

An Introduction to Critical Realism for Evidence Based Practice

In this interactive presentation, I aim to introduce the basic, key theoretical concepts of ontological realism and its linked epistemological relativism which were key to the earlier works of UK philosopher, Roy Bhaskar (cf. Maxwell, 2012) in developing the tradition now known as critical realism (cf. Collier, 1994). In doing so, I necessarily invite participants to compare positivist, relativist and realist ontologies and their implications for research study design to inform evidence based practice. This presentation will invoke a discussion on the critical realist rejection of multiple realities in favour of multiple and varying experiences of a mind-independent, social reality and the resultant implications for making knowledge claims grounded in empirical data for evidence based practice. No prior knowledge of critical realism or ontological realism is assumed or needed to participate in this interactive presentation. Also, while participants are warmly welcomed to ask questions of the presenter and of each other, as well as to share ideas and experiences, such interactivity is planned in plenary formation, meaning that those who wish to quietly listen and reflect are also welcome.

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