

LAMI countries to recognise, assess and treat common mental health problems in children.

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The Equality Act 2010 in Mental Health: A Guide to Implementation and Issues for Practice

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The Equality Act 2010 attempts to ensure that all people have their needs for the 'provision of goods and services' met with equal consideration, whatever their personal circumstances. It consolidates and extends a range of previous legislation in respect of race relations, gender discrimination and disability discrimination by outlining nine 'protected characteristics'.

A number of guides have been written to help practitioners implement the Act but this appears to be the first with a specific focus on its possible implications for all those working within mental health services. This book aims to be an accessible guide to legal and technical information on the Act and attempts to provide practical ways of putting equality into mental health practice so that it permeates the framework of services, rather than being a stand-alone goal.

The protected characteristics of the Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. Part two of the book (chapters 4–12) provides a clear description of how inequalities may arise in respect of each of these characteristics within mental health and also offers some ways to reduce these inequalities. The remainder of the book then looks at the broader issues associated with achieving equality in mental health. Part three discusses equality at an organisational level within the context of modern mental health services, and part four looks at the management and financial implications in the context of the new Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the changes and challenges of commissioning. It draws attention to the fact that consideration of equality is particularly relevant within mental health, as people within the protected characteristics groups have increased levels of uptake of mental health services. It provides a reminder that cost-saving within the National Health Service can be short-sighted and lead to poorer outcomes in the long term, and gives examples of service models that tackle the root cause as a way of more efficient working.

The book is underpinned by the experiences of service users. It suggests that by taking these into account and by seeking to translate the aspiration of the Equality Act 2010 into practice and the promotion of equality for the individual, mental health services will be better for everyone.

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