

CPD Online take-home notes

FREDA – a human rights-based approach to clinical practice

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The introduction of the Human Rights Act 1998 in the UK has not, unfortunately, led to widespread knowledge and understanding in patient and carer groups, healthcare professionals or at organisational levels.

There has been recognition of this knowledge deficit by government bodies and other agencies, which has led to the introduction of a human rights based approach (HRBA) which can be used by healthcare individuals and organisations alike in everyday practice.

A HRBA avoids the need to have technical knowledge of the HRA 1998 and associated case law i.e. a 'top down' approach.

A HRBA is based upon concepts that underpin all the Articles of the HRA 1998 i.e. a 'bottom up' approach.

The HRBA is the process by which human rights can be protected in clinical and organisational practice by adherence to underlying core values of:

Fairness
Respect
Equality
Dignity
Autonomy

i.e FREDA

The FREDA principles roughly equate to various Articles of the HRA (these relationships though are not exclusive).

Fairness ↔ Article 6 = right to a fair trial

Respect ↔ Article 8 = right to private and family life

Equality ↔ Article 14 = prohibition of discrimination

Dignity ↔ Article 3 = freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment

Autonomy ↔ Article 8

Reflection questions

(3.15) Think about your clinical experience. Can you recall any situations where patient dignity may have been compromised? How did you respond to such situations and what did this achieve?

(4.11) For each of the FREDA core values write down three healthcare issues that may impact upon the individual core value.

References

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Further reading

A recent publication by the **Royal College of Psychiatrists (2009)** allied to the Fair Deal for mental health campaign addresses the issues of equality and human rights with regards to social inclusion. [[website](#)]

A second publication from the **Equality and Human Rights Commission** entitled 'Human Rights Inquiry' was published in June 2009. This report provides an in-depth view of what human rights mean in Britain today and how embedded they are in our culture. [[website](#)]

The CPD Online modules Advance decisions in psychiatry (by Dr Lisa Williams and Dr John Rigby) and Advance directives in Ireland (by Dr Joan Cunningham) offer further information on these subjects.

The Department of Health (2008b) publication entitled '**Human Rights in Healthcare: A framework for local action**' provides a review of the use of a human rights based approach in healthcare and how it relates to the Human Rights Act. This publication is available from the Department of Health website. [[website](#)]

The Labour government's record on equality since it came into power in 1997 is analysed in the book **Towards a more equal society? Poverty, inequality and Policy since 1997** (Hills et al, 2009). Chapter 14 by P. Vizard entitled **The Equality and Human Rights Commission: a new point of departure in the battle against discrimination and disadvantage** is particularly pertinent. [[Amazon](#)]

The Tribunals Service: Rules and Legislation can be found at the Tribunals Service website. [[website](#)]

Legal cases

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