Exploring the Divide:

Illness and Disability

Edited by

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The Disability Press

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PREFACE

The majority of the chapters in this volume are revised versions of papers that were presented at a conference - Accounting for Illness and Disability - which was organised by the editors with the financial support of the Disability Research Unit, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, at Weetwood Hall in Leeds on 19-21 April 1995. The intention was to bring together some of the key contributors to debates between disability activists and theorists and medical sociologists. The central focus was on identifying issues of central concern to what had increasingly become two competing `camps', while also exploring areas of common interest. For the purposes of this volume, additional contributions have been provided by conference participants.

Special thanks go to everyone who participated in the conference for making it such a memorable and stimulating event.
THE DISABILITY PRESS

The Disability Press seeks to provide an alternative outlet for work in the field of disability studies. The Disability Press acknowledges and draws inspiration from the work of all those countless disabled individuals and their allies who have, over the years, struggled to put this particular issue on to the political agenda. Its establishment is a testament to the growing recognition of `disability’ as an equal opportunities and human rights issue within the social sciences.

Funding for this first volume from the Disability Press has been provided by the Disability Research Unit. The editors also wish to record their thanks for the support and encouragement of the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds.

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Polly Shardlow was a social worker for many years before she became a researcher. For the past two years, she has been working at the University of Sheffield on an ESRC-funded research project looking at the self-organisation of disabled people and people with mental health problems.

Gareth Williams is Reader in Sociology and Deputy Director of the Public Health Research and Resource Centre at the University of Salford. He has written extensively about chronic illness and disability, and lay knowledge.
Exploring the Divide is the outcome of a three day conference and seminar to explore the uneasy relationship between medical sociology and disability theory held here at Leeds in April 1995. This event brought together some of the leading figures from both disciplines along with disabled and non-disabled researchers and disability activists from all over the UK. Exploring the Divide is now out of print. However, the full text is available electronically on our web site in the Archive section. Please use the following links

Disabled people are engaged in a collective struggle to transform a sociospatial environment which denies them full citizenship (Campbell and Oliver 1996). The disability movement has successfully...

