

QUATSEE COURSE OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

LESSON 2

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT.

2.1 PRECURSOR PHENOMENA OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT.

Vocational rehabilitation

To discover the supported employment history we could go back to 1918, when the U.S. Congress first established the services of "vocational rehabilitation" to look after veterans of the First World War. In 1920, these services were extended to the physically disabled citizens.

Human Rights

In the 40s, these services were extended to people with mental retardation or mental illness, because traditionally it was believed that these groups were not fit to work in the labour market.

Normalization

In the decades of the 50s and 60s, in defense of the human rights of all people and particularly people with disabilities, in the Nordic European Countries (with the help of Bank-Mikkelsen (1979) and Beng Nirje) is built what would be a fundamental principle, the

Deinstitutionalization

Inclusive education

Principle of Normalization, later articulated by Wolf Wolfensberger (1980) in Canada and North America in the 70s. This principle flooded the policies of the more developed countries and led to a movement of no return, the deinstitutionalization movement, which spread across much of the globe and its effect still continues today.

Mainstreaming

The Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded, proclaimed by the UN in 1971, assumed the principle of normalization and promoted in different countries movements defending the quality of life, using ordinary resources of society and, therefore, came the struggle for inclusive education of these groups in regular school.

Job integration through Supported Employment

In the decades of the 70s and 80s, once established the right to education, parents' associations came to defend the right to work for their children, showing (in special centers, first, and later in the ordinary market) that people with mental retardation and other disabilities might be useful to society and make productive work.

Having taken Normalization, as an incontestable principle to conform to human rights, consistent and innovative practice, which spread over most developed countries, was called **mainstreaming**, which refers to the use (by disabled people) of regular resources of the community in all areas of services: health, education, work, leisure and culture, etc., that is, the use of the same services used by all citizens and mingling with them. It is opposed to keep segregated routes for parallel circuits, going to special institutions where there are not people without disabilities.

The pressure from parents, defending the right to integration, especially in North America, and the contribution of some universities (Montreal, Virginia Commonwealth, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, etc.), with the publication of demonstrative job integration experiences of people with significant disabilities in the ordinary market, led to the birth and articulation of the global system and movement called "*supported employment*" - and that was confirmed in U.S.A. legislation from 1984 (Developmental Disabilities Act) and later, in 1986 (Rehabilitation Act Amendments) and in 1990 (Americans with Disabilities Act-ADA).

In Europe, supported employment has slowly blossomed in the last decade of the twentieth century, causing multiple demonstrative programs and causing the birth of National Associations of Supported Employment in many countries of the European Union, an example of this was the *European Union of Supported Employment* (EUSE), born in 1993.

REVISION QUESTION: Among the precursor milestones of supported employment, which one do you think is the most determining and why?

TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION: In the U.S.A. supported employment was defined and given legal coverage (in 1984). Why is it proper to give this system a regulatory framework? When do you think it will be properly regulated in your country?

2. 2. RIGHTS, PRINCIPLES AND VALUES: *the fuel for escalation.*

Sometimes we talk in terms of mountaineering because the task ahead is comparable to an escalation: it is an effort of many people, a team work, you have to conquer various peaks, for which we need to program performances properly, to have a good feeding, to use tools and carry appropriate equipment. We will cross beautiful scenarios that will captivate us and we will take time, after exercise, to sit down and breathe deeply and enjoy the new scenery conquered, never spotted.

The study of rights, principles and values underlying the supported employment has to do with this stop along the way, to regain strength, reaffirm the identity and security, and then continue the climb with renewed energy.

Let's see what three mothers of Alicante (Spain) think, in relation to the integration of their children in society. Their houses are 10 Km of distance.

The first mother has a daughter (40) with an intellectual disability who goes to an occupational center of the region, built 25 years ago to the group of people. She was precisely one of the founders of the association that promoted the occupational center, because there was almost nothing for these people. "The center was a major breakthrough for these guys, at least they had a place to go, and it was unnecessary to stay at home," the mother told us very proud. She added: "For people it is good to have this center in the region, because these guys are not like the others ..."

