

The History of the Disability Movement

Living with a disability- 40 Years ago



Christmas In Purgatory: A Photographic Essay On Mental Retardation, Burton Blatt and Fred Kaplan
Human Policy Press, June 1, 1974



History of the Disability Movement- Prior to 1800

- Individuals with disabilities were isolated in their homes, no services were provided, treated inhumanely
- They were looked upon as objects of scorn, deviant, defective, non-existent, abnormal



History of the Disability Movement- Late 1800's

- Individuals with disabilities attended residential schools or institutionalized training programs
- The goal of these institutions was to make the individual with a disability “normal”
- The philosophy of the care was the Medical Model
 - Individuals were looked upon as sick, and often incurable
 - Long term care and protection were the goals



History of the Disability Movement-

Early 1900's

- Individuals with disabilities were housed in Institutions/asylums with subhuman conditions
- These settings proved to be an inexpensive way to care for individuals with disabilities
- The institutions ensured that interaction between citizens in surrounding communities and “residents” with disabilities did not occur



History of the Disability Movement- 1940

- Research and use of medication becomes more prominent
- Disability was still viewed as a defect, and should be “cured”



History of the Disability Movement- 1970's

- Independent Living Centers were founded by and for people with disabilities
- Services of these centers focused on assisting individuals with disabilities to become contributing, active, and functional members of society



History of the Disability Movement- 1990's

Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990

- Aims to end all forms of discrimination toward individuals with disabilities
- Guarantees individuals with disabilities access to employment, housing, education, transportation, and all other rights given to able-bodied citizens
- Establishes individuals with disabilities as protected citizens

The History of the Disability Movement Living with a Disability- Today





“Disability” as Defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act & the Americans with Disabilities Act

- “A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities”
- “A record of such an impairment”
- “Being regarded as having such an impairment, even when no limitations exist”



A **“Major Life Activity”** is anything an average person can do with little or no difficulty

Major life activities include, but are not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, sitting, standing, lifting, reaching, sleeping and mental/emotional processes such as thinking, concentrating and interacting with others.

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) additions: operation of major bodily functions such as the immune system, normal cell growth and the endocrine system.



“Substantially limits”

“...unable to perform, or significantly limited in the ability to perform, an activity as compared with an average person.” Factors to be considered are:

1. its nature and severity
2. how long it will last or is expected to last, and
3. Whether it's permanent, long-term impact, or expected impact



Exclusions from Coverage Defined by the Law:

- Current drug use is not protected by the ADA
- Temporary, non-chronic conditions that do not last for a long time and that have little or no long term impact, e.g. broken leg



CNCS Complaint Process

Any service member with a disability, who believes he or she has been discriminated against in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*, may raise his or her concerns with our Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness (OCRI).

*Section 504 states that no individual with a disability can be excluded from, denied benefits of, and subjected to discrimination to any program or activity that receives federal funds because of his/her disability.

Contact Information:

Corporation of National and Community Service

Office of Civil Rights and Inclusiveness

Phone: (202) 606-7503(voice)

(202) 565-2799 (TDD)

Email: eo@cns.gov

Website: http://www.nationalservice.gov/home/no_fear_act/index.asp

Important Note:

1. Service members must file discrimination claims with the OCRI Office within 45 days of when it occurred, otherwise it may not be accepted in a formal complaint of discrimination.
2. The OCRI office is committed to resolving the complaint promptly. Additionally, the OCRI office encourages but does not require service members to bring their concerns to program or project directors first.