



KEY ISSUES AND OBSTACLES FOR  
A EUROPEAN STRATEGY ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION

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Kent Ericsson  
PhD, Psychologist

Uppsala University  
Uppsala, Sweden

[www.skinfaxe.se](http://www.skinfaxe.se)

[kent.ericsson@ped.uu.se](mailto:kent.ericsson@ped.uu.se)

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A SUMMING UP OF EXPERIENCES

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A dramatic change took place in Sweden during the years 1975 to 2000.  
Persons left an institutional life for community living  
as community based services were developed  
and all institutions were closed.

During this period I ran a number of projects  
to contribute to and to understand this transition.

In this presentation I point to some key issues in this process.

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CLOSING THE INSTITUTION OF THE MIND

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When we see persons with a disability as citizens,  
we recognise their right to community participation.

Living in the community becomes a reality  
when adequate community based support  
is made available

We need to conquer a citizen perspective!

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THE INSTITUTIONAL TRADITION:  
SOME MAY LEAVE, OTHERS MUST STAY BEHIND

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When we see the person with a disability as  
a pupil, a client, a patient,  
we hope that care, treatment or training  
will increase his competence

Those with competence may leave the institution  
as they can meet the demands made by the community

Those without competence  
must stay behind at the institution

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THE KEY TO THE DISSOLUTION OF THE INSTITUTION  
LIES IN ITS COMMUNITY BASED ALTERNATIVES

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Persons with a disability need support  
inside as well as outside the institution

When we look at the institution which is to be dissolved and closed,  
we find that persons must move

Disability services in the community must therefore be set up  
for all persons who are to move

The key to closure of an institution  
lies in its community based alternatives

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THE TASK: BETTER LIVES FOR PERSONS

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Each person living at the institution must move to a better life

Work to realise this task starts in the institution and  
continues after persons have moved

The person himself, his family,  
staff at the institution and staff in the community  
all contribute to a better life

If we define our task as deinstitutionalisation,  
we work to close the institution,  
and stop when the institution is empty

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### SERVICES FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

Life in the community requires  
community based services to become a reality  
A model for community based services must be formed  
This is a task for those  
with knowledge about community life

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### THE BASICS OF COMMUNITY LIVING

A home with support  
Daily activities with support  
Participation in community life  
Quality in everyday life  
Welfare services  
Disability experts

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### DISSOLVING AND CLOSING THE INSTITUTION

A national decision to close all institutions,  
a local decision to close a local institution  
No more admissions  
A plan for better lives for persons  
outside the institution  
and for services necessary to realise these lives  
Establishing the community based services  
necessary to realise better lives for persons  
Persons move when  
services are made available  
New jobs for staff

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### THE ECONOMY OF INSTITUTIONAL CLOSURE

Special or public welfare services?

Comparing costs between institutional and community living is a matter of differences in quality of life

There are economic gains to be made from selling the empty institution

Adequate community based services in order to avoid waste of money

Renovation of the old institution or establishing new services in the community?

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### COMMITMENT OF PEOPLE

The task of supporting persons to move from an institutional life to community living demands people with a commitment

There are incompetent people also in community based services!

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### EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

We are not involved in a European Championship of Disability!

We must be open for experiences made in other services, in other regions, in other countries

We must find ways of exchanging experiences!

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INSTITUTIONS CAN BE CLOSED!

PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY CAN  
LIVE BETTER LIVES IN THE COMMUNITY!

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