Strathprints Institutional Repository

Woolfson, Lisa (2003) *Disabled children, parents and society - a need for cognitive reframing.* Proceedings of the British Psychological Society, 11 (1). p. 5. ISSN 1350-472X

Woolfson, Lisa (2003) *Disabled children, parents and society - a need for cognitive reframing.* Proceedings of the British Psychological Society, 11 (1). pp. 5-5. ISSN 1350-472X

http://eprints.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/1768/

Disabled children, parents and society – a need for cognitive reframing

L WOOLFSON, University of Strathclyde.

When parents receive a diagnosis that their child is disabled, many families adjust to this healthily and cope well but others do not. Feelings of hopelessness, social isolation of the family within the community, and child behaviour problems have all been reported. This paper focuses on the experience of disability at the level of the family by integrating perspectives from a social model of disability with psychological research on the role of cognitive change in coping and adjustment to the stress of disability and disease.

Following the argument of a social model of disability that society's attitudes towards disability need to change, the paper explores how changes in attitudes and beliefs might take place at the level of the family. Negative societal attitudes to disability identified by the social model of disability are interpreted with respect to how they might translate to parent views of their disabled child within the family. Resultant parenting beliefs and their possible implications for family interaction, child behaviour and social inclusion are explored. It is argued that cognitive reframing is needed in parents of children with disabilities in order for them to carry out effective parenting in a way that promotes social inclusion both for the disabled child and the family. Possible areas for cognitive change are suggested, illustrated by case vignettes.

The British Psychological Society
2003 Proceedings 5