

BOOK REVIEWS

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This current set of reviews contains three distinctly different sources of inspiration and knowledge for the general area of vocational rehabilitation. The first book has been a source of inspiration to reinforce the values I hold for all individuals for whom I provide support. We each need to read first-person accounts of how supports have enabled people with disabilities to lead an enhanced quality of life. I hope Ryan White's story provides an equal source of inspiration for the work in which each of you are engaged. The second resource allows the reader to keep current on the recommendations and advice continuing to evolve from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dan Steere provides excellent insights for how this information can provide excellent supports for persons with severe disabilities. Finally, a third review contains information for vocational rehabilitation specialists who want resources at their fingertips. There are many such summaries available and I take this opportunity to present one for your inspection.

RYAN WHITE: MY OWN STORY

R. White and A.M. Cunningham

New York: Dial Books, 1991.

Ryan White's death on April 8, 1990, was both an end and a beginning. The life of a teenager with AIDS had ended but the ongoing struggle to educate citizens in communities around the country continues. I debated about the relationship of this book to the focus of this journal. However, the more pages I read the stronger the connections I made with an individual's story of trying to lead as "normal" a life as possible — and going to school was a major part of Ryan's definition of a normal teenager's life. The conflicts among siblings, mother and son, neighbors, church members, parents of students in Ryan's school, and community members at large are all poignantly written in an account of one teenager's attempt to survive with AIDS. Of additional importance is the rapidly escalating number of children with this handi-

capping condition. As I read this book I noted the range of emotion, ignorance, and resistance that rehabilitation counselors will face about most of the individuals for whom they provide support.

General highlights

- The first person account is refreshing. Ryan White tells of his day-to-day existence with AIDS from a teenager's perspective.
- There are numerous pictures (both color and black-and-white) interspersed throughout the book. This adds much to the personal nature of the content.
- A general section of "Answers to Questions People Ask" concludes the book. Ryan summarizes his responses to the questions most frequently asked about his disease, especially from peers.
- The relationship between Ryan and his sister, Andrea, illustrates the intrafamily dynamics of how siblings cope with a family member who has a condition that involves frequent hospitalizations, ridicule from schoolmates, and time away from a single parent.
- Many of the events that occurred in Ryan White's life resulted from timing, and being thrust into the spotlight as a representative and spokesperson for individuals with AIDS. Events built on events and his power to communicate was based on the simplicity of his statements, his steadfast determination to lead as normal a life as possible, and the dedication and support of family members and friends.
- It is interesting to view the contrast between the reception Ryan received in Kokomo and from schoolmates in Cicero, Indiana. The difference was like night and day: in Kokomo, parents pulled their sons and daughters out of school and took the issue to court to prevent Ryan from attending classes. In Cicero, members of the student council greeted Ryan at home to welcome him personally to his new school. The school developed an AIDS awareness education program for students prior to Ryan's attendance.

Specific areas of excellence

- The following quote can apply to many disabling conditions: "I'd already decided that I

didn't *have* hemophilia—I was living with it. You *can* feel well no matter what's wrong with you. I think that's the only way to think" (p. 18).

- Professionals can be just as swayed by misinformation and ignorance as other community members: "Mom overheard one nurse telling a doctor, 'I don't want to go near him, and I don't see why I have to'" (p. 63).
- Family members and people experiencing a disease like AIDS can expect an abundance of remedies from well-meaning people throughout the country. The Whites received their share of physical and spiritual "remedies," both through the mail and in person.
- The following two statements by Ryan reflect a general tendency of some community members when reacting to a situation that they deem an immediate or distant threat. "I began to notice that the farther away from us people lived, the more they thought we were great and supported what we were doing. Closer to home, it was another story" (p. 88); "But it hurt that no one wanted to get close to me. 'It's okay for him to come to school, just as long as I don't sit by him'" (p. 118).
- "I never thought much about gay people until I got AIDS. Now I had a lot of respect for them" (p. 105). Ryan contracted AIDS from an infected batch of Factor VIII, which is used to facilitate blood clotting. One of the at-risk groups for contracting AIDS are members of the gay community. Ryan's statement is interesting because it points out how much we distance ourselves from others when we initially view them as more unlike us than like us. But when we view those same individuals as more like us than they are different we form a different, more personal opinion of them.
- How many of us have seen a situation similar to the following observation by Ryan? "The yearbook said it all: My photo was set off on a page by itself. 'Ryan White, Homebound Instruction.'" (p. 107).
- Many celebrities active in the campaign for AIDS education befriended Ryan, including Michael Jackson, Alyssa Milano, and Elton

John. There are several anecdotes about Ryan's interactions with people in the entertainment industry. He very astutely observes, "Fame can isolate you just as much as AIDS" (p. 142).

