

*Being “of” the community:
Exploring and celebrating
community living for adults
with IDD*

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rtc on community living

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Today's topics

- What is community?
- Features of community living
- Becoming “of” the community
- Challenges, solutions, & discussion



Com·mu·ni·ty

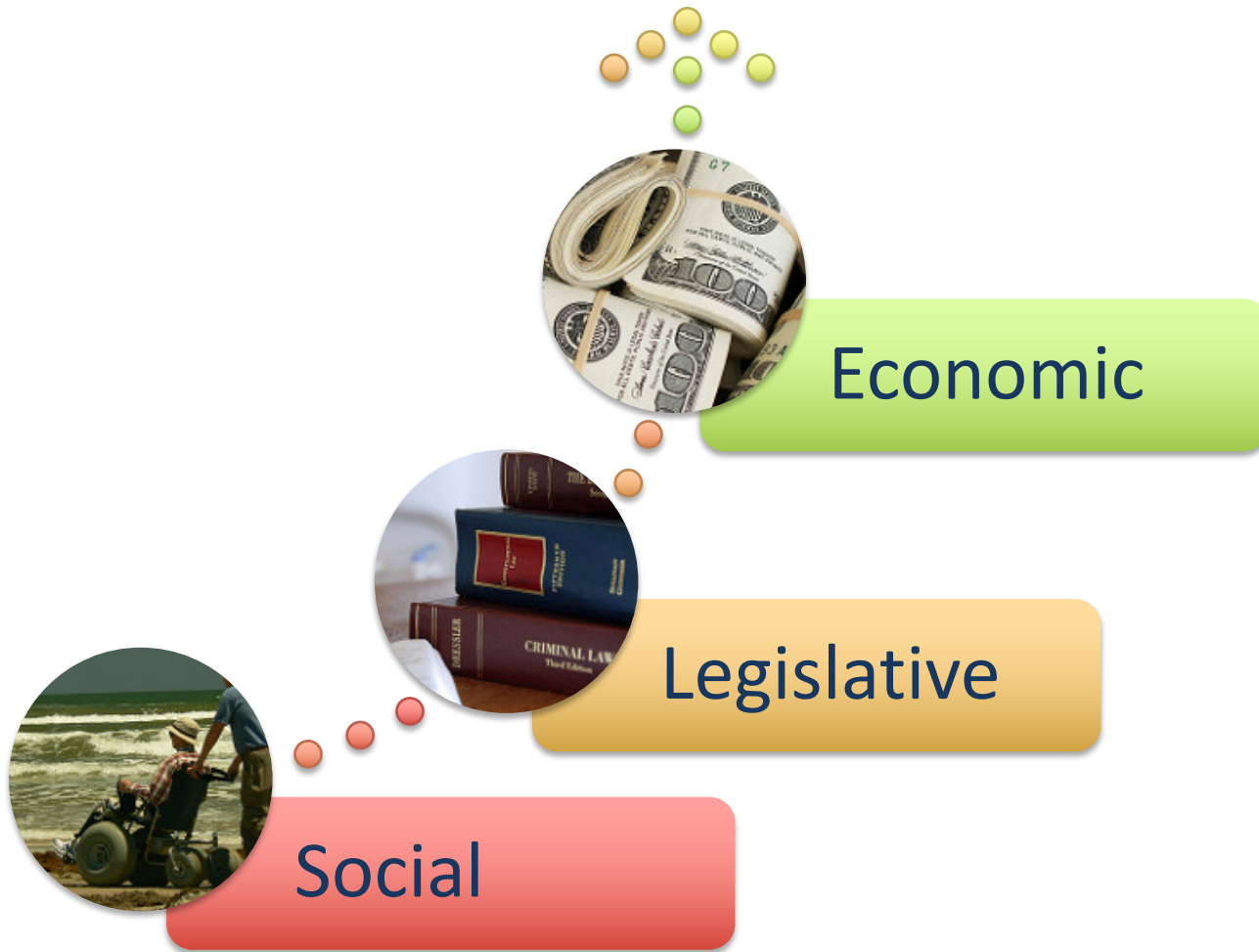
- /kə'myoʊnədəē/
- noun: **community**; plural noun: **communities**
 - **1.** A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
 - **2.** A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.

What is community living?

