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Outcomes for People Leaving Institutions: What Research Tells Us

A review of all reports published between 1980 to 1999 about behavioral changes when people with intellectual disabilities move from institutions to community settings found the following¹:

- Studies of over 2,600 subjects demonstrate strongly and consistently that people who move from institutions to community settings have experiences that help them to improve their adaptive behavior skills. This is a robust array of research whose findings are remarkable for their consistency
- Individuals who left institutions used significantly more community places, engaged in significantly more social activities, experienced significantly more personal integration, had significantly more family contacts, and made significantly more choices at an adjusted expenditure that was 66% of that of their counterparts who remained in institutions.
- All of the studies published in 1990 or later reporting significant findings regarding changes in challenging behavior reported significant improvements.
- Many studies have examined changes in adaptive or challenging behavior associated with movement from institutions to community settings. Summaries of this research noted that, overall, adaptive behavior was almost always found to improve with movement to community settings from institutions, and that parents who were often as a group initially opposed to deinstitutionalization were almost always satisfied with the results of the move to the community after it occurred.

¹Source: Lakin and Larson, 1999, Research & Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota. "Behavioral Outcomes of Deinstitutionalization for People with Intellectual Disabilities: A Review of Studies Conducted Between 1980 and 1999."

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