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Social and Psychological Dimension of Disability: the Strategy of Creation of Equal Opportunities

Социально-психологическое измерение инвалидности:
стратегия создания равных возможностей

Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of social and psychological problems of persons with disabilities, which is important not only in itself, but also in the context of studying the mechanisms of integration of persons with disabilities into society, the ways of creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in order to create the optimal conditions for disclosure of compensatory opportunities, effective adaptation and socialization. The psychological aspect of disability reflects both the personality-psychological orientation of the disabled person themselves and the emotional and psychological perception of the disability problem by society. Besides, in the most cases, the social insecurity of persons with disabilities is related to the presence of a psychological factor, which shapes their attitude to society and complicates the adequate contact with it. Thus, the considered psychological problems of persons with disabilities prevent from the normal relations with others, adversely affect the ability to work, increase their social limitations. Solving the main social problems of the disabled (such as improvement of social status, improvement of financial position, professional demand, etc.), the specialists need to take into account the above-mentioned personal psychological problems.

Keywords: a person with disability, the mechanisms of integration, the models of disability, social barriers, society, the psychological factors.

Резюме

Статья посвящена изучению социально-психологических проблем инвалидов в контексте изучения механизмов интеграции лиц с инвалидностью в социум, путей создания равных возможностей для инвалидов. Рассматривается создание оптимальных условий для раскрытия компенсаторных возможностей, эффективной адаптации и социализации. Психологический аспект инвалидности отражает как личностно-психологическую ориентацию самого инвалида, так и эмоционально-психологическое восприятие проблемы инвалидности в обществе. Кроме того, в значительной степени социальная незащищенность лиц с инвалидностью связана с наличием психологического фактора, формирующего их отношение к обществу, и затрудняет адекватный контакт с ним. В статье рассмотрены психологические проблемы людей с инвалидностью, которые препятствуют нормальным отношениям с окружающими, негативно сказываются на работоспособности, в общем мировосприятии и усиливают социальные ограничения. Решая основные социальные проблемы инвалидов, а именно: повышение социального статуса, улучшение материального положения,

профессиональной востребованности и т. д., специалистам необходимо учитывать вышеуказанные личностные психологические проблемы.

Ключевые слова: люди с инвалидностью, механизмы интеграции, модели инвалидности, социальные барьеры, общество, психологические факторы.

Actuality of the research

The problem of persons with disabilities' integration into public life has been existing throughout human existence. An active social life that involves work, leisure, socializing with family and friends, for many people it is so commonplace, that not everyone is even aware of the value of what they have. At the same time, there are people among us, for whom each of these daily elements is very important, since they are completely or partially devoid of what would appear to be ordinary activities. Disability has become a part of human existence long ago. People with disabilities make up the largest minority in the world, but, unlike many other minorities, it always has an open membership: each of us can become a member at any time, for any reason; due to accident, military trauma, illness or ageing.

In the vast majority of cases, the disability is considered a consequence of social, economic or political factors, an accident or armed conflict.

The purpose of the proposed article is the consideration of social and psychological problems of persons with disabilities in the context of studying the mechanisms of integration of persons with disabilities in society, the ways of creating equal opportunities, optimal conditions for opening up the compensatory opportunities, effective adaptation and socialization of people with disabilities.

Formulation of the problem

Currently, there are nearly 2.7 million people with disabilities in Ukraine, of which there are more than 80% of working age. However, there are many obstacles to integrating them into public life, receiving the equal opportunities, such as: the low competitiveness of persons with disabilities in the labor market, insufficient efficiency of the providing system them with technical means of rehabilitation and lack of conditions for ensuring uninterrupted access to certain places, carrying out the rehabilitation measures in a fragmentary, untimely and formal way. The problem of integration of persons with disabilities into public life and the creation of equal opportunities, exists throughout human existence. The world experience in dealing with the issues of comprehensive integration of people with disabilities into public life has its own peculiarities. At the same time, a common problem on a planetary scale is the development of strategies, concepts, approaches, models, programs, etc. for the most complete and painless inclusion of the specified group of people in all spheres of life. Along with the active involvement of political, public, social, medical and other organizations in addressing the issue of adaptation of the disabled in society, psychological support is the most urgent issue, since the overriding task is to create the conditions and accumulate all external resources to help persons with disabilities overcome internal and external barriers to the integration into a socially active society.

