

# Factors Important to Successful Independent Living for Persons with Disabilities

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## **Objective**

The purpose of this research project was to understand what factors lead to successful independent living for persons with disabilities and what barriers get in the way. As a person with a disability who lives independently in the community with some supports, the researcher wanted to do this project to see if her lived experience matched the literature and to share her findings with a broad audience.

## **Methods**

The research project consisted of a literature review and synthesis of five scholarly articles.

## **Results & Conclusions**

Five factors were identified as critical to independent living for persons with disabilities. They include quality of life, social supports, environmental factors, assistive technology, and self-efficacy (self-confidence).

Following a thorough examination of each factor critical to the successful independent living of individuals with disabilities, the literature review concludes with a series of recommendations (implications) for those supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities wishing to live independently:

- “Helicoptering” staff can keep people with disabilities from being independent,
- It is important to include people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in decisions concerning them, especially in relation to living circumstances.
- It is important to teach self-management techniques for people with disabilities to become more independent.
- Assessing for self-efficacy can suggest whether a person will need self-management training or extra help to stay out of an institution.
- Equipping people who have disabilities with self-efficacy tools may enable them to successfully do what they need to do to maintain physical health and mental well-being.
- People with disabilities should be encouraged to maintain a physical activity routine and be taught the self-efficacy skills to support that routine.
- People with disabilities should have chances to meet to share their common experiences (social support.)
- Counseling, symptom management techniques, assistive technology, and patient education can improve quality of life.