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Developments in the integration of people with disabilities into society – an internal seminar

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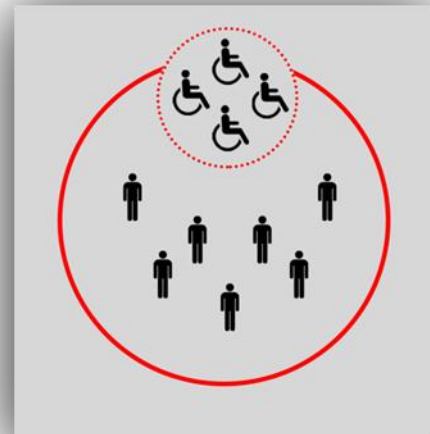
A historic opportunity has arisen in Israel to promote the integration of people with disabilities into society. This was one of the key messages delivered by Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute (MJB) researchers at a seminar on disabilities, held recently for MJB staff.

The seminar was opened by Dori Rivkin, head of the Center for Research on Disabilities, who shared her personal reflections on her work and research on behalf of people with disabilities.

Rivkin was followed by researcher Yoav Loeff, who spoke about current developments and changes in attitudes towards people with disabilities in Israel and elsewhere. For example, new disabilities, such as Attention Deficiency Disorder and various syndromes on the spectrum of autism, are being recognized. Additionally, there is a movement away from a "nursing care" approach, which regards people with disabilities as passive, in need of treatment, and whose place is outside regular society, to a "social" approach, which regards disabilities as an interplay between the individual's impairments and environmental conditions and societal expectations. The social approach emphasizes every person's right to participate in society, and charges society with the duty to create conditions that promote such inclusiveness.

Other MJB researchers went on to describe how these developments affect three areas of life.

Lital Barlev discussed developments in the area of housing – transitioning from institutional to community frameworks, with the requisite support for independent life within the community. One of the challenges in fully realizing this transition, Barlev explained, is the opposition by some people to live in proximity to those



A NIMBY protest against having a hostel for people with disabilities in a neighborhood.-

with disabilities – the NIMBY, or "Not In My Back Yard" phenomenon.



Ellen Milshtein presented on the integration of children with disabilities into regular schools. Here, the challenge facing educational frameworks is to ensure that children with disabilities participate fully, both academically and socially, which requires special efforts and awareness by all concerned parties.

Finally, Yossi Keren Avraham discussed the evolving trends in programs aimed at integrating people with disabilities into the employment market.



The speakers noted that people with disabilities are a highly significant minority group in Israeli society, representing all segments and sectors of the population. Moreover, it is a fairly permeable group, in that anyone might join the group at any moment following an accident or illness or other situation.

Some Facts and Figures

- People with disabilities represent 21% of the working-age population (18-67) in Israel.
- This rate breaks down between those with severe disabilities (5%), moderate disabilities (11%), and slight disabilities (5%).
- The number of children with disabilities in Israel is estimated at just under 9%.

For further information, please see our booklet: "People with Disabilities in Israel Facts & Figures" at http://brookdale.jdc.org.il/Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/FACTS_FIGURES2014.pdf