Theoretical basis of the research

Careful inspection with a number of studies demonstrates the multifaceted nature of the socio-economic and socio-psychological integration of persons with disabilities. The problems of disability, in particular, the socialization and optimization of the process of persons with disabilities' integration into society, they are considered mainly in terms of sociocentric theories (Diurkheim E., Spenser H., Paterson T. and others). Scientists have considered the social problems of a particular person through the study of society as a whole, and the anthropocentric tendencies (Piazhe Zh., Erikson E., Vyhotskyi L., Kon I., Andreeva H. and oth.), which discusses the psychological aspects of daily relationships. From the point of view of sociology Alpatova P. and Zub T. studied the difficulties faced by a person with disability in an urban environment [1]. Problems of violation of social and psychological adaptation of persons with disabilities are considered by most authors (Almazov B., Bielychev S., Dychev T., Ratter M., Skrypnyk V., Komar T. and others) as a process of disturbing the homeostatic equilibrium of the individual and the environment, as a violation of the individual's adaptation due to the action of various reasons; as a violation caused by the disparity of the innate needs of the individual to the requirements of the social environment; as the inability of the individual to adapt to their own needs and aspirations. So, the sharp, problem that is receiving more and more attention from the society, is the problem of discrimination and stigma [2–4], the difficulties in obtaining the education, access to the free labor market, etc.

According to Renko M., Harris S. and Caldwell K. [5], the term "disabled person" is used very often in a generalized sense, whereas in practice these are different people and each person has his or her own individual story.

The problems of social rehabilitation of people with disabilities in various aspects and the issues of his status in society are considered in the works of such researchers as: Anokhina P., Dementieva N., Dyskina A., Kim Ye., Lahynkina V., Mukhlaieva A., Osadchykh A., Khrapylina L. and others; the research in the field of rehabilitation was conducted by such specialists as: Pavlova I., Miasyshcheva V., Kabanova M., Andrieieva O., Dyskina A. and others.

Analysis of scientific studies of theory and practice showed that the science has developed the theoretical foundations of psychological and pedagogical convoy and support for the development of personality. Psychologists, teachers, social teachers have made a great contribution to the development of the problem of psychological and pedagogical support such as: Hazman O., Vulfov B., Bondarevska E., Vyhotskyi L., Rubinshtein S., Leontiev O., Morova N., Novikov L., Kan-Kalyk V., Slactenin V., Levkivska H., Sorochynska V., Shtyfurak V. and others.

However, the problem of the integral view of the essence of socio-economic integration of persons with disabilities in society and socio-psychological support of these people in the process of social integration, its forms and methods is in the process of accumulation of empirical material and theoretical developments.

But, the study of social and psychological problems of persons with disabilities is important not in itself, but in the context of studying the mechanisms of persons with disabilities' integration into society.

Statement of the main results

Socio-psychological adaptation changes the inner world of a person appears the new intentions, knowledge of the activity in which he is engaged, happens self-correction and self-determination of the personality, changes in self-esteem, purpose and goals of the personality, etc. Based on this, there is a change of attitude towards self-affirmation, the individual acquires the necessary knowledge, skills and expertises, which determines the essence of his social and psychological adaptation to society, the success of its course.

It should be noted that the social and psychological adaptation of persons with disabilities is related to the optimization of the social and psychological being of the individual, adjusted to his/her abilities, needs and values. But for a long time there was a dominant opinion in society according to which the limitation of a person's functional capacity should automatically reduce the range of his needs. And most importantly, for people with disabilities, as a rule, it was about basic needs, not the values that determine the meaning of their lives and, primarily, spiritual values.

