

## CHOICE AND CONTROL?

*Understanding why residents remain in 'transinstitutional' settings despite the 'once in a lifetime' opportunity of the NDIS\**

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New conceptualisations of institutions and their impact are being developed by post-carceral disability scholars, with implications for policy like NDIS.

The phenomena of 'transinstitutionalisation' is defined as the process of 'moving people with disability and psychosocial disability from large-scale geographically isolated institutions to alternate institutions including nursing homes and boarding houses, homeless accommodation services and correctional facilities' (Drake 2014, p242).

Early institutional studies show that institutions significantly impacted on the available choices, actions and behaviour of residents. Studies on deinstitutionalisation show that more choice, autonomy and self-determination did not automatically emerge in the move to 'community living'.

Supported Residential Services (SRS) are private congregate care settings regulated in Victoria under the *Supported Residential Services (Private Proprietors) Act 2010*.

### METHODOLOGY

This was a critical ethnographic study in two SRS involving twelve participants with psychosocial disability. Methods included interviews, observations and analysis of NDIS plans over eighteen months in 2018-19.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does living in SRS impact on 'everyday choice and control'?

What happens to residents' choices during the NDIS?

Chapman, C, Carey, A, Ben-Moshe, L 2014 'Disability Incarcerated', New York, Palgrave Macmillan US.  
Drake, G 2014, 'The Trans-institutionalisation of People Living in Licensed Boarding Houses in Sydney', *Australian Social Work*, vol.62, no. 2, pp.240-255.  
Goffman, E 1961, *Asylums*, New York, Anchor Books.

*'I only had my own place, just once. And I loved it. I had my own rules. I could cook, clean and do my own laundry. I loved it. I totally loved it'*  
[Jonny, 39]

*'My brother, proprietor, staff here say I'm not ready to move'* [Kit, 48]

*'We're trying to get out of here. That's what we're doing'*  
[Emma, 37]

### KEY FINDINGS

- SRS share many of the features of 'total institutions'.
- Residents experience limited choice and control in their everyday lives.
- A key 'aspirational choice' for residents was 'moving' from the SRS.
- The wish to move was not always included in NDIS plans.
- Public housing was a key factor for residents who did move.

\*A key object of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is enabling people with disabilities to exercise choice and control over their lives