The second mother also has a daughter (25) with a significant intellectual disability and was schooled in a special education center of the city. She, however, was never convinced that it was the best thing for her daughter to go to a special school and she tried to get her daughter in sport activities and camps organized by the city hall for all children and young people of Alicante. At present, her daughter has already had several work experiences with a working contract and she is serviced by an organization that gives her supported

employment services. She is feisty, but sometimes she gets depressed thinking that society will never accept these different people, and she is tired of going against the tide ... The mother told us "I do not know if it's worth so much effort ... sometimes I am tempted to apply for a place in the occupational center for her, it would be more comfortable."

The third mother is the youngest one, her disabled son is only 11, but she and her husband are clear: they do not want their son to get excluded from the educational institutions where the most part of child population is, they believe it is wrong to create separate institutions and think that society should increasingly accept diversity. When they are asked how they envision their child as an adult, the mother answers: "We will fight, of course, for Luis to get a job like everyone else and live like young people of his time, we will see if we get it..."

How is that families with the same problem and in the same city think in different ways? We might find an explanation in the time factor, which is the big difference, but let's answer in the end, after reviewing some basic concepts.

Importance of principles

Supported employment cannot be developed properly if support professionals or its organizations do not have the right philosophy that drives their activity. These staff will need to know many things (systems for planning and programming, teaching skills, social skills and public relations, team intervention procedures, marketing strategies, quality assessment, etc.), but if he or she does not have a philosophy or solid values and principles, the services given to people he or she accompany will be inconsistent or without quality, and, in a long-term, their organisation will be at high risk of extinction. Hence in this course we will give great importance to this chapter of principles and values, so that those who do not assimilate well this unit, they do not need to continue with the following, for being automatically disqualified.

We are confident that this will not be your case and you will take the greatest interest in the assimilation of these principles.

Right to non-discrimination and right to equality

The first thing to admit is that all people have equal rights and they should not be discriminated because of his or her disability (Treaty on European Union, Art. II-81, 1, Spanish Constitution, Art. 14 and 49, and see other national constitutions) or by other social conditions. Therefore, all people have the right to work and contribute to the construction of society, regardless of the level of support they need to do it “...in a market and labour environments which are open, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities” (UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, art. 27). Paid work is not a privilege of a few, but a right of all.

Right to work

Labour integration

All disabled citizens should have access to measures to ensure their independence and professional integration (European Constitution, Art. II-86), therefore, you can easily tell that people who are disadvantaged are entitled to compensatory services of support, to get labour integration in the business community, which the general population is incorporated.

Indeed, as citizens, they have the right and the duty to contribute, each according to his or her ability, hence the importance in this field of partial participation concept: for a person with a significant disability the fact of contributing for two hours of work a day is as important as for another person who works full time.

Zero rejection

These constitutional rights may be extended in the work of Esteban (1999), mainly in Chapter II.

Normalization

The zero rejection is therefore a basic principle assumed by the supported employment, all emanating from the right to work and employment integration of everybody. This means that, when receiving a citizen who requests our support services, the first thing to do is to see it as a citizen with full rights to integration, regardless of his/her disability. It should be done an assessment process to give him/her an opportunity, not to reject him/her. Therefore, any organization that wants to apply a quality supported employment must have well established this principle in its ideology and guidelines for action, which, unfortunately, does not exist in many organizations.

Supported employment is based, as we have seen, on the **Principle of Normalization**, which consists in giving everyone a chance to have a daily life as normal as possible, following the regular patterns and cultural aspects of society. And the normal thing in our society is to have a family, live in a conventional home, working in the labour market and participate in social and cultural events.

What was the ambition of the Normalization Principle?

It argued that disabled people should live their lives in conditions considered normal for the culture of the community in which they live, having access to the lifestyles considered normal for most people. For example, if in a community or country it is normal to live in a house, work out of it and have fun in a third environment, only in this way the Normalization Principle will be achieved for any disabled person.