The development of a person with disability, his or her self-consciousness under the influence of various social factors leads to that may or may not resolve the resolution of contradictions, which ultimately leads to the adaptation or disadaptation of the personality. If social values are new to the person, the types of behavior are contrary to the previously learned, which are a part of his inner world, the balance between the external and the internal is disturbed; there is a psychological dissonance, in our opinion, that leads to the formation of negative mental qualities and properties of a person with disability.

This realized analysis of psychological characteristics of persons with disabilities allowed to state another fact, that is because of their lack of demand in the labor market and some social isolation occurs the process of removal from the society, the world, which slows down the formation of an active life position. There is not developing a strong sense of trust to the world and other people in these individuals. Due to this, it is a quite common for people with disabilities to regard all people as a negative environment. Most of these people do not live a full life, they do not have sufficient motivation to communicate, and therefore the result of it is seclusion, detachment from people. In these circumstances, the formation of "diffuse" identity is possible.

New research suggests that even if improvements are made, the most people with disabilities remain socially vulnerable population, they do not have a full-fledged social life, have difficulties with employment or cannot go beyond specialized enterprises and they are subject to discrimination and stigmatization by society [6]. The complexity of social integration of persons with disabilities is associated with a number of difficulties of a social and psychological nature. It was largely facilitated by a health-oriented model of disability which has been prevalent in our society until recently.

The medical model considers the life limitation as a human problem that is directly caused by a disease, injury, or other illness that requires the professional health care in the form of individual treatment by professionals. Life-limiting regulation is aimed at treating or adapting a person and changing behavior [7]. According to this model, a social stereotype has

emerged in society called social stigma, that represents the disabled as "sick", who require the constant irrelevant care, the fate of which is to stay in boarding facilities.

Stigmatization of persons with disabilities as a social group becomes the increasingly significant socio-cultural phenomenon. At the same time, the mechanisms of stigma are manifested at the level of self-identification. In such cases, it is customary to talk about self-stigmatization [8]. Moreover, the behavior and commitment of the stigmatized individual are carried out in accordance with the assigned social role. Thus, a person who has partially lost his or her disability, in the course of exposure to the label «helpless patient», can completely refuse to be active over time, even if the necessary potential is preserved or restored as a result of successful rehabilitation. In addition, the stigma of disability can develop in a person such personal qualities as infantile, weak-willed, abstinence. At self-stigmatization, it is no important any more as others perceive the individual: as a typical representative of society or not.

Another disability model, called socially oriented, had the negative consequences within which persons with disabilities are perceived as "socially weak" people, who were incapable of living independently, in this connection increased the control of their life, which often went into hyperopic.

Recently, there has been a rethinking of these models, combining their positive experience with the elimination of shortcomings; the idea of independent living of persons with disabilities, which involves inclusion and lack of stigma, has become fundamentally new.

In other words, we are observing a paradigm shift in helping people with disabilities, where as opposed to separated from each other medical and social models the biopsychosocial model of disability is now being implemented. At present, the biopsychosocial model of assistance to persons with disabilities is focused on the idea of normalizing both their own lives and their families; the integrating of the individual into society and creating an accessible environment for them. Its essence lies in the realization of human capabilities in particular situations of life, taking into account his needs and environmental factors, rather than focusing solely on treating the disease or its effects. The specified model is the basis of the International Classification of Functioning, Restriction of Life and Health [7], which is universal in nature.

Another aspect of the stigmatization problem is state and regional policy. On the one hand, the state tries to take care of its citizens who have special needs and who are in most cases socially vulnerable. On the other hand, according to the research [2], the imperfection of the system as a whole it causes that the people with disabilities stop seeking the changes in their lives, lose the interest in normal work, get used to the fact that they are taken care by the state and gradually begin to take a passive position in life. This situation leads to the fact that people with disabilities are poorly integrated into the society and become object of stigmatization. They are despised, considered a burden to society [1]. This particularly complicates the lives of those people who, despite the physical obstacles, seek to find a full-fledged job and have a full social and working life.

