Social inclusion: the road forward

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MAPS team and partners

MAPS areas of focus

• Person Centered/Directed Planning (L. Martin & H. Ouellette-Kuntz)
• Parents Seeking Adult Services (Y. Lunsky & H. Ouellette-Kuntz)
• Role and Practices of Staff (R. Hickey)
• Productivity Options (R. Lysaght)
• Social Inclusion (V. Cobigo)

Visit our website for more information: www.mapsresearch.ca
Policy relevance


- Australian Minister of Social Inclusion

- United Kingdom National Action Plan on Social Inclusion, Department for Work and Pensions

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The Social Inclusion Act

- Ontario’s vision for developmental services:
  To support people to live as independently as possible and to support the full inclusion of Ontarians with disabilities in all aspects of society

- Improve services and supports for adults with a developmental disability

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Policy relevance

In Ontario:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

- Poverty Reduction Strategy

- Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act

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Achieving Ontario’s vision for developmental services

- Regulations & Directives
- Determining outcomes & practices
- Research & system monitoring
Defining Social Inclusion: MAPS approach

- Reviews of the scientific literature
- Input from local & international stakeholders:
  - International conferences
  - Local advisory groups
  - Consumer consultations
  - Online survey

Defining social inclusion: main findings

- Vast literature & many overlaps

Some defined social inclusion as:

1. The opposite of social exclusion
2. Experiencing valued social roles, i.e. desirable for typical members of the community
3. The extent of one’s participation in community-based activities
4. Having a job or a productive activity

Autistic and Seeking a Place in an Adult World
The New York Times, September 17, 2011
Misconceptions (1)

Social inclusion is the opposite of social exclusion

Misconceptions (2)

- Social inclusion is experiencing valued social roles, i.e. desirable for typical members of the community
  - Moralistic judgements

- High scores reported as optimal and closer to the desirable and valued lifestyle
  - Unattainable targets

Social inclusion: the road forward

- Adopting a pro-active perspective

- Identification of tools to improve social inclusion
  - Legislation
  - Community-based supports & services
  - Antistigma and anti-discrimination efforts
  - System monitoring & evaluation

Social inclusion: the road forward

- Abandoning the moralistic perspective
- Leaning toward an approach respectful of individuals’ expectations, choices and needs
- 100% shouldn’t be the target

V. Cobigo, 2012

Social inclusion: the road forward

Valued and meaningful social roles

V. Cobigo, 2012

Misconceptions (3)

- Social inclusion is often measured as one’s:
  - Participation in community-based activities
  - Relationships with members of non-marginalized groups

- Determinations rely heavily on objective measures
  - Frequency of activities in the community
  - Frequency of contacts with non-marginalized groups

V. Cobigo, 2012

Social inclusion: the road forward

- Validity of indicators questionable
- For social inclusion to be successful from the perspective of persons with disabilities:
  - Quality of their social relationships
  - Sense of belonging to groups they choose and want to belong to

Social inclusion: the road forward

- Including subjective measures of one’s social belonging and well-being to our definition and measure of social inclusion.

Misconceptions (4)

- Social inclusion is often narrowly defined and measured as productivity and independent living
- Overlaps between social exclusion, poverty and deprivation
- Solutions primarily about employment
  - Inappropriate for people with more severe disabilities

Social inclusion: the road forward

- Performance and productivity are not the ultimate goals of social inclusion
- Social inclusion is a dynamic process:
  - Evolves over time
  - When / opportunities
  - When \ skills

Social inclusion is:

- A series of complex interactions between environmental factors and personal characteristics that provide opportunities to:
  - Access public goods and services
  - Experience valued and expected social roles of one’s choosing based on his/her age, gender and culture
  - Be recognized as a competent individual and trusted to perform social roles in the community
  - Belong to a social network within which one receives and contributes supports.
Measuring social inclusion

Measuring processes
- “The right things to do”
- Focus on the tools to improve social inclusion
- Best match person – environment
- Dynamic process

Measuring outcomes
- No 100% target
- Need a referent
The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily the views of all MAPS partners, researchers, collaborators or those of the Ministry.

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Further readings

From the MAPS team


