicapped Children and Young People, Special Educational Needs Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People (London:HMSO,1978), 10-14

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 categories by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Special needs categories are classified according to the body parts affected/injured or deficiencies to perform some or all the tasks of daily life or a medically diagnosed condition that makes it difficult to engage in the activities of daily life.⁵

There are however, many types of challenges or disabilities; both physical and mental. They vary greatly in causes, degrees and treatments. Common disabilities include: Blindness, Deafness, Deformity, Loss of limbs, Mental illness, Mental retardation, Muscular, Nervous, Sensory disorders.⁶

The disorder affects personality traits, gender role behavior, social status, acquisition of property, inheritance, occupation and responsibility in the family, and society.

These are persons with:

- ❖ ***Specific learning disability (SLD)***: Includes Conditions like dyslexia or dysgraphia affecting reading, writing, or math
- ❖ ***Speech or language impairment***: Includes conditions affecting speaking or understanding spoken language.
- ❖ ***Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)***: A developmental condition affecting social skills and communication.
- ❖ ***Intellectual Disabilities (Formerly referred to as Mental Retardation)***: This is a lifelong developmental condition that begins during childhood (before the age of 18). It means a person's brain processes information more slowly, making it harder to grasp complex, routine instructions. As children, they often take a little longer to hit milestones like sitting up, walking, or speaking. They process the world at their own pace and simply need tailored teaching and patience to thrive
- ❖ ***Emotional disturbance***: includes mental health issues, depression, or long-term behavioral challenges.
- ❖ ***Hearing disability / Deafness***: Includes conditions like permanent or fluctuating hearing loss that is not total deafness, as well as clinical deafness.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ World Health Organization, *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health*: ICF (Geneva: World Health organization, 2001), 10-12.

- ❖ ***Visual impairment including blindness:*** Covers vision problems uncorrectable by glasses.
- ❖ ***Locomotors/ movement or orthopedic impairment:*** Covers lack of bodily or skeletal/joint function.
- ❖ ***Traumatic brain injury (TBI):*** An acquired injury to the brain caused by physical force.
- ❖ ***Deaf-blindness:*** Simultaneous severe hearing and vision loss.
- ❖ ***Multiple disabilities:*** Having more than one concurrent impairment
- ❖ ***Developmental delay:*** Used for young children showing delayed milestones (varies by state implementation)
- ❖ ***Hidden disability:*** These are disabilities that can't be seen with our own eyes unless tested or told. They are referred to as invisible or non-visible disabilities. These conditions can impair a person's activities, movements, or senses without external markers.

3.2 Possible causes of impairments

The causes includes but not limited to: genetic factors, prenatal issues, birth complications, and environmental influences. The major ones are: Chromosomal differences, inherited traits from families, brain structure, maternal infections, substance exposure, malnutrition, premature birth, childhood illness or injury, accidents and toxic exposures.

3.3 Preventable measures

While not all conditions can be prevented, some risks can be reduced through health education and community actions. These practical measures can be implemented at home, school, church and community. They are categorized under Health and safety; social emotional, economical and community prevention.

- ❖ Emphasizing screening and premarital counseling of couples on genetic issues
- ❖ Promoting vaccinations and regular antenatal care
- ❖ Avoiding harmful substances
- ❖ Prevention and treatment of infections
- ❖ Mental health support (reduce stress, trauma, domestic violence) which affects fetal development

- ❖ Prevent birth injuries like brain injuries during birth by using skilled midwives
- ❖ Full childhood immunization. Receiving vaccines for : polio, measles etc
- ❖ Early screening and intervention (checking hearing, vision, growth) etc
- ❖ Child safety and nutrition
- ❖ Public awareness and education

Unit 3: Major model of Persons with Special Needs/Disability

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Medical Model of Disability

3.2 The Social Model of Persons with Special Needs

3.3 Bio psychosocial model of Persons with Special Needs

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit the student will study to discover the different models of disability. The three major ones to be handled are: the Medical model, the Social model and Bio psychosocial model. Also in this unit, other models will be outlined.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Explain the medical model of disability, its strength and weakness
- ❖ Evaluate the social model of disability, its strength and weaknesses
- ❖ Explain the Bio psychosocial model, its strength and weaknesses

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Medical Model of Disability

The core idea of the medical model of disability is that, disability is a problem within the person's body or mind (directly caused by disease, trauma or other health condition, that needs to be addressed medically through treatment to be cured or fixed. This can be visible (physical) or invisible (cognitive, mental or sensory).

