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Roselyn M. Dixon

University of Wollongong, roselyn@uow.edu.au

H Marsh

Rhonda Craven

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Moving Out: The Impact on the Self and Other Related Variables for People with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

*Roselyn M. Dixon, Herbert W. Marsh and Rhonda G. Craven
University of Western Sydney
Australia*

Social competence and affective development (self-concept, self-esteem and locus of control) of people with intellectual disability has been widely valued as a desirable goal and is frequently seen as the crucial variable in the attainment of full integration into the community. However, although there is now wide recognition of the rights of people with intellectual disabilities to be fully integrated into the community, there have been few attempts to examine the impact of deinstitutionalisation on the affective development and social competence of people with mild intellectual disabilities. Although the consensus both here and overseas is that the physical placement of people with intellectual disabilities away from institutions and into the community has been largely beneficial, there is still an acknowledgement that social integration has not been achieved and that many people continue to lead lonely, isolated and socially restricted lives. Therefore, despite the acceptance for many years of the principles of normalisation, social role valorisation and deinstitutionalisation, there is some dissatisfaction with the outcomes, particularly in the area of social integration.

The integration of people with intellectual disabilities into the local community forms the essence of normalisation - enabling people with disabilities to attain that which most non-disabled people expect as of right (Brown & Smith, 1992, p.174). The provision of residential services in smaller community-based homes which is the most common residential option under the new policies, is consistent with the principles of normalisation and social role valorisation. These two principles provide the underlying philosophical framework for the provision of many contemporary services in the field (Young et al., 1998) both in Australia and overseas.

Smaller community-based services were implicitly mandated to provide the supports necessary to effect the integration of people with intellectual disability into the mainstream of society (Emerson, 1990). The process of supported physical and social integration in these smaller facilities was to provide the mechanism by which people with intellectual disabilities could experience the autonomy, choices, freedoms, dignity, respect and independence given to more valued members of the community. Integration has become almost synonymous with an increasingly independent life style, based on the assumption that being placed physically in the community will automatically lead to being enabled to participate in community life (Carnaby, 1998). Therefore, the rationale for deinstitutionalisation was that it would

lead to a substantial improvement in the quality of life experienced by people with intellectual disabilities. More specifically, it has been thought that there would be increases in adaptive behaviour and decreases in the likelihood of abuse and neglect (Conway, Bergin & Thornton, 1996; Sobsey, 1994). It was also assumed that deinstitutionalisation would improve the social competence of people with intellectual disabilities and impact positively on related personal affective characteristics such as self-concept and locus of control.

Self-concept, self-esteem and locus of control have been considered to be important variables of psychological well-being. For people with mild intellectual disabilities a

strong relationship exists between self-concept and acceptance of disability (Li & Moore, 1998) and low self-esteem is associated with impoverished social relationships. Self-identity, confidence and feelings of worth influence the way an individual interacts with the environment. Participating fully in society and being accepted by others requires a positive self-concept. Therefore, if people with disabilities are to achieve social integration it is imperative that there is a better understanding about the impact that deinstitutionalisation may have on their self-concept, self-esteem and locus of control. Even though self-concept, self-esteem and locus of control are so crucial to the implementation of these policies they have largely been ignored. Few studies, apart from the personal control paradigm emanating from Wehmeyer (1994) and his co-workers, go beyond the measures provided by the relevant subscales of the Adaptive Behaviour Scale (Mathias, 1990), or Quality of Life domains (Brown, 1997).

More generally, research has found that when people with intellectual disabilities are moved from institutions into smaller community-based services, positive outcomes have been recorded (Emerson & Hatton, 1996; Larson & Lakin, 1989; Young et al., 1998). However, positive outcomes have not been inevitable. It is now being recognised that mere placement in the community is not always sufficient (Jahoda, Markova and Cattermole, 1991). Individual characteristics of clients and the nature of the services received in the community may be very significant to maintaining normalisation and social role valorisation. One of the areas that has consistently been found to have an impact on community-based living is the social competencies and affective functioning of people with intellectual disability (Ralph & Usher, 1995). Given the recognised importance, it is surprising that these have not been the focus of more research in either the Australian or overseas context.

