



Living in liquid modernity

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The argument

1. Too many people w. intellectual disabilities 'known well by no-one' (Bigby, 2008; Hubert & Hollins, 2010), live 'abject' lives (Hall 2005)
2. Ideas about Community Inclusion formed 40 years ago:
 - ▶ Huge changes in society make it imperative to revise our understanding of what community inclusion means
3. Post-millennium Liquid Modernity
4. Social Anchoring: selfhood stays afloat on past & future
5. But... hate crimes
6. And... ID slow to take up new ideas
7. Community psychology methods may help change

Bauman *Liquid Modernity*

- ▶ Groups, clubs, organisations are dissolving
- ▶ Greater insecurity of jobs and homes
- ▶ More migration globally
- ▶ Relationships more fluid
- ▶ Achieving satisfactory recognition one of problems of the age
- ▶ Pits vulnerable groups against one another for limited resource

Fine & Saad-Filho (2017)

Neoliberal Individualism

- ▶ Redefined relationship between economy, state, society & individuals
- ▶ Markets have a way of knowing that exceeds human mind
- ▶ Limits wage growth, imposes 'flexibilization' on workers, adversely effects welfare systems, penalizes the poor
- ▶ Devil-take-the-hindmost treatment of vulnerable groups disadvantages people with ID disproportionately (Clegg & Bigby 2017)
- ▶ Dissolution of social collectives blocks political dissent & emergence of alternatives
- ▶ Different interest groups acting together can & should resist it

When society changes policy must adapt

- ▶ Gleeson: getting things right for people with intellectual disabilities often leads social change
- ▶ Bauman advocates a social justice approach:
 - ▶ Describing well-being
 - ▶ Specifying a life of dignity
- ▶ Fine & Saad-Filho: Different interest groups acting together can & should resist neoliberal individualism
- ▶ Need to find common ground & new ways to co-operate

Social Anchoring

Grzymala-Kazlowska (2016)

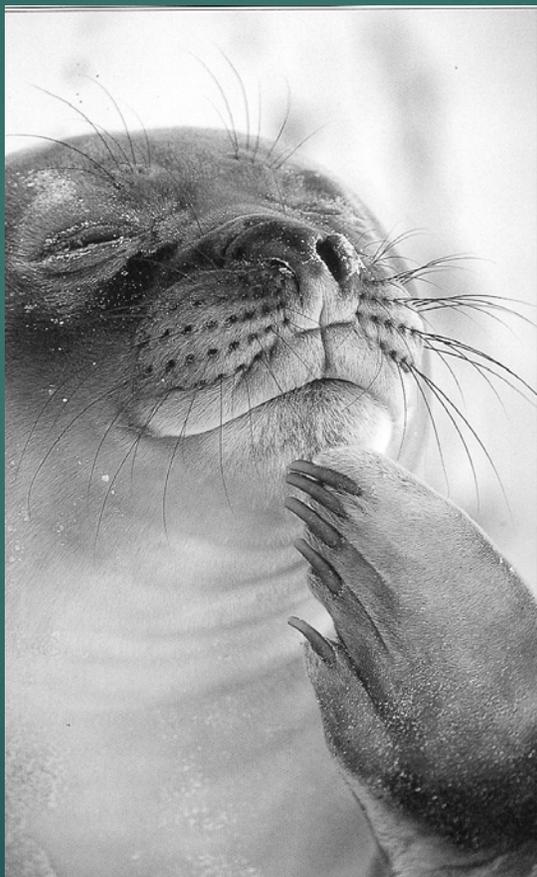
- ▶ How people stay afloat on a changing world
- ▶ “The process of finding significant references and grounded points which enable migrants to restore their socio-psychological stability in new life settings and establish their (subjective and objective) footholds in a receiving society.” (134)
- ▶ Anchors to **past & future** needed
- ▶ Past:
 - ▶ Relationships, places, rituals that celebrate particular events; gravestones, ashes, photographs
- ▶ Future:
 - ▶ Engaging with places, people, activities

BUT...hate crimes

- ▶ 7% people w cognitive disabilities abused in communities past year
 - ▶ 6 times higher non-disabled people
 - ▶ Women over-represented as perpetrators of ID abuse
- ▶ Underestimated & underpunished (ECHR; Wharmby)
 - ▶ judges speak of torture as merely 'senseless'
 - ▶ media report sustained torment as mere 'bullying'

Factors in community abuse

- ▶ Anthropology: sustained 'liminality' breeds suspicion
- ▶ Philosophy: Discomforting strangeness → intolerance
- ▶ In socially disadvantaged & impoverished environments
 - ▶ Others who get more support resented
 - ▶ Poverty creates 'fog' obscures seriousness of abuse
- ▶ Chronic loneliness & under-occupation ↑ vulnerability
- ▶ Austerity → abandonment by services (in UK)



Critical community psychology

Kagan et al 2011

▶ Tesselation

- ▶ Make alliances, create new settings
- ▶ Create & support community projects
- ▶ Strengthen community leaders/activists

▶ Walk alongside

- ▶ Commit to the community
- ▶ Witness realities of lives
- ▶ Patience & faith in members' resourcefulness
- ▶ Acknowledge limits to autonomy: responsibility-taking often needed, enduring support often required

▶ Stewardship

- ▶ Act responsibly – long term engagement not one-off projects

But... ID slow to change

Eg assertion that employment can create a meaningful adult life for all people with IDs

- ▶ Fatigue: constant churn, no real change
- ▶ People defend ideas they depend on
 - ▶ *'I've heard nothing new'* or
 - ▶ *'I don't want to hear anything new'?*
- ▶ Fully occupied juggling own skills, demands, building networks
- ▶ & effective advocacy demands certainty

So... can we rebuild the boat while crossing Atlantic?

- ▶ Are we talking about **IF** we change, or **WHEN** we change?
- ▶ If:
 - ▶ Ideas to persuade critical mass that have reached the tipping point: that radically new goals and actions are required?
- ▶ When:
 - ▶ Which alliances need to be created?
 - ▶ What actions most effective in Liquid Modernity?
 - ▶ What represents the little rescue boat we can take to when the boat starts leaking?