It focuses on diagnosis, treatment, therapy or medication. Its strength is in getting medical help by skilled professionals, and its weakness is in ignoring environment and society which makes the person feel broken.

Critics of this medical model, argues that it is inappropriate to perceive disability as a medical issue because it is more of a social condition than a medical condition.

They also believe that clinicians cannot manage disability because they are not trained for that, because disability is a long-term social state and is neither treatable nor curable. Furthermore, they assert that doctors impose their decision on persons with special needs thus determining on where they should live, whether they should work or not, what kind of school they should go to, what kinds of benefits and services they should receive and in the case of unborn disabled children, whether they should live or not which affects their human rights.

3.2 The Social Model of Persons with Special Needs

The core idea of the social model of disability is that people are disabled by society and not by what they are or conditions. Its focus is on change of environment, attitudes, and laws. In the social model perspective, disability does not lie in the individual, but in the interactions between special need persons and society.⁷ These would include but not limited to:

- ❖ Dominant social, political, and economic ideologies
- ❖ Cultural and religious perceptions regarding persons with disabilities
- ❖ Paternalism in social welfare system
- ❖ Discriminations by society
- ❖ Inaccessibility of the environment and information
- ❖ Lack of appropriate institutional and social arrangements

The strength of this model lies within its advocacy for inclusion, equality and special needs person rights. While its weakness can be found in underplaying medical needs. The critics for social model claim that this model presents only a partial picture of disability. This kind of argument basing all challenges of the disabled on environmental factors is as actually damaging as the focus on ‘bodies-to-be improved’ found in the medical model.

Advocates for the social model argue that although the person’s impairment/s may cause them pain or discomfort, what really disables people as members of society

⁷ Lorella Terzi, “The social Model of Disability,” A Philosophical Critique,” Journal of Applied Philosophy 21,no.2 (2004): 145.

is a socio-cultural system, unaccommodating physical environment caused by the negative attitudes and other types of the social environment which does not consider the rights of special need persons to genuine equality.

These would include among others:-unaccommodating physical environment brought about by attitudes, isolation and exclusion from full participation in the mainstream of social activities and Oppression. Thus the social model dissociates disability from mental and physical incapacitation. The perception of the social model is that Persons with physical challenges are viewed as oppressed social group. To this model, disability is a social oppression and not a form of impairment.

3.3 Bio psychosocial model of Persons with Special Needs

The core idea of the Bio psychosocial model of Persons with Special Needs considers an integration of biological, psychological (individual), and social factors. It focuses on giving different perspective of health care, therapy, mindset, and supportive environment. Its strength lies in Holistic care for special needs persons. It synthesizes what is true in both the medical and social models. Through this model we learn that disability is a complex phenomenon. It is both a challenge at the level of a person's body features, and primarily, social environment where the person lives. Addressing it requires both models in order to be adequate and valid.

There other models not discussed in detail just to mention but a few includes: charity model whose core idea is that special needs are objects of pity that need help. It focuses on donations and sympathy which creates dependence and low self-esteem; Human right model; Empowerment model; Religious/moral model and many others.

4.0 Conclusion and Summary

This module has helped you to understand the categories of persons with special needs and models of disability. You have also learnt the genesis of the term special needs. In the following module, we shall be looking at the cultural attitudes and its effects on persons with special needs. Also we shall look at epistemic and moral authority benefits for special needs.

Self-Assessment Exercise for Module 2

1. Identify the assistive device for every category of special needs and their benefits to the person with special needs
2. Discuss the strength and weaknesses of each model of disability
3. Suggest the preventive measures for each category that you would use in your mission field as a gospel worker
4. Visit a person with a hidden disability and write your experience and the type of support you extended to him/her. Evidence required

Reference for Further Reading

Wasserman, D. “Philosophical issues in the definition and social response to Disability”. In *Handbook of Disability Studies*, ed by Gary L. Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman, and Michael Bury, 219-151. CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

World Health Organization. *International Classification of Functioning disability and health: ICF*. Geneva: World Health Organization, **2001**.

