

Biomedical technology and social work: Friend or foe?

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The bio-psycho-social consensus

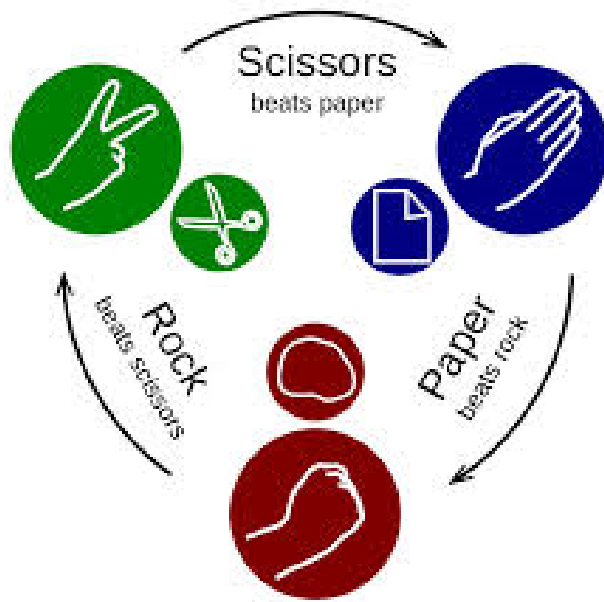
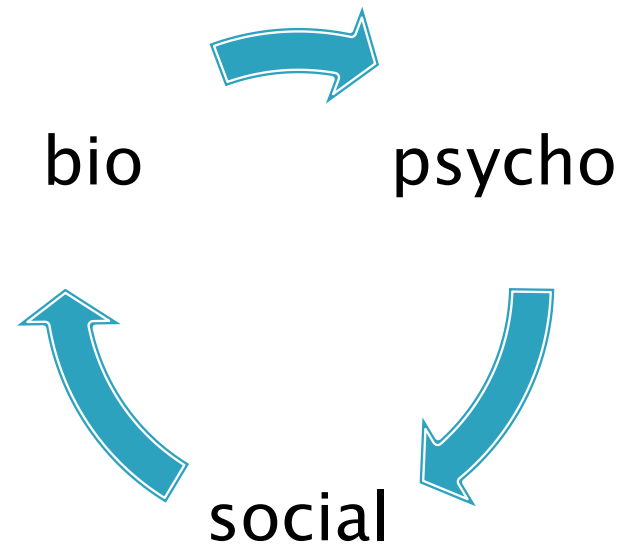


Image Source: wikipedia



The rise and rise of biomedical science

- ▶ “Today, we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, the wonder of God's most divine and sacred gift. With this profound new knowledge, humankind is on the verge of gaining immense, new power to heal. Genome science will have a real impact on all our lives and even more, on the lives of our children. It will revolutionize the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of most, if not all, human diseases.” (President Bill Clinton, 2000).

Seductive power of the image

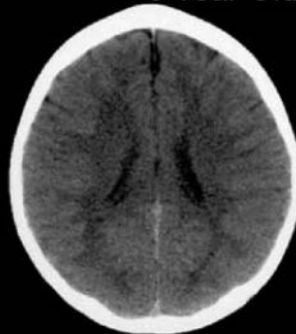


The tale of two brains

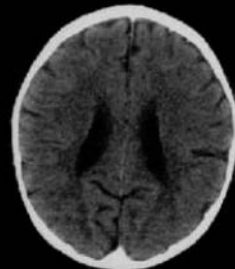
Early Intervention: The Next Steps

An Independent Report to Her Majesty's Government
Graham Allen MP

3 Year Old Children



Normal



Extreme Neglect

January 2011

 HM Government

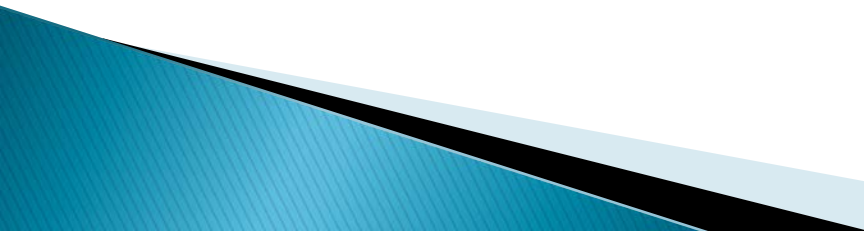
Beyond the bio-psycho-social consensus?



Social and ethical conundrums

“Whereas technological innovations of the last quarter century have rendered the human genome accessible to scientific inquiry in ways never before thought possible, the ethical, legal, and social implications of a flood of information are far from settled.”

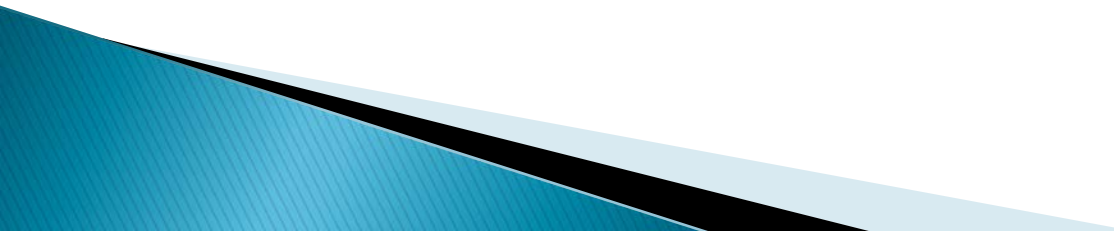
(Treadway and Buckholtz, 2011, p. 534).

1. Unrealistic hopes and expectations
 2. Creation of a biological underclass
 3. Denial of human rights (selective abortions, denial of insurance/ health cover, pressure to intervene on basis of risk)
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Options

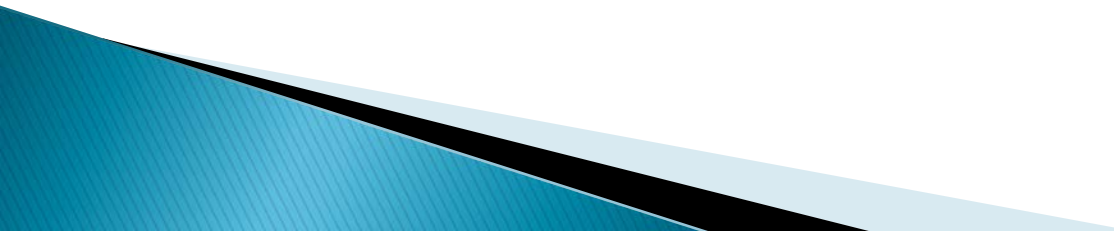
1. Embrace BIO–psycho–social

In 2003, the NASW (the American social work association), argued that “social workers shall acquire a basic understanding about genetics as a science and a field of study, including its biological, psychosocial, ethical, and legal aspects” they go on to add that “social workers need to become familiar with general terminology used in human genetics and basic patterns of biological inheritance and with the role of genetic factors in maintaining health and preventing disease.”



2. Rebuilding the bio-psycho-social approach

Building and valuing our expertise in psycho-social practices particularly in relation to ethical and holistic engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation.

- ▶ Developing our evidence base
 - ▶ Working with allies
 - ▶ Realising our values in a new bio-psycho-social context/
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Biomedical technology: friend or foe?

