

PROMOTING HARMONY AND JUSTICE IN A WORLD OF CONFLICT

An International Conference on Social Work and Counseling Practice
City University of Hong Kong, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong, June 02-05,
2009

Abstract

A world of conflict. Service for people with intellectual disability in Israel in the midst of many conflicts

Joav Merrick, MD, MMedSci, DMSc^{1,2,3,4,5}

¹National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, ²Office of the Medical Director, Division for Mental Retardation, Ministry of Social Affairs, Jerusalem, ³Zusman Child Development Center, Soroka University Medical Center, Beer-Sheva, Israel, ⁴Interuniversity College for Health and Development, Castle of Seggau, Graz, Austria and ⁵Kentucky Children's Hospital, University of Kentucky, Lexington, United States

Correspondence: Professor Joav Merrick, MD, MmedSci, DMSc, Medical Director, Division for Mental Retardation, Ministry of Social Affairs, POBox 1260, IL-91012 Jerusalem, Israel. E-mail: jmerrick@zahav.net.il

The Division for Mental Retardation under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services in Israel today provides service to all people with intellectual disability (ID) in Israel. From 1948, when the modern State of Israel was established, until 1962, the Ministry of Welfare was responsible for the care of persons with ID, both Jewish and non-Jewish residents. In 1962, the Division for Mental Retardation (DMR) was established under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) with the responsibility for the assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons with ID. By 2007, the population in Israel was 7,208,500 persons, whereas the DMR is in contact with around 25,000 persons (all ages), who have been assessed and diagnosed as persons with ID. Residential care is provided to about 7,000 persons in 63 residential centers all over the country, another 2,000 persons are provided residential care in hostels or in group homes in the community in about another 50 locations, and the rest are served with day-care kindergarten, day-treatment centers, sheltered workshops, or integrated care in the community, while living at home with their families. The Office of the Medical Director is responsible for health care to all people in residential care. In our area of the world we have experienced the Israel-Arab conflict, which is ongoing and several times this population has been under actual fire and war, we also experience the conflict in day-to-day activities, but on the other hand we also see harmony and justice in the treatment of this population irrespective if the person is Jewish or non-Jewish. This presentation will describe the population in question, the service provided and how we have prepared and continuously try to handle the situation, when this population becomes part of the conflict and under fire.