Terzi, L. The social model of disability: a philosophical critique. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 21 (2), 141

MODULE 3: WORLD VIEW ABOUT PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Unit 1: Cultural attitudes towards Persons with Special Needs.

Unit 2: Effects of Cultural attitudes towards Persons with Special Needs

Unit 3: Epistemic and Moral Authority

Unit 1: Cultural attitudes towards Persons with Special Needs.

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Attitudes of Society towards persons with special needs

3.2 Effects of society’s negative attitudes towards persons with special needs

3.3 Epistemic and Moral authority

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, the student will assess the cultural attitudes towards persons with special needs and their negative effects on their lives.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Describe the attitude of the society towards persons with special needs
- ❖ Explain the effects of the society's negative attitude towards persons with special needs

2.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Attitudes of Society towards persons with special needs

Traditionally, disability had spiritual significance and explanations. In some communities persons with disabilities were valued while in others were hidden from society for fear of being laughed at as a family.

Disability was viewed as God's punishment, a curse, evil sign in the family, demon possessed and carriers of ill luck. In some parts of the world special needs children were abandoned to death. Attitudes of this kind were passed on from generation to generation and were attached to values and beliefs of the society. This kind of biasness towards persons with disability and judgment affects their lives negatively.

Academically, this attitude has gradually changed:

- ❖ Ancient times-1800, they were excluded. (Attitude, they can't learn. They are a curse, punishment from God)
- ❖ 1800-1950s, they were segregated. Accepted to be taught but from far away from others. (Attitude, they deserve help, but will disturb normal children)
- ❖ 1960-1990, they were integrated. Bring them to our class to study with others. (Attitude, Let us be fair, bring them to normal schools)
- ❖ 2000s-todate, Inclusion. Change the school to fit the child. (Attitude, Every child has a right to quality education. Disability is not inability)

The attitude in the health professionals because of academics is positive. A part from those disciplines, Persons with special needs are facing serious prejudice and discrimination.

3.2: Effects of Cultural attitudes towards Persons with Special Needs

Cultural attitudes are like lenses that society puts on to view others. What people believe about others determines how they treat them and the treatment shapes their whole lives. This is true with special needs persons. The way we see them affects their well-being.

There are positive and negative effects.

Positive cultural attitudes towards special needs persons: On one hand when a culture accepts and values them, the effects are great and promising.

- ❖ Being seen as God's image and gift Gen 1:27. The effect on the person is feeling loved and safe
- ❖ Being seen as capable of learning. The effects on a person is acquiring skills and support
- ❖ Having rights. The effects on a person are empowerment, own property, and speak for self.
- ❖ Part of the society. The effects on a person are belonging, marrying, participation in social events and services.

On another hand when the culture is negative, the effects are traumatic and painful.

- ❖ Denial of education opportunities. The effects on a person are illiteracy, unemployment, dependence etc
- ❖ Denial of health services. The effects on a person are emotional pains and worsening of the condition
- ❖ Denial of employment opportunities. Effects on a person are poverty, dependence and emotional torture

Other effects includes; stigmatization, objects for pity, neglect, segregation, superstition, malnutrition, isolation, discrimination, shame, loneliness, denial of marriage, exclusion in all services and positions of responsibility, stereotyping, beggars, physical sexual and emotional abuse, exploitation, rejection by family members, among others.⁸

Unit 3.3 Epistemic and Moral Authority

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 concept of epistemic

3.2 concept of moral authority

⁸ Esther Akua Gyamfi, Negative Attitudes towards Persons with Disabilities (December 2015), Ghana Web

1.0 Introduction

In this unit, the student will study two concepts that matters for special needs persons to be recognized as having equal moral worth with other people and to express their own voices when it comes to decision making.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Explain the concept of Epistemic authority
- ❖ Clarify the moral authority of the special needs persons

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 concept of epistemic

The concept of epistemic authority encourages making informed decisions based on who is seen as having the primary knowledge about the special needs persons. Epistemic authority provides special needs people authority to speak for themselves through personal experiences as non-inabilities listens.