The principle of Normalization is very

simple and intelligible, but very picky when practicing it and very powerful in its impact on the service system for people with disabilities in a country. In fact, in the middle of the last century, it began to revolutionize the approach of the services for these groups of people in the Nordic countries, later extended its influence in Europe and North America.

It is easy to glimpse the influence of this great principle at work, which is what concerns us here: if the most normal thing in a community is to work in the open labour market and contribute to society, people with disabilities must also have the opportunity to contribute in the same environment as others and have an employment contract tailored to his/her abilities.

Individuality

The study of the Normalization principle can be extended with the talk in Spanish of G. Allan Roeher (1977), who was the director of the National Institute of Mental Retardation in Toronto (Canada) and the work of a global integration "pope", Lou Brown (1990), *Criterios de funcionalidad*.

Social inclusion

Other basic principles and values that are interesting here for their influence in supported employment are:

Individuality: people with different capabilities or support needs should have attention as unique individuals with different skills and interests. They should not be grouped by a labeled diagnosis, not for an operating level, neither for convenience of the organization offering support services. People must be served one by one and each must have his/her own individual development plan.

Inclusion in the community

Choice

Social inclusion: it should be facilitated people's access to social contexts, to build friendships, working relationships or networks of individuals who share common interests and situations. It goes beyond the mere physical integration, which involves using the same scenarios than the general population, but not coming into contact with it.

Empowerment

Community integration: everyone has the right to join the community and receive the necessary support to achieve this. Instruction and support should be given in natural environments where the person lives, and making use of regular resources for health, education, employment, housing, leisure, etc., Minimizing what is artificial and restrictive. It is the *mainstreaming* we talked about earlier.

Self-advocacy

Power to choose: people with different abilities should be able to choose from plenty of options related to their wishes and interests, so that they are the ones who exercise control in the direction of their lives. No one should make decisions on their backs that affect their lives. In order to decide, individuals should receive all the necessary information beforehand, so they can discern and take one path or another, it is called "make informed decisions". This leads in many cases to a long and leisurely process, in order to assimilate the received information and even to contrast it with their own experiences. The independent living movement say "*nothing about us without us*".

Another principle of great importance is empowerment, which refers to the fact of giving power to people, something very important for parents and professionals, when they accompany people with intellectual disability. This principle

Self-determination

deals with three key areas: 1) information, which should not be owned by parents or professionals, but must move properly and fully to the targeted people with diverse abilities, 2) control of the money, the adult with support needs, or his/her guardian, must be able to control the income that he or she receives monthly as a benefit of his or her social inclusion, and 3) create a community, people with disabilities will have more power and more possibilities to succeed if they have links, bridges and contacts in the community.

Respect

Self-advocacy is one of the principles that spread over the five continents in recent decades. This is a movement, however, that has been increasingly on the rise, in line with the right to respect and dignity of people with different abilities, who want their voices to be heard to influence in the service policies: "*nothing about us, without us*". This concept means speak for oneself: it requires a knowledge of personal rights as a citizen, desires and ambitions and their own needs. It also implies acting in an assertive way to let others know about the desires and needs of one. It is not uncommon in supported employment services to find organized groups of self-advocates who have their own dynamics and that are related to peer groups from other regions and even other countries.

Participation

Self-determination: this principle is closely linked to the previous one. It is the set of beliefs, values and skills that give power to decide and take control of one's own life, according to their own interests, needs and abilities. All things considered, is one of the basic human rights.

In line with this principle, we can say that the jobs obtained belong to people, each participant must be able to develop his/her own

professional career, the one he or she decides, the jobs must be found from their preferences, needs and abilities, people should receive the support needed to make their own decisions.

The self-advocacy and self-determination are processes that require long learning time.

Respect: the services must be always worthy, age appropriated, and favoring the development. This implies, for example, promote alternative methods of communication for people who do not speak or have difficulty expressing the standard oral code. Without hearing or understanding the individual, one cannot go on.

Participation: people with significant disabilities or different abilities should have the opportunity to actively participate in all that concerns their projects and to plan their lives. And so they should intervene and not be left out when setting goals, design plans and choose strategies and concrete support for their lives.

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