

Challenges Facing the Field of Disabilities

Rud and Ann Turnbull

Rud: We are in a point in the disability movement, where we have finished about 30 years worth of the civil rights, disability rights revolution. We are now at a point where all the basic, shocking issues have been handled satisfactorily in law and policy and with money and services. We are experiencing some rollback and resistance to further claims for rights, supports, and integrations. I think that is the major issue today.

Ann: The shortfall of funding for many programs that have had more funding in the past, the expansion of disability in saving many children who in the past would not have been saved, new kinds of disability connected to AIDS or connected to drug addiction, or a number of different types of environmental pollutants. So, the whole field of disability is expanding while our resources are shrinking. I think that is where our really big challenge is.

Rud: Well, unless we have the rights that are implemented, how can people with disabilities demonstrate that they are responsible citizens? We are sort of caught in a trap because we still don't have enough access, and yet we are being told we must be responsible. I will be happy to be responsible, but let me have my rights as well.

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