

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SERVICE SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY

In a social service system

people are known by what's wrong; by their condition or label

In Community

people are known as individuals

In a system

people are incomplete and need to be changed or "fixed"

In community

people are as they are, with opportunities to follow their dreams

Taken from "The Gift of Hospitality"
Community Life Project
Evanston, Illinois

In a system

relationships are unequal: service workers do things "for" clients and don't look for any contribution in return

In community

relationships are reciprocal, give and take; and the diverse gifts of many people are recognized

In a system

people are broken into parts and separated into groups

In community

people have the chance to be accepted as whole persons, and viewed as part of the whole society

In a system

problems are solved by consulting authorities, policies, procedures

In community

people seek answers from their own experience and wisdom of others

In a system

there is no room to acknowledge mistakes and uncertainty?
information is communicated professional jargon that distances individuals from their actions

In community

people can make honest efforts and acknowledge honest mistakes and fears

In a system

all problems have a rational solution

In community

there is room for confusion* and mystery, and a recognition that some things are beyond human control.

Community, finally, is no different, for people with disabilities than for any of the rest of us, It's the free space where people think for themselves, dream their dreams, and come together to create and celebrate their common humanity.