

BIG IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD OF DISABILITY

Information Pack

Who is normal? Wolfensburger's Big Idea

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About the Workshop

Background to Normalisation
The Normal Fashion Parade

About the Workshop

1. Saying hallo - your name and ONE thing you want to tell us.
2. Jan will give a short talk with some slides
3. Some people will take part in a fashion parade for you to judge!
4. Discussion - what does "normal" and "normalisation" mean to you?
5. Final thoughts - a definition of normal...

Please come with some ideas about what is "normal"

If you are one of the "models" for our fashion parade, please come with an outfit

Background - Normalisation and Social Roles

Bengt Nirje (1924-2006) & Nils Bank-Mikkelsen (1919-1990)

“Normalisation” started in Denmark and Sweden in the late 1950s.

Many people with learning disabilities lived in big long stay institutions

Nirje and Bank Mikkelsen began to argue for ‘normal’ patterns of living in these homes.

They said it was NOT normal to live, work and relax/play in the same place,

Institutions should change so that people could go out to work, to play sports and to do things outside the institution.

They did NOT say that that institutions were wrong and should close.

Wolf Wolfensberger, (1957-2011) said this wasn’t enough.

He was an American academic.

His ideas changed the way services were delivered in the 1980s and 1990s.

He said that people with learning disabilities are seen as not worth much.

They are ‘devalued’

This is because they are marked out as different in a bad way-
“stigma”

The way to change this is to do everything possible to help them ‘pass’ as ‘normal’ to fit in, not stand out as different.

People should live in nice houses, not large institutions or hostels or even group homes.

They should use the services everyone uses, schools, health services, leisure centres.

They should not spend time with, or be friends with, other people with learning disabilities

They should have non-disabled friends. He called this 'integration'.

Social Roles

He loved jargon (!) and invented the phrase 'social role valorisation'.

Valorisation means giving value to something

By this he meant that people with learning disabilities must have "valued social roles" so that people look up to them.

These roles might include being a sports star, an actor, a researcher, a student, and, most important, a paid worker.

He also said that people should dress like other people with valued roles

No teddy bears, no short socks, no scruffy t shirts or jogging pants.

You must wear a shirt and tie if you are a man

Make-up and high heels if you are a woman.

He ran courses for professionals called PASS and PASSING, which taught them what they must and must not do in their work.

Dictionary

Integration - joining in and making yourself like most other people

Long stay institutions - the group homes where people with learning disabilities used to live for most of their lives

Normal....what do YOU think this means?

Normalisation - making things or people more normal

Social role - what people do in society - eg. a parent, a neighbour, a dog walker... and the jobs people do, paid or unpaid.

Some social roles are seen as more important than others - they are **valued**

Stigma - a sign that marks you out as different in a bad way

Value - how much something or someone is worth (not always money)

High value - important and good

Low value or de-valued - not important, not very good or useful

Valorisation - being given a value

The Norma and Norman Normal Fashion Show

We're are watching a fashion parade. We are looking for the outfits that are the most "normal"

You are going to judge all the outfits on show.

3. GREAT..really normal. This outfit will NOT stand out in a crowd at all
2. OK. You might look a BIT different from other people.
1. You are in danger of looking TOO different from other people
0. This is terrible. Everyone is going to turn around and look at you and point because this outfit is SO outlandish!

And another talking point

The Five Accomplishments

Wolfensburger's colleagues produced checklists, to see if services were up to the mark in making things normal for people with learning disabilities

1. Physical Presence – are people in the community with non disabled people?
2. Choice – do people have real choices?
3. Competence – do people have the chance to learn new skills?
4. Respect – do people have positions which earn them respect?
5. Participation – do people have friends and colleagues to do things with?

You might use this when you think about where you live/ work / relax

Reading

Brown H and Smith H (1992) *Normalisation: a reader for the 90s* Better World Books (only £1.90 on EBay)

Walmsley J (with Brown H) (1997) When 'Ordinary' isn't enough: a review of the principle of normalisation in Bornat J, Johnson J, Pereira C, Pilgrim D and Williams F (eds) *Community Care: a Reader* London: Macmillan