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Subject: What is isolation?

The definition of isolation is a bit subjective in the language of this proposal. Surely, there is a spirit that those with any type of disability, be given every opportunity to participate in society as anyone else. To make boundaries for anyone is to marginalize them. All people should have every avenue open to them to participate in all aspects of living life to the fullest. I think most reasonable people agree that everyone, regardless of any disability is just as capable as anyone else. I think we can often get caught up in advocating for individual rights and the importance for making the point, to the actual point that we have gone too far by defining too broadly what is "best" for those who may not be able to or may not be whole enough to choose for themselves. In this instance, we choose for them in many ways. Not that this is not in the best intentions, but not even the best intentions result in the best outcomes.

I have worked with adults with developmental disabilities for over two years and there is really no such thing as a universal mandate for a population of so many individual needs. There are actually, believe it or not, persons in this population, that wish to be isolated to some degree or another, just as anyone else does.

To mandate that no person be "isolated" is wonderful in the spirit of inclusion rather than exclusion, but we must not overlook the fact, that "normal" people often want to be left alone and not be forced to be included.

What this mandate has in spirit is a wonderful, but this mandate should not be so broad in scope that it cannot focus on the individual need. No matter whom we are, some of us just don't want to be engaged in the community if we don't have to be or want to be. We can't make people be engaged if they don't want to be.

Before we make all sorts of changes, we probably need to more clearly define and have certain exceptions for the term "isolation". Let us also consider that by mandating inclusion, are we violating the personal right to remain private? Who determines that choice for the person who may not be able to make that decision for their self? When we mandate care so universally, there will be a whole lot of individuals who will not fit that model. Nor should they any more than you or me.

Thank you,
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