3.2 concept of moral authority

The concept of moral authority unlike epistemic authority, seeks for who stands in to decide what is fair and right for special needs persons. Historically persons with special needs had no authority to speak for themselves. Parents, Doctors, teachers would stand in to determine for them which is best. This is termed as speaking about them without them. Today unlike in the past, There is a strong belief that the special needs person have a right to a hearing. It also helps explain the challenges and disappointments, and opportunities denied.

3.0 Conclusion and summary

This module has helped you to understand that the society's attitude towards persons with special needs is generally negative. This attitude is passed on by cultural values and beliefs from birth. The effect of this attitude has greatly affected people living with disabilities in many ways. However those who overcome it manage to live close to normal life independently with dignity.

Self-Assessment Exercise/s

1. Assess the effects of the society's negative attitude towards special needs persons
2. Suggest possible ways of addressing the effects in no.1 above
3. Explain the advantages of the epistemic and moral authority principles to special needs persons.

Reference for Further Reading

Catala, Amandine. “Metaepistemic Injustice and Intellectual Disability: A pluralist Account of Epistemic Agency.” *Journal of social Philosophy* (2020):.

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MODULE 4: FOSTERING THE WELL BEING OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Unit 1: Involvement in decision and policy making

Unit 2: Services and needs of persons with special needs

Unit 3: Coping and living normal lives

Unit 4: Importance of legal laws for Persons with Special Needs

Unit 1: Involvement in decision and policy making

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 **Nothing about us without us**

3.2 **Main reasons for involvement in decision and policy making**

4.0 Conclusion and Summary

1.0 Introduction

In this unit the student will be introduced to the reasons why special needs persons must be involved in decision and policy making that concerns them. Furthermore the student will study how to meet their services and needs; why some live normal lives and study about laws that can protect their rights.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

Elucidate why persons with special needs must be involved in decision and policy making that concerns them.

Explain why some persons with special needs live close to normal life from others.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT CONTENTS

3.1 Nothing about us without us

3.2 Main reasons for involvement in decision and policy making

3.1 Nothing about us without us

When special needs persons are involved in decision and policy making they help in removing barriers instead of creating them when ignored. The core idea in special needs study in decision and policy making is “Nothing about us without us” which is better than for us, without us.”

3.2 Main reasons for involvement in decision and policy making

Persons with special needs should be involved in decision and policy making that concerns them for the following reasons:

- ❖ They are the experts of their own experiences
- ❖ Their lived conditions makes policies realistic not theoretical
- ❖ Avoids wrong assumptions policies
- ❖ Promote independence, access, dignity, and their rights
- ❖ Saves wastage of resources and time
- ❖ It is a legal right not a favor
- ❖ To build confidence and leadership in the disability persons
- ❖ To reduce stigma, rejection, and discrimination
- ❖ Changing the society’s attitude of recipients to contributors
- ❖ To ensure diversity among the disability community by including different voice\

Unit 2: Services and needs of persons with special needs CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Needs of special needs persons

3.2 Service needs of special needs persons

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit the student will study the services and needs of persons with special needs which are designed to remove barriers for them to live with dignity, independence, and enjoy equal opportunities.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

Differentiate between services and needs of persons with special needs.

Match needs with appropriate services for different special needs categories

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Needs of special needs persons

The needs of persons with special needs are the key requirements they must have to independently live close to normal lives with dignity. These persons have the same rights to enjoy all human needs in the community like others. For this to happen, specific needs and services must be worked upon. These includes among others: Accessibility to education and other social services and places, health care, assistive devices, work and participation in community activities, social acceptance and mobility support.

3.2 Services for special needs persons

The services for special needs persons are programs, support systems and interventions designed by communities, governments, NGOs to meet the needs of such persons. The aim is not charity but equal opportunities, independence and full participation in the activities of the community. These would encompass: vocational training, special education, physiotherapy, sign language, counseling, and inclusivity. When persons with special needs are provided with the right services, they contribute meaningfully to the communities and own families.