A *complex and evolving* construct related to individual preferences, contexts and cultural and linguistics lenses

- where and with whom a person **lives**;
- if and where a person **works**;
- the **financial resources** available to the individual;
- what a person does **during the day**;
- their quality of **relationships** with others;
- what and with whom a person does things of **personal interest**,
- an individual's **health** (physical and emotional);
- if, where and with whom they meet their **spiritual needs**;
- their interest and opportunity to engage in **learning** and personal **growth**;
- their opportunities and ability to make **informed decisions** about and **determine the direction of their own life**, and
- their **human right to assume roles and responsibilities as a citizen** (e.g. neighbor, taxpayer, voter). (Credit RTCCCL @UMN)

Making the case for community living



Book chapters & topics

- Chapter 1. Community Living and Participation: A Comprehensive Framework
- Chapter 2. One Person at a Time: Using Person-Centered and Positive Support Practices
- Chapter 3. A Place to Call Home
- Chapter 4. Work and Careers: It's More Than Just a Job
- Chapter 5. Friendship, Love, and Fun: Social Inclusion and Relationships

Book chapters & topics

- Chapter 6. Self-Determination and Self Advocacy: It's My Life
- Chapter 7. Rights, Choices, and Supported Decision Making
- Chapter 8. Wellness Matters: Supporting Health and Wellness in Adulthood
- Chapter 9. Planning for Healthy and Engaged Aging
- Chapter 10. Outcomes for Quality of Life: Practices That Promote
Quality Outcomes
- Chapter 11. Hiring, Training, and Supporting the Direct Support Workforce



Key features of community living



Key features continued

- **engagement**—the act of being connected and involved in something, which can include civic engagement
- **expectation**—the belief that something can be achieved or will occur
- **valued social role**—where the person is looked up to and seen as a capable, competent, and valued contributor to the interaction
- **reciprocity**—the exchange of feelings, things, experiences, and ideas for mutual benefit
- **connectedness**—the feeling or state of being joined or linked with a person, group, or idea that includes the feeling of belonging
- **self-direction**—the authority to made decisions and take responsibility for choices, actions, or experiences for oneself
- **choice and control**—the freedom to pick among several options, and to make a decision when faced with one or more possibilities
- **contribution**—one’s role in making something happen or advancing something

Shifts in thinking & approach

To make community living a reality for people requires us to make shifts from where we've been.

“What got us here, isn't going to get us there.”

-Bruce Remme, Director,
Ability Building Center (MN)

#1: Separate is not equal



#2: Reinvest in people and community



Photo credit: Creative Commons

#3: Maintain high expectations at all times



#4: Building capacity and system change take time



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Moving beyond "in" the community

OF THE COMMUNITY

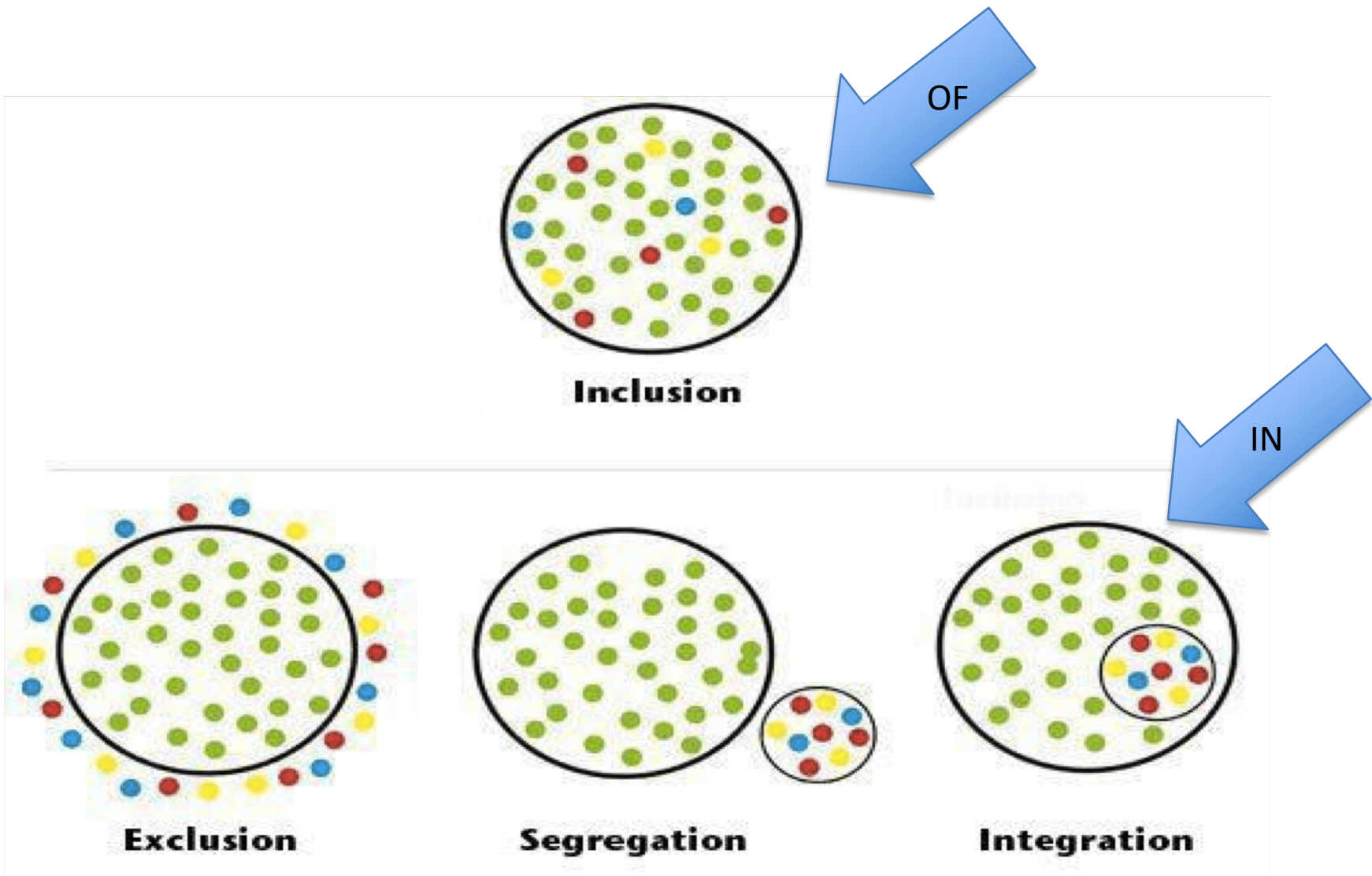
Shifting from...