This study examines the social competency and affective functioning of people with mild intellectual disabilities through examining salient variables that impact

on people with disabilities who are in transition, i.e. older adults moving from institutionalised living to independent programming and transitional housing. Few research studies have utilised either a longitudinal design or a comparison group and this limits the validity of the reported studies. Only a limited number of studies, and none in Australia, have utilised a range of instruments to evaluate a large number of psychometric and other variables. No study has used a multidimensional self-concept instrument with adults.

The study is a longitudinal pre-test post-test with comparison group design which assesses the impact on salient affective variables of placing people with intellectual disabilities in the transitional housing and individualised programming. The study uses a group (Group 1) that moved and compares them to a similar group that were not deinstitutionalised (Group 2). The variables that were chosen for the study were self-concept, self-esteem, and locus of control. It was expected that the moving group would show greater changes in these variables than the non-moving group. A battery of tests was administered prior to the participants in Group 1 moving to the new program and setting. All of these measures were readministered 30 months later.

The study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. What impact does moving to transitional housing and individualised programming have on self-concept, self-esteem, and locus of control of adults with mild intellectual disabilities?
2. Are there significant changes after a 30 months of living in transitional housing and being exposed to individualised programming?

Subjects

Two groups of adults with intellectual disability were chosen for this study. All of the subjects included in the study were verbal and answered the instruments independently. Subjects who were not sufficiently verbal to answer the instruments were not included in the study.

Group 1

Comprised 30 adults with an intellectual disability who were residents of a residential service in the Brisbane area. These residents ranged in age from 32 to 65 but the great majority were under 60 years of age. The mean age was 48 years, 22 of the subjects were female and 8 were male. Twenty of the subjects were in the mild range and 10 were in the mild to moderate range of intellectual functioning. Twelve of the subjects had diagnosed psychiatric conditions and there was a range of additional disabilities. The length of time these subjects had been institutionalised ranged from 3 -35 years.

All of these subjects were going to be moved into a new individualised life skills programming and transitional housing after Time 1 testing.

Group 2

Was a comparison group of 27 residents with intellectual disabilities who are not moving to community-based living. These subjects were living in a residential facility in a different geographic location in South-East Queensland. These subjects ranged in age from 18 to 55 with the mean being 36 years. There were 7 males and 20 females in this group. Twenty-one of the subjects were in the mild range of intellectual functioning and six were in the mild to moderate range. Eleven had diagnosed psychiatric conditions but there were fewer additional disabilities. The length of time these subjects had been institutionalised ranged from 3-35 years.

These subjects were receiving some life skills programming but were not being prepared to move to the community. They were nearly all employed in a sheltered workshop where they worked 5 days a week.

All scores were examined using standard summary statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients.

Differences within and between groups on total scales and subscale scores were examined using a hierarchical procedure beginning with analysis of variance with repeated measures (MANOVA) and examining univariate effects when appropriate.

The results presented here will be the descriptive and MANOVA (for Group 1 (the moving group) and Group 2 (the comparison group) at Time 1 and Time 2 on the variables measured. These are *multi-dimensional self-concept* as measured by the SDQ-111 (Marsh, 1989), *general self-esteem* as measured by the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory Adult Form (Short Version) (Coopersmith, 1981), *locus of control* as measured by *Adult Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Locus of Control Scale* (Nowicki and Duke, 1974)

Results of Multi-Dimensional Self-Concept

Descriptive Results of the Self-Description Questionnaire 111 (Marsh, 1989)(SDQ-111)

The descriptive results on the multidimensional self-concept measure (SDQ-111) are

presented in Table 1. They indicate that for most subscales of the SDQ-111 both groups have low to medium self-concepts, compared to the most relevant norming samples.

