

Choice & Empowerment

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Why?

- Pabal Project
- Bahrain
- Control Versus Empowerment

- Power permeates everyday life – it is exercised in the way people talk to each other, in what utterances are taken up and what are ignored, in how and what options are offered, in how information is presented, how spaces are opened up for people to express preferences and how spaces are shut down (Jenkinson 1993). This is recognized in recent models of supported decision-making,

- *Improving services, improving lives* states that disabled people can feel ‘steered towards choices made by other people’ (Social Exclusion Unit 2005, 64), in particular that sometimes staff, managers and parents try to control the lives of people with learning disabilities (Learning Disability Taskforce 2004).

General Reality

- Barriers to the promotion of empowerment in services
- Services focus on incapacity, inability and risk
- “Those with significant cognitive/communication impairments are particularly at risk of being denied control and choice in their lives”

Empowerment

- ‘the process by which individuals, groups and/or communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve goals, thereby being able to work towards maximising the quality of their lives’

But

- Empowerment does not flow from in any straightforward way from changes in service values, structures, planning or inspection regimes

- How do we judge if empowerment practices are in any way effective?
- Choice/Choice making as one way

Research on Choice

- Australia (Young 2006)
- 30 matched pairs clients with mod/severe ID
- Dispersed versus cluster housing
- Same residential philosophy in both

Matching Groups

Table 1 Matching characteristics of community and cluster centre groups

	Community	Cluster centre
Gender – male/female	19/11	19/11
Age range, mean (SD)	27–81 years, 47.1 (13.1)	30–78 years, 47.5 (12.5)
Mild/moderate intellectual disability	16	16
Severe/profound intellectual disability	14	14
Mean years in institution	27	34
ABS Part I range	16–239	15–222
ABS Part I mean (SD)	111 (51)	114 (55)

ABS, Adaptive Behaviour Scale.

Comparisons

- *Cluster*
- 7-8 houses with admin centre
- 6-10 hours community recreation, lesiure and personal care
- Single room
- *Community*
- Suburbs Brisbane
- 2/3 bedrooms
- 10-15 hours personal. Leisure & recreational
- Single room

Measures

- Adaptive Behaviour (ABS)
- Maladaptive Behaviour (ABS)
- *Choice Making (Resident Choice Assessment Scale, Kearney et al., 1995)*
- *Objective Quality of Life*
- 6 months prior to start: 12 & 24 months

Really choices? Key Ones?

- Does the client choose what time they get up in the morning?
- Does the client move about their house as they please?

Life Circumstances Questionnaire

1. Material Well-Being (possessions)
2. Physical Well-Being (visits to GP)
3. Community Access (frequency visits)
4. Daily Routines (participation in routines)
5. Self-Determination (life events/holidays)
6. Socio-emotional Well-Being (contact with family)
7. Residential Well-Being (nearness to shops)
8. General

Results

- Both groups increased amount of choice-making
- 64% community versus 57% cluster
- Both groups see significant increases in LCQ across ALL domains
- Community have more choices overall than cluster

Stat V Clin Significance!

Table 4 *F*-values, means and SDs for Resident Choice Assessment Scale over time by community vs. cluster centre residential service

Residential location	Institution Mean (SD)	12 months Mean (SD)	24 months Mean (SD)	Change over time-value [†] (d.f. 2.58) [‡]	Outcome over time	Difference over time by location
Community <i>n</i> = 30	2.97 (1.06)	4.46 (0.94)	4.57 (1.06)	61.37**†	Increase	8.73*†
Cluster centre <i>n</i> = 30	3.31 (1.22)	4.03 (1.27)	3.99 (1.15)	10.97**†	Increase	

P* < 0.01; *P* < 0.001.

Reliability Checks

- 10% of total sample: Inter-rater reliability
- All measures

Suspicion

- Research on client empowerment via choice rather limited
- Many measures are Proxy measures- staff report on choice making and open to social psychological variables
- Choice domains may not relate to empowerment

Staff Empowerment

- Almost absent in ID literature
- Staff are ultimately the people that translate policy into practice

Definition

- Empowerment was defined as a set of dimensions that characterize an environment's interaction with persons in it so as to encourage their taking initiative to improve process and to take action.

Recognition

Factor 1 was designated “fairness of the recognition system.” This factor concerns recognition for achievement and the fairness of rewards. The focus is on the organization as a whole. There are 22 items on the factor. The highest loading items are *In this organization, there is an unfair distribution of rewards* (.76); *Rewards for outstanding achievements are fairly distributed in this company* (–.75); and *This organization often fails to recognize exceptional accomplishments* (.69). The factor was scored so that a high score indicates that an employee perceives that there is fair and equitable recognition for achievement. The reliability is $r_{\alpha} = .90$.

- Clarity of company goals
- Response to risk taking
- Responsibility for quality
- Encouraging working in teams
- Responsibility for company success
- Decisions about work processes