

Rights of People with Developmental Disabilities

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Our modern legal system is based on the principles of the social model of disability. Under this model, disability is defined as reduced participation due to society's failure to accommodate the needs of individuals. For example, a person with a cognitive impairment may function well in a work environment if the employer breaks the tasks into small pieces and provides adequate supervision.



The Developmental Disabilities and Assistance Bill of Rights of 2000 finds that:

- Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to enjoy the opportunity for independence, productivity, integration and inclusion into the community.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities often require lifelong specialized services and assistance, provided in a coordinated and culturally competent manner by many agencies, professionals, advocates, community representatives and others to eliminate barriers and to meet the needs of such individuals and their families.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities, including those with the most severe developmental disabilities, are capable of achieving independence, productivity, integration and inclusion into the community, and often require the provision of services, supports and other assistance to achieve such.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities have competencies, capabilities and personal goals that should be recognized, supported and encouraged, and any assistance to such individuals should be provided in an individualized manner, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities of the individual.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are the primary decision makers regarding the services and support such individuals and their families receive, and play decision making roles in policies and programs that affect the lives of such individuals and their families.

References

1. Developmental Disabilities and Assistance Bill of Rights 2000. 42 USC 15001
2. The Montreal Declaration on Developmental Disabilities of 2004. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*. 2007; 3: 218. United Nations. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available at: www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot?e.pdf [2]. Accessed: March 1, 2010. Entered into force May 2008. Signed by the United States July 30, 2009.

Document

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