- Supports from only paid staff
- Manufactured environments
- Hidden from public view
- Limited or no choices
- “Tracked” into typical programming
- Dependency on the system
- Over supporting 24/7

Moving to...

- Person driven supports
- In AND of the community in plain sight
- Relationships with others not paid to support
- Individualized approaches
- System supports, person directs
- “As needed” or “just in time” support





Graphic credit: Thinkinclusive.us

Suggested Resource

Of the Community from RTC Media

Examples and experiences of:

- Self direction
- Futures planning
- Supporting choice
- Dignity of risk
- Using technology
- And many more!



<http://rtcmedia.umn.edu/ofthecommunity/>

Current controversies & challenges

- Resistance to full inclusion
- Policy compliance and enforcement
- Location, location, location
- Workforce challenges

Practical suggestions & interventions

- Community as place of intervention
- Values based core elements of inclusive community practices
- Life course approaches

Moving the conversation

1. What are the most important aspects of your life in the community?
2. How do these aspects compare with the lives of people with IDD with whom you interact?
3. What are the roles and responsibilities of communities when it comes to including and supporting people with IDD? In what ways can local businesses, restaurants, faith communities, libraries, schools, community centers, etc. promote community living and participation for people with IDD? What can you do to hold these community places accountable for inclusion and ensure they do their part?
4. What is the key difference between being in the community and being of the community?

Author acknowledgment

We would like to thank the advocates, authors, and families who contributed to the richness and diversity of this book.

We are a village. We are a community.

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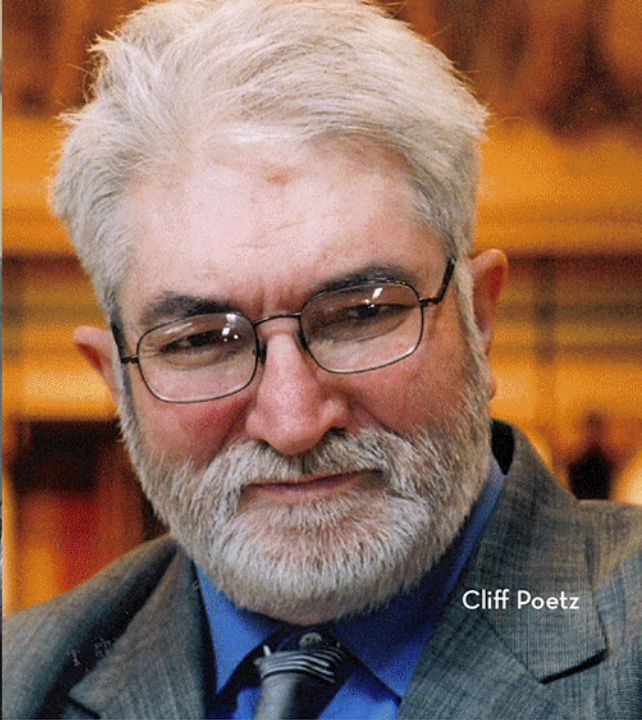
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Amy Hewitt



I AM DRIVEN TO RETHINK
WHAT ACCESSIBILITY MEANS



Cliff Poetz



I AM DRIVEN TO
PROFESSIONALIZE THE DIRECT
SUPPORT WORKFORCE



John Smith



I AM DRIVEN TO
MAKE HOME OWNERSHIP A
REALITY FOR PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES