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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>Services for disabled people are changing as a part of the ongoing processes of change in the area of welfare services in the municipalities. The study examines the role and position of social work within these processes. With a starting point in the close connections between social movements and social work, I have pointed out the impact of the Disabled people's movement on the ideas of disability, the so called disability models. Parallell to the changes in the society and the shifting discourse of disability models, social work is changing as well. In this study focus lies on empowerment and dialogue as ideas which are both theoretically and ethically motivated, but also important as practical elements in social work. The study points out research that has influenced the discussion on disability models and empowerment in social work. Understanding about disability influence how society is planned, how legislation and criteria for services are formulated and practised. This understanding influences the substance in the social workers' practice and the alternatives in the everyday life of disabled people who use services. An other dimension of these processes is the one that takes place in the meeting between social workers and disabled people. This study contributes to the discussion of the role and position of social work. At the same time there is a goal that contributes to practise as well: to increase the self-reflection and knowledge within services for disabled people, to enhance the possibilities for co-operation and to find some ideas and tools for developping dialogical practice.</p> <p>The research question has risen from practical needs. In my contacts as a social worker, with disabled people and social workers from all parts of Finland, I have created a general picture about social work within services for disabled people. The questions that have risen from practise are connected with encounters, dialogue, practises, co-operation and the ethics. The research question examines what influences the end result that social work is carried out way it is.</p> <p>The qualitative research project started with an action research approach with focus on development, and it transformed during the research process. This is the reason why the same process is described in this study with two different approaches. First, in the participatory action research frame, and secondly, from the individual perspective in the frame of content analysis of focus group interviews.</p> <p>The study results point out something of the potential that social work possesses and raises questions about whether the full potential of social workers is in use today. The results also point at the limitations. The interesting question then is: who is setting the limits and how does this connect with the potential not in use. Are the limits set from outside or do social workers have the chance to participate in defining them? The study reveals facts that influence and to a certain point explains the existing differences between different municipalities, when it comes to the social work offered within services for disabled people. The significance for research is that in the scope of Finnish social work, the marginal group of social workers who work with services for disabled people, in this study are heard and documented.</p>			
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