

Keynote abstract

Crossing network lines between ageing and disability in the United States

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Abstract

Introduction: In the US, ageing and disability public policies, programs, and service systems have historically separate origins, age-based categorical eligibility, and distinct funding streams. This division creates barriers in serving persons ageing with disability transitioning from disability to ageing service systems and for older adults obtaining independent living services in disability systems.

Description of policy practice: Professional cross-network collaborations can bridge ageing and disability service networks. Barriers to cross-network collaborations include competition for public funds, lack of professional cross-system knowledge, unfamiliarity with non-traditional consumer groups, and limited organizational interest or administrative knowledge of how to build and maintain collaborative relationships. Demonstrated successful collaborations and coalitions have strong leadership, organizational support, partners with shared interests and goals, clear missions, and strong investment by professional staff and service system clients.

Conclusions: There is growing evidence that the work of crossing network lines is locally implemented and sustained. Large-scale government mandates can help initiate this process.

Discussion: Service networks include governmental (public) and non-governmental (private) organizations. Collaboration is mainly voluntary, but encouraged by: growth in home and community based care, demand for community integration by people with disabilities, and the need for fiscal efficiency and demonstrated performance results in government spending.

Keywords

ageing, disability, collaboration, long-term care, independent living

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