

## A Brief Note on Language Usage

Dr. Wolfensberger was exceedingly thoughtful and disciplined about almost everything he did or said, and this analytic manner included his use of language. Over the course of his long career, he did change his oral and written language several times and over a number of things. But he did so only after careful consideration governed by logical, well-reasoned rationales, consistent with clearly articulated ideals and the norms of ordinary discourse. He was not persuaded that certain terms, labels, and phraseologies considered by some as more enlightened, “current,” “acceptable,” or politically correct were, in fact, positive advancements or necessarily better. Therefore, he did not surrender to pressures to use such terminology.

Dr. Wolfensberger wrote and spoke quite a bit about this topic, even beyond the article in which he explains his thinking and rationales (Wolfensberger, 2002), but to little avail, even though many consider his teachings in this area as another of his important contributions to the field. In any case, in documenting his work, as is done here, it is historical revisionism to use language he would not have used. Therefore, the sections that follow that do document his work will use terms that some may consider old-fashioned or out of date or worse.

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### References

- Wolfensberger, W. (2002). Needed or at least wanted: Sanity in the language wars. *Mental Retardation*, 40, 75-80.
- Wolfensberger, W. (1997). *Training Institute Publication Series (TIPS)*. Volume 16(5) & Volume 17(1, 2, & 3). Syracuse, NY: Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership, & Change Agency.