

Fred's Story

Discussion Guide: For Professionals

What were some of the reasons Fred was placed in the institution?

- Death of parent
- Family reluctant to be caregivers for him
- Professional advice
- Idea of training available
- Lack of support services need in the community
- Lack of other choices for his family
- Fred's particular behavior and needs
- What else?

What would be different today for Fred if his parent died?

- Family would be encouraged to support him in his home community
- Some support would be available in his town
- More options exist
- More community acceptance
- Few institutional beds available
- What else?

How has the philosophy changed in the past 40 years? How has it remained the same?

- *Changes*
 - Support in the community is priority
 - Institutions are not options for most people
 - Move towards personal choices in spending support monies
 - Emphasis on cost-effectiveness
 - Recognition of importance of home community for well-being
 - More community support alternatives
- *Similarities*
 - The person with disability is often not part of the decisions
 - Options for home and work are limited
 - Community supports not adequate for all who need them
 - Smaller living arrangements like the group home Fred describes can be institutional in character
 - People can remain socially isolated
 - What else?

What made the institution seem like a prison to Fred?

- Lack of choices, i.e., lining up to march to meals
- Lack of freedom of movement
- Separation from his family
- Lack of respect from staff people
- Having his belongings taken and broken
- Lack of privacy
- What else?

What did he miss from his real life back in his home community?

- Family members and events
- The rhythm of life as relatives and friends were born, married, and died
- Acceptance as part of a family
- Making friends
- Dating, marrying, having children
- A job he chose and the respect that comes from work
- Familiar community places
- What else?

Why didn't Fred like his job at the institution?

- Did not choose it
- Hot, dirty work
- Pay very low
- No vacation
- No pension
- Lack of respect for his work both from his co-workers and from his relatives
- Lack of socialization
- What else?

What are some of Fred's special traits and strengths?

- Reliable, hard worker
- History buff
- Speaks Italian
- Good singer
- Knowledgeable about opera
- Interested in other cultures
- Can live alone with support
- Makes his breakfast
- Knows the value of money
- Sets priorities
- Makes real connections with people
- Good memory
- What else?

What support does Fred need in the community?

- Help with his medical conditions
- Assistance getting to work and other places
- A job and income to pay rent
- A circle of friends and acquaintances
- Family connections
- What else?

The black and white footage from the 1960's indicates that people like Fred were removed from society to protect them and the community. What were the reasons for this thinking? Are these reasons valid today?

- Fear
- Lack of resources and techniques to teach people with disabilities
- Pseudo-scientific information about retardation and its effects on society
- Thinking disabled people didn't care whether they were in the community or not—they didn't know the difference
- What else?

How could Fred's life be enriched further?

- More real friendships
- Opportunity to go out on dates and develop an intimate relationship
- Learning to read and write better
- Having a job in the competitive market
- What else?

What has *FRED'S STORY* helped you to understand about:

- Cognitive limitations?
- Institutionalization?
- Support Services?
- Your own work?
- What else?