



## The Importance of Expectations for a Good Intervention

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### Introductory Comments: Just to Clarify

- This brief training highlights one of the factors that influence the outcome of an intervention – but there are others.
- The impact of expectations (others' about us, ours about ourselves) has been extensively researched.
- We will only be covering one aspect of the expectancy construct and that is the impact of the expectations of others



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### Others' Expectations About Us

- Others' expectations have a decisive impact on an individual's performance
  - on the performance of complex tasks
  - on I.Q.
  - on the mitigation of symptoms
  - on healing
  - on the individual's wellbeing
- Others' expectations can become "self-fulfilling prophecies"



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### Start-up Exercise -1a

The pediatrician explained to the parents of the newborn that their child had a very rare syndrome, sc phocomelia, which is characterized by the following features:

- significant deformation in the hips, which will require surgery
- microcephaly, with a high probability of epilepsy and intellectual disability
- a high probability of visual impairment and deafness




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### Start-up Exercise -1b

- The pediatrician gave a prognosis of profound intellectual disability, blindness, deafness and severe physical disability requiring the use of a wheelchair.
- The doctor and the nurses encouraged the parents to place the child: “she will not have any quality of life.”




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### Start-up Exercise -2

- What will become of this child?
- Take a few minutes to discuss amongst yourselves what the future holds for this child
- At the end, take a few minutes to develop a prognosis:
  - what will happen to this person when he/she reaches adulthood?
  - how will he/she develop?
  - what would you recommend to the parents?
    - placement in a home?
    - that the child be brought up by the parents?




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## Our Expectations

- This child, who at this point is nameless, does not know that its future is being decided:
  - the adults are coming up with prognoses (assumptions about its future)
  - these diagnoses and prognoses set stereotypes and influence our perception
  - our decisions and actions are strongly influenced by our expectations, couched in these terms
- This child will grow up and will, to a large extent, be the product of the expectations of the adults in its life

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## Impact of Expectations

- The impact of expectations is particularly obvious with children
  - Expectations are what dictate the activities we choose for our children
    - music
    - dance
    - hockey
    - chess club
    - gymnastics
    - educational savings plan

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## Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson

- Bright rats:
  - Running through mazes and intelligence
  - Inconsistent results
  - The laboratory technicians' expectations
  - **Self-fulfilling prophecies**
- Children about to come into their own
  - Two groups of children
  - The teachers' expectations
  - Significant impact of school performance and IQ

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### Things that Inform our Expectations

- Our experiences, our knowledge and our theories about the person and his/her situation
- The person's appearance
- The context in which we find the person
- The person's activities
- Other people in the person's environment
- The words used to describe the person
- The image associated with the person or a group
- The common stereotypes about the person and his/her situation

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### Nine Socio-historical Roles / Stereotypes Assigned to Devalued Persons and Groups

The individual is seen as:

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|---|---|
| 1. A non-human organism<br>a) pre-human<br>b) no longer human<br>c) sub-human: animal, vegetable, object<br>d) "other", alien | 5. An object of pity  |
| 2. A menace; an object of dread   | 6. A burden, requiring charity                                      |
| 3. Waste material, garbage, discard, offal  | 7. A child<br>a) eternally<br>b) once again<br>c) an innocent saint |
| 4. An object of ridicule, trifle  | 8. Someone sick   |
|   | 9. Someone dead, just about dead                                    |

(Wolfensberger, 1998)




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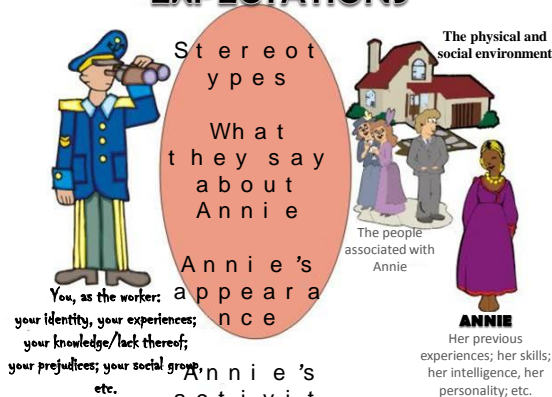
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## EXPECTATIONS




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### The Pygmalion Effect – How it Works

- Expectations about a person are mainly positive or negative
- These expectations inform the opportunities we offer that person
- And inspire the quality of our support and of our encouragement
- All of this will have an impact on the person's performance
- And on the feedback we give that person




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### icious or virtuous circle ?




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### THE "BEAUTIFUL IS GOOD" STEREOTYPE

This stereotype suggests that beautiful people are more competent, and better people than those who are not.

The research confirms the stereotype. Why?

Beautiful people attract the attention of others, and expectations placed on these people are high, so they have better learning opportunities.

(Alice Eagly)




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### Self-fulfilling Prophecies in the Classroom

Brophy (1983) describes what happens in the classroom as follows.

