

Research Highlights

Topic: Self-Determination

Wehmeyer, M. L. & Schwartz, M. (1998). The relationship between self-determination, quality of life, and life satisfaction for adults with mental retardation. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 33, 3-12.

BOTTOM LINE

Fifty individuals with mental retardation, who were living in group homes, completed surveys that were designed to determine the impact of self-determination on their quality of life. Individuals who reported higher levels of self-determination tended to also report having a higher quality of life. IQ scores were neither related to quality of life nor self-determination scores, meaning that individuals of varying levels of disability experienced high levels of self-determination and quality of life.

TIPS

- For additional information on the relationship between self-determination and quality of life, see the [Self-Determination and Quality of Life in Educational Tips and Highlights](#).
- Include people with disabilities, who often need the opportunity and skills to be able to take part in the mainstream of society. This may not be something that everyone wishes to do, but the option should be there, if possible.
- Support the development of self-determination over time by
 - “ advocating for people with a disability
 - “ asking people with disabilities what they would like to do, and
 - “ providing opportunities for capacity building for individuals who need to work on self-advocacy and self-regulation skills.

KEY FINDINGS

- There is a relationship between quality of life and self-determination scores of individuals with mental retardation living in group homes.
- Individuals who report having a higher quality of life also tend to report being more self-determined.
- Quality of life and self-determination scores were not related to the participant's IQ scores, meaning that people with varying levels of cognitive disabilities can experience high quality of life and levels of self-determination.
- Although a relationship between quality of life and self-determination was found, the participants tended, on average, to have low scores on measures of quality of life and self-determination.

METHOD

- 50 adults with mental retardation, who were living in group homes, completed surveys assessing quality of life and self-determination.
- The adults were divided into high and low groups quality of life groups, based on their scores on the quality of life measure.
- The relationship between self-determination and quality of life for each group was assessed.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Wehmeyer, M.L., Agran, M., & Hughes, C. (1998). *Teaching self-determination to students with disabilities*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Wehmeyer, M. L., & Bolding, N. (1999). Self-determination across living and working environments: A matched-samples study of adults with mental retardation. *Mental Retardation*, 37, 353 - 363.

Wehmeyer, M. L., & Bolding, N. (2001). Enhanced self-determination of adults with mental retardation as an outcome of moving to community-based work or living environments. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 45, 1-13.

Wehmeyer and Metzler, C.A., (1995). How self-determined are people with mental retardation? The National Consumer Survey. *Mental Retardation*, 33, 111-119.

RELATED
PUBLICATIONS
cont.

Wehmeyer, M.L., & Schalock, R. (2001). Self-determination and quality of life: Implications for special education services and supports. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 33(8), 1-24.

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