For Group 1 at Time 1 the academic subscale mean was low ($M=3.30, SD=1.67$), the verbal subscale mean was low ($M=3.87, SD=1.8$), the opposite sex subscale mean was low ($M=4.2, SD=2.1$) and the maths subscale mean was very low ($M=1.26, SD=.69$). Conversely the honesty subscale mean ($M=6.87, SD=1.3$) and the parent subscale mean were quite high ($M=6.04, SD=1.9$). This last result is surprising

given that most of these people do not have regular contact with their parents.

Results of the MANOVA on the SDQ-111

The results of the repeated measures analysis of variance are shown in Table 1. For the academic subscale there was a main effect of institution ($F=7.23, p<0.01$) caused by Group 1 being higher than Group 2. There was an interaction effect caused by Group 1 increasing more than Group 2 ($F=4.33, p<0.05$), but the scores went up a lot overall.

For the honesty subscale there was a main effect of institution ($F=5.26, p<0.05$) caused by Group 1 being higher than Group 2. There was also a main effect of time ($F=9.15, p<0.01$) with the scores decreasing for both groups over time. There were no interaction effects.

For the emotion subscale, there was no main effect of institution, there was a main effect of time ($F=11.73, p<0.001$) with both groups increasing slightly. There was a marginally NS interaction caused by a greater increase in Group 1 than Group 2.

For the physical ability subscale there was a large main effect of time ($F=10.75, p<0.01$) (both groups improved), but no main effect of institution or interaction effect.

For the maths subscale there was a main effect of institution with Group 2 being higher than Group 1 ($F=8.75, p<0.01$). There was a main effect of time ($F=16.81, p<0.001$) with both Groups increasing. There were no interaction effects.

For the parents subscale there were no main or interaction effects. The means were marginally lower in Group 2, and there was a marginal decrease over time.

For the physical appearance subscale, there were no main effects for institution or time but there was a significant interaction with Group 1 increasing Group 2 decreased a little but was mostly stable.

There were no main effects for time or institution or any interaction effects on the total, problem-solving, religion, general, opposite sex, same sex, and verbal subscales.

Results of General Self-esteem

Descriptive Results of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory Adult Version (Short Form)

Means, standard deviations and F-Ratios are presented in Table 1. The descriptive results (Table 1) of Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory Adult Version (Short Form) showed that participants with mild intellectual disability had very low to average self-esteem compared to the normative groups on this measure. None approached high self-esteem as measured by the Coopersmith. As the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was not normed for people with intellectual disabilities, it is probably more useful to compare the scores with a similar study that used participants also with mild intellectual disabilities and the same instrument, (Griffin, Rosenberg, Cheney and

Greenberg, 1996). They reported an overall mean of 69.56 (S.D.17.68) and means ranging from 47.69 for participants who lived with their families to a mean of 62.57 if the participants were in a group home to a mean of 83.73 for those participants who were in independent living.

The means as reported for both groups of participants in this study were low but comparable to the participants in the Griffin et al (1996) study who were not living independently.

Results of the MANOVA on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

Although the mean scores of the moving group increased slightly from T1 (M 52.48 SD=14.48) to T2, (M 55.3, SD= 14.51) the results of the MANOVA on CSEI T 1 and T2 by Institution as the between subjects factor and within subjects factor being Time 1 and Time 2 showed that as predicted from the hypotheses there were no significant differences between the groups.

The results of the repeated measures analysis of variance (Table 1) reveal no statistically significant main effects for group. Also there was no main effect for time no interaction effect observed.

There was a slight increase in the predicted direction for the moving group i.e. the self-esteem of the moving group increased. However, there was no significant change over the 30 months between the 2 groups in the scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

Results of Locus of Control

Descriptive Results of the Adult Version of the Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale (ANS-IE)(Nowicki and Duke, 1974; Nowicki and Strickland, 1973).

