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Oral History Project Plan: A Look at the History of Developmental Disabilities in Maine

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Abstract

This project is in partnership with the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) and is a 9-month process that will result in a design plan for an oral history project. This oral history project will focus on the experiences of those with developmental disabilities in Maine and provide public education regarding those experiences, particularly within the Pineland Institution. As the NH-ME LEND trainee I am working with stakeholders to determine the population of those included in the project, the method used to collect information for the project and how the project will be shared with the public. Additionally, the design plan will include potential partners in the project such as advocacy organizations and existing programs that will help support the DDC is carrying out the final oral history project. This poster will include a finalized outline of the design plan for the oral history project.

Partnership Plan

University of Maine Folklife Center

Detailed research was conducted regarding organizations that have developed oral history projects. A plan for collaboration with the Folklife Center and the Maine DDC was initiated and will continue to develop.

Key Points:

- ❖ Prior oral history experience
- ❖ Gaining community connection
- ❖ Structured interview methodology
- ❖ Innovative public education ideas (e.g., podcasts, documentaries,

Recruitment Process

Coordinate with the following stakeholders in order to identify informants for the Oral History Project:

- ❖ *Speaking Up For Us Maine*
- ❖ *Autism Society of Maine*
- ❖ *Maine Parent Federation*
- ❖ *Maine Coalition for Housing & Quality Supports*
- ❖ *Stephen Murphy, author of Voices of Pineland*

Recruitment will be done primarily through the Maine DDC with input from Disability advocacy organizations.

Institutional Review Board Process

Although Oral History Projects are not bound to IRB approval, partnering with the University of Maine will require the project to go through the IRB Process.

As the NH-ME Lend intern I will develop the following:

- ❖ IRB proposal
- ❖ Consent form
- ❖ Detailed description and form for structured interviews

Proposal for Oral History Project

1. Work with stakeholders to identify the following informants for oral history: individuals who resided at Pineland, former employees, and family members.
2. Develop IRB proposal that includes consent form, detailed structured interview form, a description of the structured interview process, and identification of strategies to protect the confidentiality.
3. Collaborate with University of Maine Folklife Center to implement data collection for Oral History Project in 2018 and 2019.
4. Summarize data collected through the oral history project and determine strategies and media that can be used in sharing the information.

Selected Resources

Murphy, S. T. (2011). *Voices of Pineland: Eugenics, social reform, and the legacy of "feeblemindedness" in Maine*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Pub.

Maine Developmental. (n.d.). Retrieved April 09, 2018, from <https://www.maineddc.org/>

Maine Developmental Disabilities Council

Goal #1: MDDC will engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systems change activities that support individuals with developmental disabilities, families, and communities to have increased choices, opportunities, and self-determination.

Goal #2: MDDC will engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systems change activities that support individuals with developmental disabilities and families to have greater access to their communities



Goal for Pineland Project:

An Oral History Project designed to capture the life experiences of individuals with developmental disabilities in Maine and share these experiences with the public.

Brief History of Pineland Farms



- ❖ Also known as the Maine School for the Feeble-minded.
- ❖ Open from 1908-1996
- ❖ An institution that housed individuals considered to be "intellectually disabled"
- ❖ Participated in sterilization practices for patients thought to be mentally deficient

Why is it important to collect Oral History on Pineland Farms?

- ❖ To avoid repeating history of institutionalization of individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- ❖ To preserve the rights of the persons in Maine with developmental disabilities
- ❖ To capture the stories of those who experienced life at Pineland Farms (both patients and staff members)
- ❖ To provide public education on this topic.