To eliminate the discrimination and stigmatization problems the scientists suggest to work in two directions: to take action with those who are stigmatized and discriminated and with those who stigmatize and discriminate that need the different ways of solving the problem.

It is important that researchers [9] differentiate between physical limitations due to disability and loss the ability to work as a result of disability, claiming that the first is about the limitations of a particular physical condition, while the last is a consequence of the perception of the disabled by society which demonstrates them in a socially limited and depreciated position. Such discrimination on the part of society leads to a situation in which physical and social barriers inhibit the personal choice of a person with a disability.

In addition, the negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities acquire the character of stressors – factors that impede the process of social adaptation to the social environment, reducing the effectiveness of adaptation measures. According to Yu. Urmantsev's typology [10], the adaptation factors are divided into: stressors that disrupt the adaptation process; stressors that stimulate the adaptation process; neuters that do not affect the adaptation process.

Adaptation is a two-way process of mutual adaptation of the subject and the environment, which indicates the need for their counter activity. Based on this, it becomes apparent that the effectiveness of the process of persons with disabilities' social adaptation depends not only on environmental conditions, its loyalty to the adapter but also from the efforts of the individual with disability, his/her abilities and desire to be involved in the situation and the system of relationships [11].

Exactly the psychological aspect of disability reflects both the personality-psychological orientation of the disabled person himself and the emotional and psychological perception of the problem of disability by society. For some people with disabilities, entering the open labor market is very difficult due to the physical reasons, while others with disabilities have fewer restrictions and can compete with regular job applicants in non-specialized enterprises. However, they are hindered by the psychological barriers or lack of education or information.

We have analyzed the main barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from having a fulfilling social life, including professional realization. Thus, the following barriers were identified for the socio-economic integration of persons with disabilities: physical, psychological, educational and information and communication barriers. The identified groups are presented in Figure 1.

Usually, the most attention is brought to a group which is directly related to the physical disabilities that a person with a disability has.

The next obstacle group is equally important; it is a communicative group, which includes a communicative barrier. Communicative barriers are one of the most complex social problems of children and young people with disabilities, which are the result of emotional protective self-isolation. According to the researchers, the communicative barrier, in turn, creates the motivational, ethical, emotional difficulties [12].

The following are educational and information barriers which are related that in not in every locality, persons with disabilities are able to

