

Raymond's Room: Ending the Segregation of People with Disabilities

Imagine an 8 by 10 foot room.

What does it look like?

What do you see inside?

Take a deep breath.

What do you smell?

Did you imagine a room with 2 sets of bunkbeds?

How about a room with the bunkbeds and a portable toilet?

Did you imagine up to four people in this room overnight - with no means of leaving? With the stench of the portable toilet?

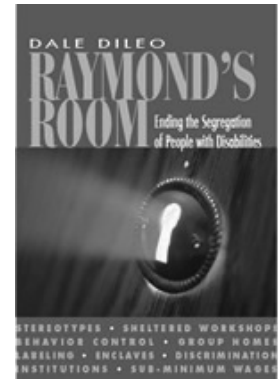
Chances are, you did not initially see any of those images in your mind. But now you do. Although it is hard to imagine this harsh reality, it is even harder to believe that this room existed in the United States in the 1970's. But it did - in a residential facility for children with autism. Not that long ago.

Raymond's Room: Ending the Segregation of People with Disabilities is a poignant, thought-provoking book by Dale DiLeo. The room that was described came to be known as Raymond's Room because a child named Raymond spent

most of his time in that room – for his own protection. For DiLeo, this room represents what is wrong with the way services are provided to people. DiLeo states that “This book is my way of apologizing, Raymond, for what I did not do many years ago.”

In this book are anecdotes from DiLeo's experiences in working with people with disabilities and includes criticisms, recommendations, and promises of the future. He discusses the exclusion, isolation, and powerlessness of people with disabilities and the self-serving, change-resistant “disability industrial complex” that keeps people down. Recognizing that many people with disabilities need the support of publicly-funded systems, DiLeo calls upon the service providers to minimize the perception of disability by helping people learn the unwritten rules of behavior, the cultural norms. In conclusion, he states “We just need to stop accepting what is and start creating what should be.”

To learn more about Raymond's Room visit:
www.raymondsroom.com



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