

Introduction

While persons with disabilities use the term Independent Living, our goal is to participate equally in our communities - exercising our self-determination.

Credit: ILI promotes the self-determination of people with disabilities
The Independent Living Institute (ILI) is a policy development center specializing in consumer-driven policies for disabled peoples' self-determination, self-respect and dignity.
<http://www.independentliving.org/indexen.html>

Principles

1. Independent living is a process of consciousness raising, empowerment and emancipation. This process enables all disabled persons to achieve equal opportunities, rights and full participation in all aspects of society.
2. Disabled people must be able to control this process individually and collectively. To achieve this goal we provide peer support and use democratic principles in our work.
3. As equal citizens we must have the same access to the basics of life including: food, clothing, shelter, health care, assistive devices, personal support services, education, employment, information, communication, transportation and access to the physical and cultural environment, the right to sexuality and the right to marry and have children, and peace.
4. The Independent Living Movement must be a cross disability movement addressing the needs of all disabled persons. In order for this to occur we must rid ourselves of any prejudice we have towards persons with disabilities other than our own and encourage the involvement of disabled women and other underrepresented groups. Disabled children should be enabled by their families and society in general to become independent adults.
5. Disabled people must obtain all the requirements for equalisation of opportunities and full participation by defining their own needs, choices and degree of user control.
6. The Independent Living Movement is opposed to the development and maintenance of systems which promote dependency through institutional responses.
7. Disabled people must involve themselves in research and development, planning and decision making, at all levels, in matters concerning their lives.

Definition of Independent Living

1. Solidarity

- a) To work actively for the development of full equality and participation for all persons with disabilities regardless of type or extent of disability, sex, age, residence, ethnic origin, sexuality or religion,
- b) to work so that people with disabilities can have the resources to live independently, c) to recognize Independent Living as a basic human right,

Definition of Independent Living (cont)

- d) to share or exchange information, advice, support and training in appropriate form, e.g. tape, braille, large print, free of charge for persons with disabilities or, where there is a charge, to ensure that people with disabilities have the resources to pay for these services,
- e) to cooperate with and support other organizations which belong to the international Independent Living network or who support the goals of the Independent Living movement.

2. Peer Support

- a) to use peer support as the foremost educational tool for sharing information, experiences and insights in order to make people with disabilities conscious of the audio, visual and cultural, psychological, social, economic and political oppression and discrimination that they are exposed to,
- b) to make persons with disabilities aware of their possibilities to reach full equality and participation,
- c) to empower persons with disabilities by assisting them to acquire the skills to manage their social and physical environment with the goal of full equality and participation in their families and society.

3. De-Institutionalization

- a) to oppose all types of institutions, stationary or mobile, especially designed for persons with disabilities. An institution is any public or private establishment, organization or service which creates special segregated solutions for persons with disabilities in education, work, housing, transportation, personal assistance and all other areas of life, which by its nature limits disabled persons' possibilities to make their own decisions about their lives or reduces their opportunities to participate in society on equal terms..
- b) In particular, establishments, organizations or services may not use the term "Independent Living", if they promote or accept personal assistance services that require the user to live in special dwelling units or which deny or reduce the individual user's right to full choice and control over his or her life by forcing the user to live by the routine of others.

4. Democracy and Self-determination

Organizations may use the term "Independent Living" only, if all the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) if they are membership organizations based on democratic principles such as one person - one vote and
- b) if full membership with voting rights is reserved for persons with disabilities only and
- c) if the organization as a practice favors disabled persons for positions within the organization for both paid staff and volunteers including the head of staff and
- d) if the organization as a rule is represented in negotiations, meetings and the media by disabled persons.

Any organization, governmental or non-governmental including organizations for disabled persons, individuals and professionals who use the term "Independent Living" in their work have to comply with these principles