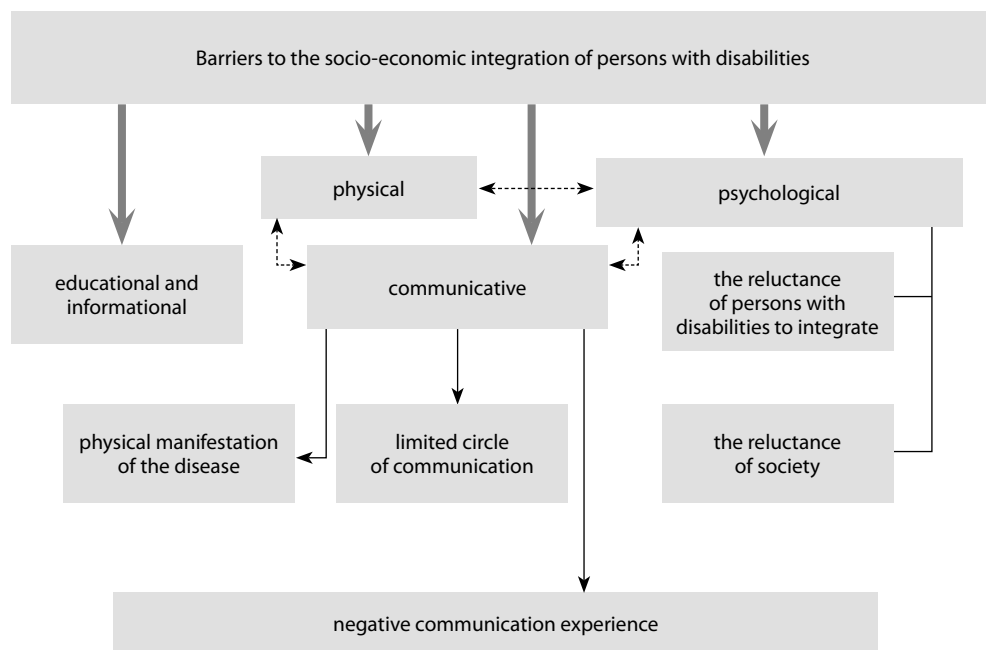


Fig. 1. Types of barriers to the socio-economic integration of persons with disabilities

obtain full-fledged counseling on services and organizations that can assist them, as well as to have the opportunities in the labor market [1]. Regarding education, Ukraine's educational institutions are still not adapted to the fact that their students may include persons with disabilities.

In addition, the importance of socio-psychological barriers should be noted which are based on dislike and disgust. At the same time, the psychological barriers are equally important. Not only people with disabilities but also others around them can be the source of these barriers.

Firstly, a person with disability can seek more isolated life from society. Such people often close up in their world and have a very narrow circle of communication that involves family members, doctors, possibly several friends, and the same disabled person. The first reason for such lifestyle can be the limitation of physical activity and the lack of adequate infrastructure, which makes a person a prisoner of his own accommodation. Also, a person may despair in himself and others, and refuse the opportunity to realize himself in society.

Secondly, this is the phenomenon of stigmatization we discussed above.

Thus, the above-mentioned psychological problems of persons with disabilities prevent to have normal relations with others, adversely affect the ability to work, in general, worldview and increase their social limitations. Therefore, for the effective psychological support of people with disabilities it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the mental state: emotional, cognitive and behavioral spheres.

Solving the main social problems of the disabled, such as: improving social status, restricting the financial standing, professional demand, etc., specialists need to take into account the above personal problems. The participation in public life is considered by people with disabilities as the key to solving their main task: to achieve full inclusion in society, while recognizing their special needs and rights.

When it comes to the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in society, a key role in raising awareness of people with disabilities' rights and the Media plays a role in changing their attitude. In the media, people with disabilities are often described from extreme positions. This submission only preserves the stereotypes about people with disabilities and it does not take into account that they are a group as interesting and multifaceted as any other group in society.

Therefore, the combination of the considered barriers can lead to another problem. Some groups of persons with disabilities work in the specialized enterprises, such as UTOS enterprises, but they do not have access to the open labor market [1, 10, 13]. For some people with disabilities, entering to the open labor market is very difficult for physical reasons, while other people with disabilities are prevented by psychological barriers or lack of education or information.

Therefore, one of the first approaches to the full integration of persons with disabilities is their physical rehabilitation and adaptation. So, it is important to adapt the homes, rehabilitation places and routes to the needs of persons with disabilities [14]. It is also necessary to make reasonable accommodation to jobs, work operations, tools, equipment and work organization to make it easier the professional training and employment of these people. Therefore, improving the infrastructure of the living area and the frequent stay of persons with disabilities should be tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities with different types of diseases [15]. Special attention is paid to the observance of modern norms and standards need to be given while building new infrastructure in particular when constructing new buildings, especially buildings of educational institutions, state institutions, social services. Similarly, the development of new models of vehicles and the purchase of these vehicles for public transport networks must be carried out taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities.

Last but not least is the availability of special equipment and equipment for persons with disabilities, their families, businesses and organizations where persons with disabilities work or plan to work.