For Locus of Control the descriptive results (Table 1) show that Group 1 (M 19.21, SD=3.56) and Group 2 (M 19.1, SD=4.51) had a high external locus of control, compared to the normative sample. Reported mean scores on the ANS-IE for college age students are 9.06 and a standard deviation of 5.61. For nondisabled adults in the community a mean of 10.96 and a standard deviation of 5.61 has been reported. (Nowicki and Strickland, 1973).

Both of the groups in this study scored in the external direction on both testing occasions. (Table 1) These findings are consistent with previous research that people with intellectual impairments hold externally oriented perceptions of control. (Wehmeyer, 1994)

Results of the MANOVA on the ANS-IE

The results of the repeated measures analysis of variance (Table 1) revealed no main effect for group or time and no interaction effect. There was a slight shift towards internality at Time 2 for the moving group. This

shift was in the hypothesised direction, however, it did not reach significance.

Summary

Overall, the results on multi-dimensional self-concept, general self-esteem and locus of control are consistent with the results that have been reported in the literature. The participants in this study had low to average self-concept, low self-esteem and highly external perceptions of control.

The results on the repeated measure analysis of variance, reveal no significant changes from Time 1 to Time 2 on self-esteem and locus of control, which was not predicted. The results on the multidimensional self-concept, indicate that there were changes in the hypothesised direction for Group 1 on the academic, maths, emotion, and physical appearance subscales.

The changes in the maths subscale were unexpected but the other changes confirmed the hypotheses and indicate that there were benefits to the self concept from the move to the community for Group 1.

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Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations and F-ratios for the SDQ-111 Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory Adult Form (Short Version), Adult Nowicki-Strickland Internal- External Control Scale

VARIABLE	Group 1		Group 2		EFFECT F		
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2	GROUP F(1,#)	INTERACTI ON F(1,#)	
SDQ-111							
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Total	60.1 7	11.0 4	60. 22	12.8 6	62. 08	12.84	60.64
							12.99
Academic	3.30	1.66	5.0	1.91	5.0	1.80	5.68
							1.90
Honesty	6.87	1.25	5.9	1.75	5.7	1.60	5.36
							1.38
Emotion	4.28	1.89	5.5	1.90	5.3	1.75	5.74
							1.83
							1.90
							0.12
							0.39
							0.44
							19.00***
							4.33*
							9.15**
							11.73***
							3.14

Verbal	3.87	1.79	3.48	2.31	3.20	2.08	3.28	2.07	0.70	0.27	0.61
Opposite Sex	4.22	2.11	3.74	2.16	3.32	1.75	3.40	1.68	1.53	0.65	1.29
Physical Ability	3.61	2.11	4.61	1.95	4.65	2.17	5.16	2.15	2.07	10.75**	2.55
Same Sex	5.88	1.39	6.04	2.32	45.9	2.28	5.85	2.52	0.01	0.01	0.33
General	5.88	1.67	5.48	1.56	5.60	1.53	5.20	1.83	0.37	2.42	0.01
Problem Solving	4.04	1.40	4.44	1.67	4.24	1.86	4.28	2.23	0.01	0.74	0.74
Maths	1.26	0.68	3.00	2.70	3.28	2.79	4.52	2.75	8.75**	16.81***	0.47
Parents	6.04	1.92	5.58	1.78	4.92	1.80	4.64	2.12	3.79	3.49	0.40
Religion	6.00	1.88	5.65	1.97	5.68	1.86	5.88	1.83	0.01	0.08	

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Physical Appearance	5.24	1.51	6.0	2.06	5.8	2.02	5.70	1.84	0.04	2.92	4.97
			8		1						
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory	52.4	14.4	55.	14.5	48.	16.50	49.88	16.23	1.03	0.72	0.83
	8	8	37	1	96						
Adult Internal-External Locus of Control Scale	19.2	3.56	17.	4.32	19.	4.51	19.04	4.44	0.22	1.94	1.24
	1		00		15						