

# **Intellectual Disability – An Impairment for Life Satisfaction**

**Germain Weber**

Department of Psychology at the University of Vienna, Faculty of Psychology, Vienna, Austria

**Email address:**

[germain.weber@univie.ac.at](mailto:germain.weber@univie.ac.at)

**Abstract:**

Quality of life and life satisfaction for people with intellectual disabilities have only been addressed in a systematic way since the late 1980's. Historically these areas have been neglected in research as intellectual disability was dominantly viewed within a medical model. Hence, intellectual disability was addressed predominantly in relation to quality of medical treatment and quality of institutional care. With the concept of normalization emerging the early 1960's a social model social of intellectual disability experienced a steady expansion in our societies, thus focusing more and more on the individual person. The social model of intellectual disability asked for changes in the lives of people with intellectual disability in areas like early childhood, education, job opportunities up to accommodation, leisure time activities and old age. Along with these new person centered conceptions models of quality of life and life satisfaction were coined and methodologies on how to assess these areas were developed. The presentation will depict milestones of these new approaches and the way in which social and environmental changes contributed to the increase of life satisfaction in people with intellectual disabilities and the way these factors interact with a good quality of life and a good mental health, with challenges still awaiting to be tackled in our European regions.

**Keywords**

Intellectual Disability, Quality of Life, Social and Environmental Changes, Normalization, Institutional Care