- There is a lengthy section about Ryan's interactions during the filming of the television movie about his life. The sensitivity of the director and producer are evident. Ryan portrayed one of his friends with AIDS who was having difficulty maintaining a positive frame of mind.
- "I keep reminding myself that education takes time. Ignorance dies hard" (p. 195).

Ways to enhance this book

- Readers should view the television movie, "*The Ryan White Story*."
- I plan to reread newspaper accounts of the events described in the book to gain a different perspective from people not included in Ryan's more personal account.
- When reading this book, we can make connections between Ryan's story of living with AIDS and the stories of the many individuals with different "labels," and look for similarities and areas of mutual struggle.

Common threads throughout this publication

- Emotions run high when discussing equal access issues for individuals with AIDS.
- Ryan White gives us his personal perspective and no one else can do that. The stories and events are seen through his eyes. In all situations except the funeral, Ryan's interpretation of events is given top priority.
- Fighting ignorance, handicapism, and verbal abuse take time, energy, and the commitment of an organized and concentrated group of individuals with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise.
- Friends can be powerful allies for an individual who wants to lead as normal a life as possible. Ryan drew enormous strength from his peers, who benefitted as much from their relationship with Ryan as he did.

Recommendations for rehabilitation professionals

- This is a timely, thought-provoking book. I will never forget Ryan White's courage; this book will be a continual reminder of how much I have gained from reading his words.
- We all need to read more frequently first-person accounts of individuals and their successes and setbacks as they live through difficult experiences. We gain insights that impact our commitment as providers of support.

Ernest L. Pancsofar, PhD

HELPING PERSONS WITH SEVERE MENTAL RETARDATION GET AND KEEP EMPLOYMENT Supported Employment Issues and Strategies

M. Sherril Moon, Katherine J. Inge, Paul Wehman, Valerie Brooke, and J. Michael Barcus

Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1990.

Although supported employment was developed as a programmatic option for people with severe disabilities, many of these citizens continue to be considered too disabled for employment. This attitude violates a basic tenet of supported employment: with the necessary supports, any individual is capable of employment in regular community jobs.

The new book by Sherril Moon, Katherine Inge, Paul Wehman, Valerie Brooke, and Mike Barcus is a step toward reasserting the right of people with severe disabilities to be employed. Moon and her colleagues have focussed their material on the employment of people who have more severe disabilities, and their recommendations and examples reinforce their belief that these individuals can succeed if careful attention is given to job development, instruction, and follow-along services. A major asset of this work is the authors' liberal use of examples of currently-employed peo-

ple with severe disabilities to illustrate different strategies. Equally important, they have clearly articulated the values that drive supported employment and continually remind readers of the importance of these values throughout the book.

General highlights

- The first chapter describes the individuals who are the focus of discussion. Describing these people and the challenges they face is the best way to convince readers that people with severe disabilities can work.
- This book maintains the high standard of quality that characterizes every publication that has come out of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at Virginia Commonwealth University. The writing is clear, the examples are practical, and the content is well organized.
- The addition of a chapter on the role of advocacy in supported employment enhances this publication. The need for strong and clear values on the part of employment specialists is appropriately emphasized.
- The book emphasizes the need for quality of supported employment. That is, the authors describe strategies that require skill, energy, and creativity on the part of employment specialists but which are necessary if supported employment is to be well implemented for people with severe disabilities.

Specific areas of excellence

- Moon and her colleagues assert that people with severe disabilities can work successfully if the people who support them believe in their abilities and devote sufficient energy and determination to the process. This point is perhaps the most valuable aspect of the book and is often overlooked. Our belief in individuals with disabilities and our expectations for their success are critical ingredients in quality supported employment.
- The description of the components of a quality secondary-level vocational training program is excellent. Although transition strategies are not specifically emphasized in this publication,

sections like this make a valuable resource for teachers and professionals in secondary education.