1. The teacher develops expectations about the student.
2. These expectations influence the interactions between the teacher and the student.
3. The student interprets the teacher's actions. These first contacts create expectations in the student.
4. A reciprocity develops between the teacher's expectations and the student's behaviour, and the student's expectations and the teacher's behaviour.
5. The expectations crystallize. We hold onto our expectations until proven otherwise.
6. As time goes on, it becomes more and more difficult to dislodge well-established expectations.
7. Finally, the student interprets his/her own reactions and behaviour towards the teacher. This influences his/her self-image.




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### The "Stereotype Threat"

- We have a tendency to conform to and confirm ethnic and racial stereotypes
  - When stereotypes are invoked, performance on IQ tests is affected




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### "Realistic" Expectations?

- "The idealist realizes the ideal whereas the realist idealizes the real." (Chesterton)
- Expectations have to do with the person's potential (always unknown): when faced with the unknown, being "realistic" doubtless means under-estimating that which can be achieved
  - We cannot measure potential, not even the potential for change




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## Unrealistic Expectations

- Positive expectations are always unrealistic
- To master a new skill, a person must surpass his/her current skill level
- Long-term expectations (life goals) must be very ambitious (every child should be able to dream of becoming a prime minister, fireman or prima ballerina)
- Short-term expectations, inspired by ambitious long-term expectations, must enable a person to approximate success
- Expectations must encourage a person to surpass himself/herself, and support/assistance from others.

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## Expectations and Opportunities

- Expectations—your expectations—are what limit or provide opportunities for development.
- Good parents, even before their baby is born, imagine an outstanding future for their child: parents want their child to live better and to be more successful.

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## Our Expectations for Children and Adults: the Good Things of Life

1. Family, or for those who don't have one, an equivalent small close group.
2. A place to live – a home.
3. Being part of an intermediate social entity that is not too big.
4. Acquaintances and friends.
5. A system of transcendent beliefs that provides a spiritual foundation.
6. Work (or studies), in particular work that has meaning beyond money or an equivalent material aspect, and beyond.
7. Freedom from imminent danger of extreme deprivation or violent death.
8. Opportunities and expectations that enable everyone to discover and foster their skills, competencies, gifts and talents.

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### Our Expectations for Children and Adults: the Good Things of Life - 2

- 9. Being seen as a human, and being treated with a modicum of respect.
- 10. Being treated honestly.
- 11. Having reasonable assurance that we will not fall victim to a gross injustice.
- 12. Being treated as an individual.
- 13. Having a say about the important decisions that affect our lives.
- 14. Having access to at least a few places for day-to-day activities; not being excluded from such places, where normal activities take place.
- 15. Having access to at least a few ordinary social activities.
- 16. Being able to do one's share and having one's contributions recognized as having value.
- 17. Good health.

*Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso (1996)*




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### Whatever became of that child at the start of the session?




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### Josée

The pediatrician gave a prognosis of profound intellectual disability, blindness, deafness and severe physical disability requiring the use of a wheelchair. The doctor and the nurses encouraged the parents to place the child: "she will not have any quality of life."

- Ten days later, the parents chose to take Josée home.
- Five years later, I reconnected with the family and met the then five year-old Josée.




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### Conclusion Regarding Josée

- Josée did not have any surgery.
- She is not deaf.
- She is partially blind.
- She does not have an intellectual disability.
- She does not have epilepsy.
- Josée has, to a large degree, surpassed her parents' high expectations.




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### The Story of Josée

- Josée learned to walk, run, ride a tricycle, inline skate, ski and lots more,
- Josée went to school,
- She got her grade 8 diploma, and finished high school,
- She has lots of friends, and leads a full life in her community.

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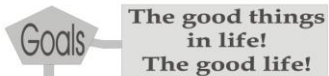
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Expectations and Organization of Social Roles

One way to understand S.R.V.



**Defend or enhance valued social roles**

Objectives




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### Intellectual Disabilities and Expectations

- What stereotypes and expectations are attached to people with developmental disabilities?
- What impact to they have on a person's development?

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### Conclusion

- The resulting expectations, circumstances and opportunities will have a decisive impact on the person's development.

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### Changing our Expectations and Those of Others who are Close to that Person

- Become aware, and change our assumptions about the person and his/her situation
- Improve that person's appearance
- Improve or change that person's context
- Find valorizing activities
- Involve the person with valorized individuals
- Avoid using diagnostic terms, and rely on more positive and respectful language
- Associate the person with positive images
- Fight negative stereotypes about the person and his/her situation
- Help the person adopt valorized roles

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### Some of Josée's Valorized Roles

- Girl
- Granddaughter
- Sister
- Neighbour
- Student
- Friend
- Parishioner
- First communion recipient
- Soprano in a choir
- Soloist singer
- Graduating student
- Member of the community
- Volunteer
- Secretary
- Source of knowledge
- Consumer
- Traveller
- Skier

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Wolf Wolfensberger and Josée




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*“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being.” (Goethe)*

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