Firstly, all interested people should have the access to the information on where can obtain or purchase the necessary equipment or machinery. Secondly, it is important to use the fiscal instruments, such as: the exemption from internal taxes or any other internal charges, which are levied on import or later individual goods, the training materials and the equipment which are necessary for persons with disabilities.

In order to overcome information barriers, it is important to organize the work of social services, employment services, medical institutions and other services and organizations so that everyone with disabilities and their families receive full information about their rights, training, rehabilitation and employment opportunities. Active collaboration with traditional

and online media is needed to systematically extinction the significant information to persons with disabilities.

Another group of ways to overcome the communication and information barriers is to use the new technologies. Today's information technologies allow to expand the circle of communication through the Internet, in particular, through the social networks, forums and means of remote communication. Therefore, one method of accelerating the socio-economic integration of persons with disabilities is to provide the certain groups of such people with the Internet access. Communication through the Internet can have several advantages for certain categories of people with disabilities: no need to walk or go, overcoming infrastructure imperfections; other people with whom a person with disability communicates may not see this person at all, and therefore, not to know that they are consorting with a person with certain physical characteristics.

At the same time, this method of communication is not without its disadvantages. Thus, for some persons with disabilities, who have the movement restrictions, it may be necessary to equip them with additional technical means in order for the disabled person to be able to use the new technologies independently. Older people may find it difficult to absorb new technologies, so organizing the training in the basics of computer awareness becomes relevant. Moreover, online communication cannot replace the traditional communication and, moreover, it cannot be the only solution of socio-economic integration problem of persons with disabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate other physical and psychological barriers for the mobility of such people and more meaningful communication with other members of society.

In addition, other technologies may be used to overcome the communication barriers. Thus, Politis Yu., Robb N., Yakkundi A. and others describe in their work several examples when to the development of computer games for people with autism spectrum disorders and certain mental disorders (intellectual disorders) were involved the people with such disorders [16]. Each of the described development projects by authors and using of specialized computer games was intended at improving the reading, communication and socialization skills of people with disabilities. This way of solving the problem of developing communication skills for Ukraine with its potential in the IT sphere is quite real and can complement other methods, which are used today by specialists of social and medical institutions. At the same time, it remains necessary to continue the studying of such computer games effectiveness for different groups of persons with disabilities.

Finding the ways to solve the problem of social integration of people with disabilities should begin with an in-depth barrier analysis. In many cases, the main barrier is the physical limitation of the person himself it cannot be eliminated. However, existing approaches make it possible to overcome or reduce both physical and psychological, communication, information and educational barriers. In our opinion, it is important to have a comprehensive approach and using the different methods at the same time to achieve a faster and more efficient result. The attempt to generalize the contemporary paradigm of persons with disabilities social integration is presented in Fig. 2.

