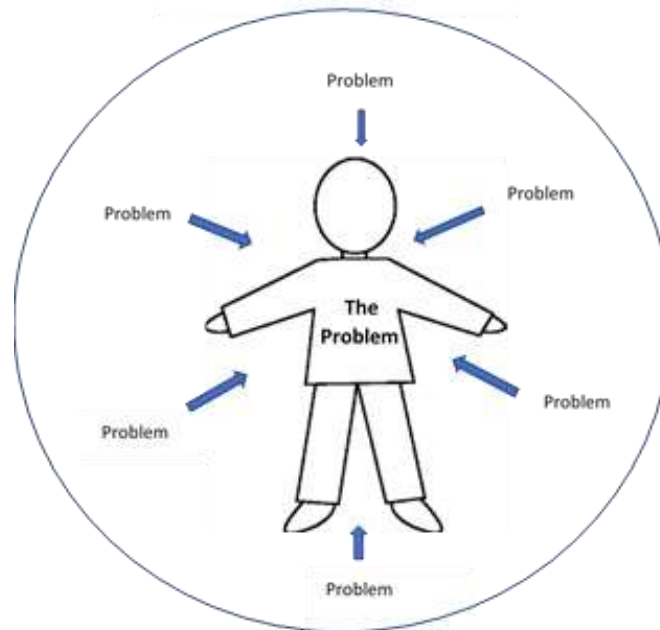


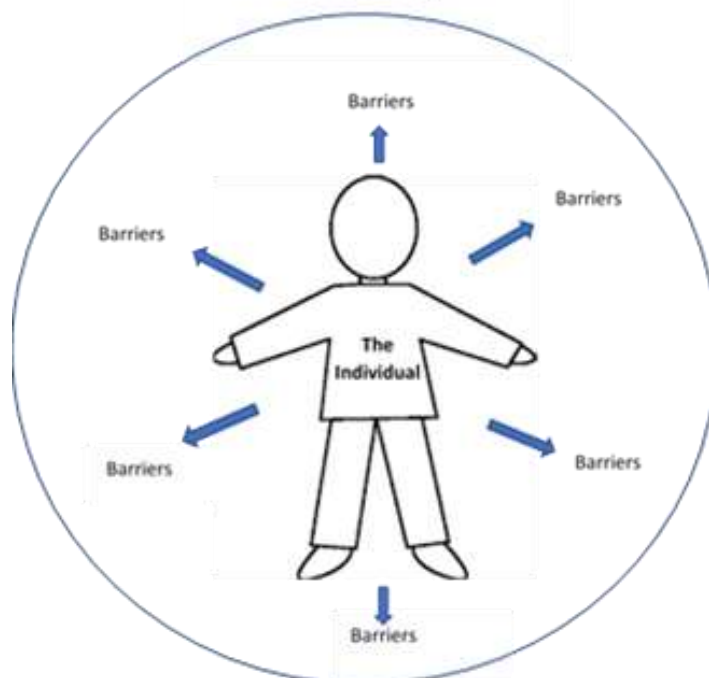
# Models of Disability

The Medical Model of Disability



The **medical model** of disability takes a very traditional view and focuses on what the child or young person can't do. It sees the child or young person's impairment (or the child /young person themselves) as the 'problem' and focuses on trying to make them 'less disabled' by removing /changing/ curing / 'fixing' the impairment.

The Social Model of Disability



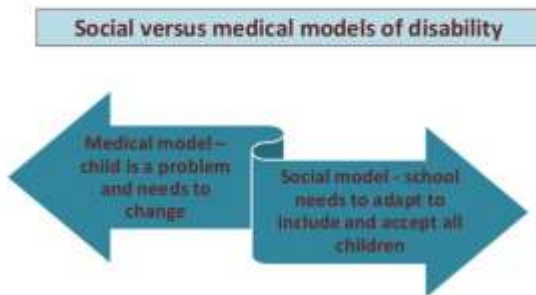
The **social model** of disability focuses on what the child or young person can do. It sees social barriers such as access, attitudes, approaches and expectations as the 'problem' and focuses on removing them so that the child or young person can do even more.

The social model is always the preferred model when thinking about children and young people with SEND. It was developed by people with disabilities themselves and distinguishes between impairment and disability:

- Impairment = a characteristic of a person that impacts on their physical or mental functioning. A person can seek medical and other interventions to minimise the impact of their impairment as far as this is possible.
- Disability = Something a person experiences within a given environment because of the social barriers that exist within that environment.

### What do the Models of Disability Look Like in an Educational Setting?

The following diagrams are helpful in understanding what the different models might look like in an educational setting



Medical model	Social model
Child is faulty	Child is valued
Diagnosis is made of child	Strengths and needs defined by self and others
Child is labelled	Barriers are identified and solutions developed
Impairment becomes focus of attention	Outcomes-based programmes designed
Child is assessed and monitored	Resources made available
Segregated and alternative services are provided	Training provided for parents and professionals
Ordinary needs put on hold	Relationships nurtured
Re-entry only if 'normal' enough or permanent exclusion	Diversity welcomed; child is welcomed
Society remains unchanged	Society evolves

The medical model is more reflective of an educational setting where children and young people with SEND are expected to integrate or are segregated.

The social model is more reflective of an educational setting where children and young people with SEND are fully included.