Inclusive Perspectives:

The Journey from Isolation to Full Community Inclusion of People with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

Mark A. Keeley, MSW, LCSW
My background

How skipping a math class changed my life
Dehumanization
Devaluation

Over time, this stereotyping created the widespread view that people with disabilities lacked human feelings and emotions, intelligence, even physical sensations such as pain, cold and hunger. Consequently, society has come to place less value on individuals with disabilities and their needs.
Historically, people with disabilities have been isolated from the rest of society – sometimes to protect them from a harsh society, more often to remove a disturbing reality – it is easier to avoid thinking about things you can not see.
Having A Disability Was A Crime

From the late 1860s until the 1970s, several American cities had **ugly laws** making it illegal for persons with "unsightly or disgusting" disabilities to appear in public. Some of these laws were called **Unsightly Beggar Ordinances**. The goal of these laws was seemingly to preserve the quality of life for the community, similar in intent to current homeowners association regulations and by-laws.
1950 – Brave Parents Pave The Wave

Families who chose to go against common medical advice, kept their sons and daughters at home. Seeing each other in the community, they recognized they had something in common. They started recreating together and discussing the lack of services for their children. This led to advocacy efforts that continue today.
1950’s – 1960’s Change Movements

- U.S. Civil Rights Movement
- Self-help Movement
- Deinstitutionalization Movement
- Demedicalization Movement
- Consumerism Movement
Small changes at first...

- 1950 – Mary Switzer, Vocational Rehabilitation Director, emphasized independent living as a quality of life issue.
- 1960 - Social Security Amendments of 1960 eliminated the restriction that disabled workers receiving SSDI benefits must be 50 or older.
- 1961 – President Kennedy appointed a special President’s Panel on Mental Retardation.
- 1965 - Medicare and Medicaid were established through passage of the Social Security Amendments of 1965, providing federally subsidized health care to disabled and elderly Americans covered by the Social Security program.
Deinstitutionalization

1963 – President Kennedy called for a reduction “over a number of years and by hundreds of thousands, (in the number) of individuals with mental illness and mental retardation confined to residential institutions.
1972 – Geraldo Rivera does an expose on Willowbrook Institution.

1972 - Social Security Amendments of 1972 created the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The law relieved families of the financial responsibility of caring for their adult disabled children.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was passed. Sections 501, 503 and 504 prohibited discrimination in federal programs and services and all other programs or services receiving federal funds. Key language in the Rehabilitation Act, found in Section 504, states “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States, shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

1973 - Handicap parking stickers were introduced in Washington, D.C.
War Heroes - Wounded and forgotten
1975 - The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) required free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive setting. This Act was later renamed The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

1978 - American Disabled for Public Transit (ADAPT) was founded. It held a transit bus hostage in Denver, Colorado. A yearlong civil disobedience campaign followed to force the Denver Transit Authority to purchase wheelchair lift-equipped buses.

1981-1984 The Reagan Administration terminated the Social Security benefits of hundreds of thousands of disabled recipients. Distressed by this action, several disabled people committed suicide. A variety of groups including the Alliance of Social Security Disability Recipients and the Ad Hoc Committee on Social Security Disability fought these terminations.
1985 Brings More Rights!

- The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act mandated that polling places be accessible.

- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Center that localities cannot use zoning laws to prohibit group homes for people with developmental disabilities from opening in a residential area solely because its residents are disabled.
Americans with Disabilities Act

1990 - The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed by George W. Bush. The Act provided comprehensive civil rights protection for people with disabilities. Closely modeled after the Civil Rights Act, the law was the most sweeping disability rights legislation in history.
1999 - The Olmstead Act

The Supreme Court construed Title II of the ADA to require states to place qualified individuals with intellectual disabilities in community settings rather than in institutions, whenever deemed appropriate, the affected persons do not oppose the placement, and the state can reasonably accommodate the placement.
2010 Health Care Reform

Health reform made health care more affordable, make health insurers more accountable, expand health coverage to all Americans, and make the health system sustainable, stabilizing family budgets, the Federal budget, and the economy.
Major Employment Law Change

2014 - Businesses that have Federal Contracts are now required to set goals to employ people with disabilities at a rate of 7% and to track their progress towards this goal.
"Inclusion doesn't mean you pay to sit at the table. Inclusion means you are invited to the table because you earned it by just being you. You deserve to be at the table because of who you are. Your worth is not measured by dollars dearest son Liam. Its measured in how far you promote inclusion by occupying space in this world. Continue to do that and show the way for Dad and I. Remember the crowds that celebrated you!"
Still have more work to do...
The Impact of Inclusion