Unit 3: Coping and living normal lives

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Needs of special needs persons

3.2 Services for needs of special needs persons

1.0 Introduction

In this unit the student will be exposed to factors that can make some special needs persons live close to normal life.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

Differentiate between key ways and factors that make special needs person live normal lives

Describe factors that make some special needs person live close to normal lives

Explain how different factors help remove barriers, build confidence, reduce stigma and isolation, builds resilience, makes daily life easier.

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Key ways to cope up with disability

3.2 Factors that make some special needs people live close to normal lives

4.0

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Key ways to cope up with disability and live normal life

The phrase normal life as used in this sentence refer to being able to go to access education, work, engage in relationships/family, and participating in society with dignity and independence. Given right support, persons with special needs can live fulfilled lives. Listed below are the key ways that leads them live fulfilled lives.

- ❖ Strong family and community support
- ❖ Right support services
- ❖ Special education and skill training
- ❖ Positive mind set
- ❖ Self-advocacy
- ❖ Accessible environment
- ❖ Health care services
- ❖ Mental health regular checkups
- ❖ Inclusivity in decision and policy making,

- ❖ Legal laws to protect special needs persons and interest

3.2 factors that make some special needs people live close to normal lives

Factors leading to Living normal lives by special needs person means being able participate in community independently with dignity. This would involve going going to school, work, engage in family matters, etc. The following are some of the factors that can make this possible:

- ❖ Early identification of the impairment and intervention
- ❖ Supportive family and the attitude of the community
- ❖ Positive self-concept and self-advocacy
- ❖ Degree of impairment/effect
- ❖ strong healthcare and rehabilitation services
- ❖ special education and skills training
- ❖ Inclusive employment opportunities
- ❖ Access to assistive devices and technology
- ❖ Accessible physical environment
- ❖ Functional legal protection and policy implementation
- ❖ Economic empowerment
- ❖ Spiritual gifts and talents
- ❖ Inclusion in decision and policy making

The person with disability is limited by the barrier more than the disability itself. When barriers are removed they are capable of contributing to their lives and community like other. The environmental, attitude, and services are right, special needs persons live close to normal lives.

Unit 4: Legal laws for Persons with Special Needs

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Importance of legal laws to protect persons with special needs

3.2 Shortcomings of legal laws to benefit persons with special needs

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, the student will be exposed to the importance of legal measures to reduce the stigma and discrimination of the persons with special needs.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

Explain the importance of the legal laws for persons with special needs

Identify the weaknesses of legal laws for persons with special needs

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Importance of legal laws for persons with special needs

Legal laws are fundamental for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities (WHO 2011). The following are some of the reasons for legal protection:

- ❖ Human rights; Disability is a human right not a health issue. Laws ensure that persons with special needs are treated equally with other citizens to life, dignity, freedom, and from discrimination and stigmatization.
- ❖ Laws make services available to special needs person not as charity but as a right and duty of the nation. Without the backing of the law such services are unavailable
- ❖ Laws helps in removing the physical, attitudinal, and communication barriers
- ❖ Laws promotes inclusion and participation in policy making and implementation
- ❖ Legal protection increases chances of employment and economic empowerment
- ❖ Laws give persons with disability to complain when thir rights are compromised
- ❖ Laws changes society's view from charity and medical model to rights and social model
- ❖ Legal laws they move persons with special needs from being objects of care to subjects with human rights.

3.2 Shortcomings of legal laws to benefit persons with special needs

Laws are good. But laws alone without an implementation plan, funds, and monitoring, they are good for nothing. The following are some of the weaknesses of legal laws for special needs persons:

- ❖ Lack of awareness of the law by special needs persons, families, employers, officials, and community
- ❖ Poor enforcement and implementation plan
- ❖ Lack of budgets and funds to implement the enacted law
- ❖ Complicated language like where possible, subject to resources etc
- ❖ Cultural and attitudinal barriers that persist with discrimination ans superstition
- ❖ Lack of measuring tools for the progress of the enacted laws

- ❖ One size fits all method. Specific needs of different categories are defined in one
- ❖ Slow legal process when rights are violated.

4.0 Conclusion and Summary

This module has made you understand why some special needs people live close to normal lives independently with dignity. It has also helped you realize the needs and services for persons with special needs. The next chapter will help you to learn practical ways of meeting their needs and services.

