

Background on Vermont

- Small, rural state
- Population 624,000
- City of Burlington
- Chittenden County: 150,000
- 14 Counties
- 9,200 square miles
- Support provided to over 3,000 people w/DD
- Do not use Federal definition of DD
- 15 private, non-profit providers
- Contracted by State
- Family/Self Managed Funds

Champlain Community Services

- In 1967 group of concerned parents in VT started their agency and sheltered workshop.
- Similar workshops around the country emerged in the 1950's-60's.
- Sanctuary away from the institution and a safe haven from the community.
- Sheltered workshop built and maintained on charity.
- Developed an insular community.

Family Voices (Anger)

- *Twenty-five years ago the "experts" said that the state institution was the way to go. Then the experts said it had to close and people went to foster homes instead of the family, because experts said that would be best. [My son] was physically and emotionally abused at that foster home. He starved himself to get out. He had always been good-natured, but became very unhappy and difficult. Talk about trials and tribulations! We weathered it all. They didn't live up to their word.*

Family Voices (Concern)

- *A lot of the families down there are my age and older that started the workshop because at that time there were no other services. And so I think from that point of view it's a little scary for some of them to let go. They worked hard and did their job; they really spent a lot of time and effort to get that started and having a place for their family members to go and be protected and feel good about themselves.*

Family Voices (Fear)

- *We are all scared to death. My biggest concern is the far-reaching effect on their emotions of closing the workshop. I'm not sure about how she will feel not having that be a center for her. Whether it's a workshop where she really works or whether it's a place they can come and go. If they can just come back there and eat lunch so that they could see their own peers and belong, and feel that this is MY place.*

Younger Families

- *I don't like the thought of putting people in an area where they're not seen. They need to be appreciated by the community. People need to know that there are people with disabilities out there, not hiding away somewhere working on projects.*

Younger Families

- *I watch many of the people who were in the sheltered workshop and how they behave socially. I think maybe because they work in this closeted room or closeted box that they are in, that they don't have the opportunity to socialize and I think it comes out when you bring them to large groups of people. You see that.*

Younger Families

- *It's too reclusive. That's one of the things that I found about it too, you're shut off from the rest of the world. And it sort of adds to the stigma, which is sad.*

After the Closure

- *I think he's happy, what more can I ask for than to have him contented and happy?*
- *[Her] integration into the community has been a remarkable move up the ladder for her in skills. She is so verbal you would not believe it. You cannot close her down sometimes. And you know, before she went into the workshop situation, she wasn't speaking at all.*

Paradigm Shift (1967-Now)

- Segregated
- Sheltered Work
- Mentally Retarded
- Uneducable
- Children
- Protected
- Parent-Determined
- Potential Untapped
- None/Spec. Ed.
- Older Parents
- Agency-Based
- Community Exclusion
- Included
- Supported Employment
- Intellectual Disability
- Having Competence
- Adults
- Dignity of Risk
- Self-Determined
- Potential Maximized
- Inclusive/Spec. Ed.
- Younger Parents
- Community-Based
- Community Acceptance

Generational Differences

- Closing Doors of Workshop
- Letting go: Loss and Grieving
- Not ready, too late
- Ridicule and abuse
- Taking away friends and community
- 35 years of tradition and culture
- Care after parents
- Opening Doors to Community
- Opportunity, Risk, Being with non-disabled peers
- Graduating with jobs
- Community work and social life
- Same age peer group
- Social skills and daily living skills for community
- View sheltered work as reclusive & stigmatizing

Family Summary

- Sense of Place
 - Letting Go
 - Missing the workshop?
 - Safety-Net
 - Seeing increased skills
 - Happy if sons and daughters are happy
 - Participants are happy but miss their community and want more
 - Care after parents are gone
- While the initial transition was difficult, most families and participants were satisfied with the conversion process as long as they could maintain their previous social networks and find acceptable employment in the community.

Strategic Planning

- What are your current demographics?
- What will they be 5 years from now? 10 years? 20 years?
- Are you preparing for that?