- The chapter on conducting situational assessment gives a practical approach to this issue and should be valuable to professionals who are trying to move away from over-reliance on traditional assessment strategies that provide little useful information about the potential of an individual in community employment.
- The chapter on advocacy in supported employment is an extremely positive addition to the literature. It is refreshing to have a book about supported employment end by expressing belief in people with disabilities and stating our responsibility to live our values by advocating for people in multiple ways.

Areas in which this publication could be improved

- It would be helpful if readers could follow one or more individuals with disabilities through the entire process of supported employment as described in this publication. The numerous case examples provided throughout are excellent, but unifying examples would have enhanced this aspect of the publication.
- The information provided on instructional strategies is well presented and integrated in the form of sample instructional plans within work environments. However, this material can be complex for beginning employment specialists, and the addition of simple diagrams to illustrate the features of strategies such as prompting sequences, forward and backward chaining, and time delay would have been helpful.

Common threads throughout this publication

- Supported employment was developed for people with severe disabilities, but these individuals have often been denied opportunities for quality supported employment services. Services must therefore be well designed and implemented by employment specialists who are highly skilled in arranging support to individuals with severe disabilities.
- Supported employment must be based on

strong and clear guiding principles that drive service delivery. This book ensures that this values base is not forgotten in the design and implementation of services.

Recommended uses for rehabilitation professionals

- This book is an excellent resource for employment specialists who are looking for practical suggestions about supported employment services for individuals with severe disabilities. It provides both a convincing argument for the success of individuals with severe disabilities and a source of ideas for creative design of services.
- Professionals in secondary-level school programs will find this a valuable resource in enhancing the quality of supported employment services for students prior to graduation. Many of the examples relate to students with severe disabilities, and the strategies employed would enhance many efforts to develop quality employment-training programs using existing community employment sites.

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MEETING THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

New York: Resources for Rehabilitation, 1991.

This publication is one in a series from Resources for Rehabilitation. It identifies approximately 160 different national organizations and gives the address, phone number, and a brief description of each organization. The novice human resource provider will be amazed at how many organizations exist to provide information and services for individuals with disabilities. More experienced professionals will notice that some resources they have used are missing.

General highlights

- The book includes chapters on work and disability, environmental adaptations, assistive

technology, transition from school to work, older workers, employees with chronic conditions, hearing and speech impairments, mobility, and visual impairments and blindness.

- There is a brief narrative at the beginning of each chapter containing elementary information about the topic of concern in that chapter.
- The section entitled "Suggestions For A Safe and Friendly Workplace" gives specific advice to assist coworkers in helping a coworker with a disability to work as successfully as possible.
- An appendix lists state vocational rehabilitation agencies and their addresses.
- The book lists journals of interest in each area.

Specific areas of excellence

- Although the information presented is extremely elementary, it would be useful to professionals with limited knowledge about individuals with a vision loss.
- From the section, "Suggestions For A Safe and Friendly Workplace:" "Do not avoid using expressions such as 'Do you *see* what I mean?' or words such as *look*. They are part of everyday language and are used comfortably by individuals who are visually impaired or blind."

Ways in which this publication could be enhanced

- The inclusion of publication dates of the audio/visual and other resources would have helped readers to access current materials.
- I would have liked to see more information about each organization. At times the brief description was little more than an expanded version of the organization's name.

- All the information contained in this publication should be available in most university or large city libraries; I am surprised by the book's high price given the actual information provided.
- The book lacks information on deaf-blindness. For example, there is no reference to the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults or the TRACES Project at Teaching Research Division of Western Oregon State College.

Common threads

- Journal articles, books, and audio/visual resources are included in each chapter.
- The narratives at the beginning of each chapter provide basic, commonly available information.
- Language is respectful of individuals with disabilities and information is easy to find.

Recommended uses for rehabilitation professionals

- If an agency has a library, this publication would assist the librarian to access information by disabling condition for a vertical file.
- Even though much of the information contained in this book can be located in several other sources in my office, I appreciate having a resource that contains the essential names and addresses under one cover.
- This publication will be useful to readers of this journal, but only to provide initial, general information about resources available for individuals with diverse needs.

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