Self-Assessment Exercise for Module 4

1. Discuss why some special needs people live with dignity and independently where as others don't.
2. Analyze the historical and the contemporary contributions of special needs persons by giving examples
3. Describe how you and your mission field shall meet the needs and services of special needs persons.

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MODULE 5: PRACTICAL IMPLIMENTATION

Unit 1: Accessibility/barrier- free design

Unit 2: Church, family and community engagement/support

Unit 3: The Assistive Tools used to meet different special needs categories

Unit 1: Accessibility/barrier- free design

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Accessibility design

3.2 Accessibility in public service other social centers

1.0 Introduction

In this unit the student will explore different ways of putting in action on ground the needs and services for special needs persons.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

Explain what barrier free design means

Identify key areas of accessibility design and services

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Accessibility design

This is an intentional design which aims at removing any kind of barriers so that all people may have full access to services equally without calling for special help.

This includes designing buildings, products, environment, websites, and other services for the well-being of every person. Accessibility design is designing with everyone in mind, including the elderly and persons with special needs.

3.2 key areas of accessibility design and services

- ❖ In schools and churches; Inclusive learning with resource rooms equipped with braille machines, hearing devices, magnifiers, and appropriate furniture, audio books, and bibles.
- ❖ In hospitals; rehabilitation centers, community health workers, mental health counselors
- ❖ Physical accessibility. Buildings with enough space, ramps, wide doors, accessible toilet facilities etc
- ❖ Digital/web accessibility. Websites and apps work with assistive technology; texts for images, keyboard navigation, screen readers, support captions.

- ❖ Communication accessibility. Information in formats that everyone can understand, sign language interpreters, braille, easy to read caption
- ❖ Transport accessibility. Public transport used by all with special seats for special needs persons, lifts, and audio announcement.
- ❖ Product accessibility. Everyday items usable by all; phones with voice control, doors with lever handles, etc

Unit 2: Church, family and community engagement/support

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Family roles

3.2 Church and community

1.0 Introduction

In this unit the student will learn the role of different support systems for the special needs persons.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

- Identify his/her role for special needs person
- Analyze the roles of other support systems

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Family roles

Families are key support systems to help the person live independently. They should strive to give care that makes the person independent and not dependent.

Key roles includes but not limited to:

- ❖ Provision of basic needs; feeding, health care and hygiene
- ❖ Providing safety: preventing any form of abuse
- ❖ Teaching life skills at home: self-care, cooking, exercises, and money handling
- ❖ Advocating: speaking up for person in schools, hospital and community
- ❖ Giving emotional support; Build confidence by providing love, encouragement, and building self-esteem
- ❖ Decision making and planning roles: Guiding and counseling

- ❖ Connecting to services and community: schools, hospitals, government programs
- ❖ Teaching the community the importance of inclusion; how to respect persons with disabilities, giving them support , attitude change, taking them to church, and other ceremonies.
- ❖ Shift from charity to personal rights.
- ❖ Link to the world.

3.2 Church and community

The chief role of the church and the community is inclusion and accommodation. Inclusion takes place where special needs persons live, worship, and interacts. The church and community are responsible for giving special needs persons support beyond schools and hospitals. The following are some of the roles of the church and community as support systems for the special needs persons;

Church roles:

- ❖ Church: Gives spiritual and emotional support that includes giving hope, prayers, counseling, to person with disabilities and their families
- ❖ Inclusion and acceptance: providing devices, ramps, involving them in all church life activities
- ❖ Creating awareness, advocacy, disability Sabbath, committees, teaching and protecting their rights.
- ❖ Filling gaps where government fails by establishing special needs schools, trainings, rehabilitation centers, and charity programs.
- ❖ Giving skills to promote economic empowerment

Community roles:

The community involves neighbors, leaders, schools, markets CBOs and environment. Their roles include:

- ❖ Social inclusion in events, games, and community meetings.
- ❖ Creating accessible public places with ramps, toilet facilities and space
- ❖ Protection of PWDs from any form of abuse
- ❖ Economic empowerment role for reducing dependence and poverty among PWDs
- ❖ Community awareness and education roles to the community
- ❖ Formation of support groups for PWDs

