

TITLE: Leadership/Community Participation in Resource Planning/
Development for Individuals with Physical Disabilities

RESEARCHER: Elaine T. Jurkowski
School of Public Health Sciences
The University of Illinois at Chicago
Doctoral Dissertation: January 1997

OBJECTIVE: To examine factors that contribute to the leadership and advocacy role for people with disabilities.

METHODOLOGY: Interviews with key informants with physical impairments (N=9) were conducted in order to reveal issues contributing to the advocacy movement within the disability arenas in Canada and the U.S. These guided the development of a survey instrument, including the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), which was mailed to 250 people identified in leadership rosters within medical, rehabilitation and independent living organizations (68% response rate yielded a sample of 172). On average respondents were 43.4 years old, with 61% of them women, 91% caucasian, and two-thirds were employed. Canadian respondents comprised just over one-third of the sample. Leadership roles assumed by the respondents included membership within executive committees (52%), service on Boards of Directors now or previously (68%), 55% had served in a staff or management role within the disability arena, and 90% identified themselves as members or consumers of disability organizations.

An initial factor analysis and a structural equation analysis was conducted using LISREL 7 to determine if the same factors identified by the LPI originally could be replicated with this target group. "...the analysis shows the data fit this model. This is also confirmed by the Goodness of Fit and Adjusted Goodness of Fit indices...The Cronbach's Alpha scores ranges from .79 to .85 for the factors identified" (p. 117-118).

KEY FINDINGS: There was no different in factor structure/leadership behaviors on the LPI when comparing leaders with disabilities to those without disabilities. Logistic regression techniques revealed that leadership practices differed depending upon the roles performed and engaged in. People who have served in staff roles tend to be more likely than those who have not served to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage. Members of Boards of Directors will be more likely than non-members to challenge, inspire and enable. Consumer/members are more likely than non-members to encourage. Americans were not different from their Canadian counterparts on enabling, modeling and encouraging, although they reported engaging more frequently in challenging and inspiring.