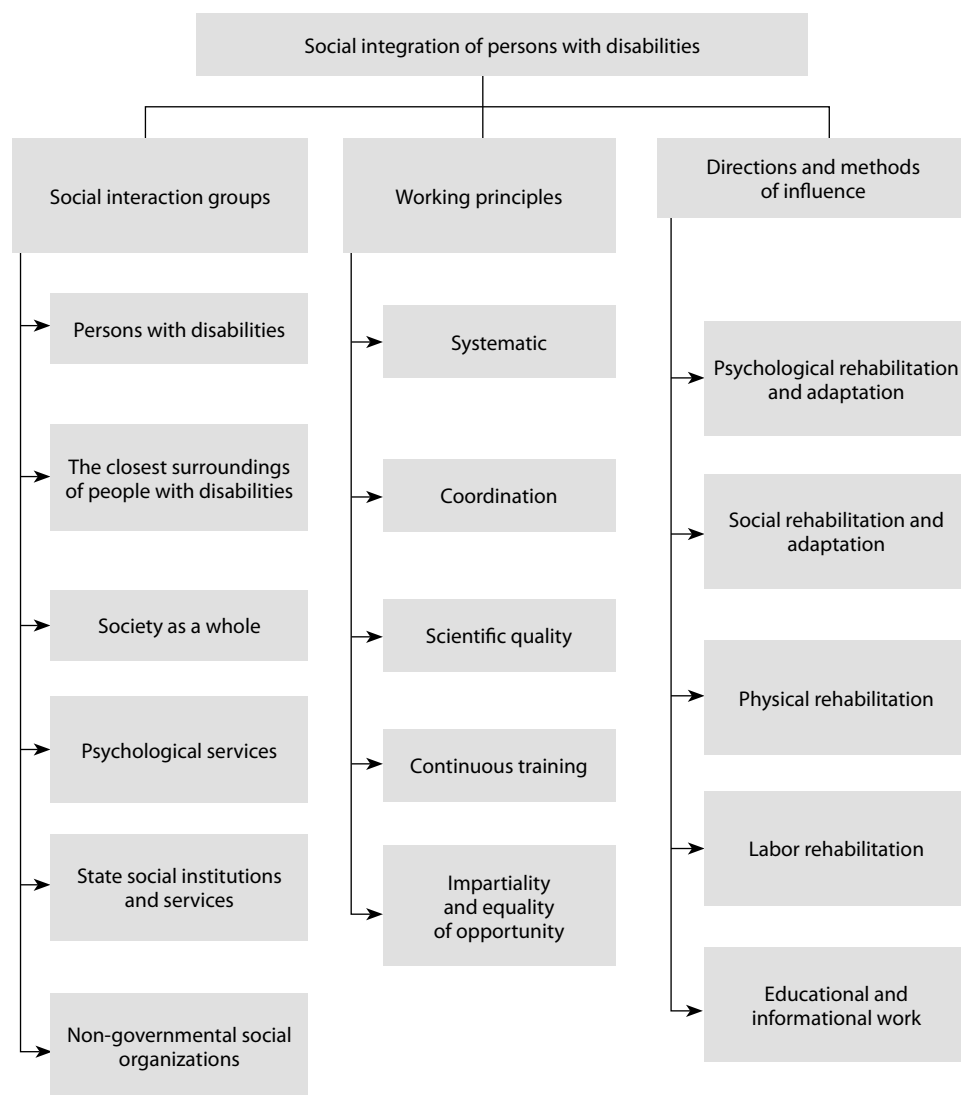


Fig. 2. The modern paradigm of persons with disabilities social integration

This paradigm displays the main focus from purely physical problems to other problems and the needs that persons with disabilities have. It is important to develop the interaction between individual stakeholders, especially among the society as a whole and persons with disabilities, search for common touch points, resolve the existing conflicts and build the trust.

Such work should be based on the systematic principles, science, equal opportunity, impartial treatment, continuous training and coordination of the activities of the various stakeholders.

■ CONCLUSIONS

Today, the problem of people with disabilities is very urgent for Ukraine. The implementation of the social programs, activities and initiatives which are aimed at the comprehensive rehabilitation of persons with certain physical health disorders and realizing their potential, despite all other factors, significantly slow down by the fact that at the domestic level in Ukrainian society there is a set of persistent negative stereotypes about such people. At the same time, the social and psychological support of persons with disabilities includes many forms of assistance, such as: social support, psychological support, psychological and pedagogical support, etc. Social support, as a continuous, prolonged process, foresees the social rehabilitation and integration of persons with disabilities into society and it is made possible by the enrichment of macro-social environmental conditions (environment availability, expanding social networking).

Thus, the ensuring equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in Ukraine is possible in the coordinated position of the various social institutions, the citizens themselves and their associations. The state requires further elaboration of the system of privileges, which are established for employment of persons with disabilities.

In addition, the urgent solution requires the issue of monitoring compliance with the employment standard, to prevent its formalism. A separate program that can be implemented at the assets of the budget or from international sources with the participation of public organizations of persons with disabilities is a program to promote self-employment of persons with disabilities.

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