Unit 3: The Assistive Tools used to meet different special needs categories

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.1 Main Contents

3.1 The Assistive Tools for the Blind and Visually Impaired

3.2 The assistive tools for the physically impaired

1.0 Introduction

In this unit the student will learn different assistive tools (services) that help special needs people to learn, communicate, move, and perform daily tasks with more dignity.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student should be able to

- ❖ Identify the type of assistive tool required for a few categories of special needs
- ❖ know the importance of assistive tools to people with disability

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Assistive Tools for the Blind and Visually Impaired

- ❖ Braille books
- ❖ Talking books- eg recorded on cassettes, CD-ROM, DVD and on the internet as e-Books
- ❖ Talking newspapers
- ❖ Screen reader
- ❖ Screen magnifier
- ❖ Voice recognition software
- ❖ Braille translation software
- ❖ Braille writing equipment
- ❖ Closed circuit television
- ❖ Braille embosser
- ❖ Scanners:

3.2 The assistive tools and facilities for the physically impaired

- ❖ Wheel chair
- ❖ Walking sticks
- ❖ Wheelchair Ramps
- ❖ Doorways
- ❖ Automatic doors which are appropriate for wheelchair easy access.
- ❖ Enough space for wheelchair

- ❖ Functioning and comfortable spacious elevators wide to accommodate wheelchairs.
- ❖ Comfortable chairs
- ❖ Well trained staff that is always willing to render assistance to persons with special needs

- ❖ Visible Signage
- ❖ Clean Toilet facilities.

4.0 Conclusion and summary

In this module you have looked at the roles of the church and community as supportive groups that have different responsibilities for the special needs person to be independent, and live close to normal lives. You have seen that the church is to provide, emotional and spiritual support, moral and other spiritual services. Whereas, the community is to provide protection, social and economic, support. Put together they create an inclusive environment where PDWs can live with dignity. The emphasis should be on church and community leadership who must receive training to change others' attitude.

Self-Assessment Exercises for Module 5

1. Prepare a presentation to sensitize the church to meet its obligation as a supportive agent to the special needs persons.
2. Explain how the your mission field is going to support families with special persons of different categories

Reference for Further Reading

Hardwick, Lamar. Disability and the Church: A Vision for Diversity and Inclusion. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2021.

Fox, Bethany McKinney. Disability and the way of Jesus: Holistic Healing in the Gospels and the Church. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2019.

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MODULE 6: CHURCH AND ELDERLY PERSONS AND RETIREES

Unit 1: Elderly Persons as Special Needs Persons

Unit 2: Retirees as special needs persons

Unit 3: The Role of the Church leaders and the church

UNIT 1: Elderly Persons as Special needs

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 needs of elderly persons
 - 3.2 services of elderly person
- 4.0 Conclusion

1.0 Introduction

Elderly persons are considered special needs not because they have disability, but because aging needs extra support to live normal life independently with respect. They need physical, mental, social, information and economic support.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

- Explain the needs of the elderly person
- Identify the services needed for elderly persons

3.0 Main Content

- 3.1 Needs of elderly persons
- 3.2 Services of elderly person

3.1 Needs of elderly persons

Aging leads to body weakening and system slow down. This calls for extra support for one to live independently with dignity. The following are the needs of the elderly persons:

- ❖ Physically: Mobility, health needs and support
- ❖ Socially: Belonging and inclusion needs
- ❖ Economically :Financial and needs and support
- ❖ Environmental: Accessibility Needs
- ❖ Spiritually : Emotional, Spiritual needs and support
- ❖ Cognitively: Mental needs and support

3.2 Services of elderly person

Services needs of the elderly people refer to the specific support services needed at that particular time to live with dignity, health and independent. These match with their needs. They include but not limited to:

- ❖ Health services: regular medical checkups, home based nursing care etc

- ❖ Mobility services: physiotherapy, occupation therapy, walking sticks, wheel chairs, glasses and other assistive devices.
- ❖ Social services: Preventing isolation and loneliness
- ❖ Financial services: skill training for income, pension schemes, subsidies for food, housing and transport
- ❖ Housing and accessibility services: accessible public places, ramps, handrails, non-slippery floor
- ❖ Legal and protection services: Property and will services, protection from abuse services,
- ❖ Spiritual and psychological services; Emotional and spiritual care services, counseling, mental health services and chaplaincy services iat home and hospital
- ❖ Information and education services: health education, audios, large prints and training in the use of technology.

Unit 2: Retirees as special needs persons

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Needs of retirees

3.2 Services needs for retirees

1.0 Introduction

Human life from childhood to death is a journey of transition, from one stage to another. Retirement is one of the major life transitions. After employment, human needs shift from work productivity to wellbeing, health, survival and purpose. There are experiential challenges that retirees face after retirement. These include physical decline, economic dependence, social loss, psychological stress, and environmental barriers.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

Explain the needs of the retirees

Identify the services needed for retirees

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Needs of retirees

Retirements always comes with costs. On one hand when not planned or supported well it affects the well-being of a retiree and ends up living a life of dependence. On the other hand, when planned for early or supported, retirement becomes a stage of dignity and contribution. Retirees' needs are always age related. Given right services, would live fully independent and active lives. The needs of retirees are grouped in areas which include:

- ❖ Economic/ financial need: financial security, stable income and affordable health care
- ❖ Social needs: companionship, respect, belonging to overcome loneliness
- ❖ Health needs: medical care, checkups, rehabilitation
- ❖ Psychological needs: to find purpose, self-esteem, and emotional support
- ❖ Environmental needs: housing, transport and accessibility

3.2 Service needs for retirees

Service needs of retirees refer to specific type of support needed to live healthy, independent and dignified lives after productive years of service. Services required fall under the following categories:

- ❖ Health services: To deal with age related and chronic conditions
- ❖ Economic and financial services: To address financial security after income reduces or stops
- ❖ Social services: To address loneliness and isolation
- ❖ Psychological services: To deal with stress/mental well-being and sense of purpose
- ❖ Spiritual services : To give emotional and spiritual support
- ❖ Housing and accessibility services: To address shelter and age friendly environment
- ❖ Legal and information services: To protect their rights and empowerment

Unit 3: The Role of the Church leaders and the church

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Roles of the church leaders to the elderly and retirees

3.2 Roles of the church to the elderly and retirees

1.0 Introduction

In this unit the student will analyze the roles of the church leaders and the church to the elderly and retirees.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

- Explain the roles of church leaders to the elderly and retirees
- Describe the roles of the church to the elderly and retirees

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Roles of the church leaders to the elderly and retirees

The church is considered the second home and family for elderly and retirees for purpose, support, and belonging. Leadership roles would encompass the following:

- ❖ Giving emotional and spiritual support role
- ❖ Visiting and comforting roles
- ❖ Giving information that concern them
- ❖ Educating the church and community about their needs and services
- ❖ Performing Counseling roles
- ❖ Mobilizing their support
- ❖ Linking the elderly and retirees to support groups and services

3.2. Roles of the Church

- ❖ Social inclusion
- ❖ Creating space that make them feel valued
- ❖ Material and welfare support
- ❖ Giving them meaningful responsibilities
- ❖ Advocacy roles
- ❖ Spiritual support

4.0 Conclusion and Summary for Module

In this module you have seen that elderly and retirees are considered special needs people simply because age combined with retirement creates vulnerability that requires extra support in order for one to live a dignified life. We have also seen that once their service needs are met, old age and retirement becomes a period of contribution and independence.

The needs and services of elderly persons and retirees centers around personal health, finances, information and educational services, legal services, social, economic, accessible services to public places and spiritual services. These services and support once provided, the elderly persons become active living with dignity and independence.

Handling of older people and retirees requires special skills. Church leadership and congregation must be trained on how to play their roles effectively. Emphasis must be on being intentional while planning.

Self-assessment exercise

1. What are the information needs of the elderly and retiree people?
2. Explain how you are going to sensitize the members of your mission field to prepare for old age and retirement in order to live an independent life with dignity?
3. Evaluate the challenges of the elderly and retiree persons in the rural and urban settings?
4. What is your take home from this course Guide?

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