

**Further Education in the Care of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: Findings  
from a Nationwide Online Survey in Germany**

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**Abstract**

This paper presents key findings from the study "Further Education in the Care of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities," conducted at Philipps University of Marburg, Germany, between early 2023 and 2024. The research explored various aspects of professional development in this field, with a particular focus on a nationwide online survey. The survey included 254 participants in management roles at institutions serving individuals with disabilities across Germany. A primary objective was to evaluate the demand for further education within these organizations.

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## Introduction

### *The Role of Further Education in Disability Care: Challenges and Opportunities*

The purpose of further education is to maintain, deepen, and expand employees' skills and knowledge while adapting them to new professional requirements. In Germany, particularly in the field of disability care, changes have been observed over the past decades, bringing new demands for professionals in this area. Since the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) came into force in 2009, the sector has increasingly focused on inclusion and self-determination. However, while these goals are being pursued, their comprehensive implementation remains incomplete in many areas (König 2022: 20).

This highlights the need for further changes at both the political level and within the organizational structures of disability care facilities. Further education has the potential to play a crucial role in driving these changes. However, developing and implementing further effective education programs is often challenging. Various studies (Trescher 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2018) have identified specific needs for further education in disability care. While many institutions already provide a range of training opportunities, comprehensive empirical research is lacking regarding the current status and specific needs—particularly for the care of adults with intellectual disabilities living in residential facilities. Most existing studies focus on areas such as early childhood education, schooling, or vocational training (Becker et al. 2022; Lutz et al. 2022; Buchhaupt et al. 2022; Böhm 2019).

The study presented in this article, "Further Education in the Context of Caring for People with Intellectual Disabilities," aims to address this gap. Key findings are shared here to contribute to the international professional community and serve as a foundation for further (country-specific) research in this field.

### *Housing Situation of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Germany*

The organization of care for people with intellectual disabilities varies widely across countries. This section provides a brief overview of the housing situation for this population in Germany. Germany is home to approximately 84.7 million people (Statistisches Bundesamt n.d.). In 2017, around 13 million individuals were classified as having impairments, according to the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS 2021: 37). This classification aligns with the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which defines impairments as permanent limitations in performance caused by damage to body structures or functions (ibid.: 35).

As of 2024, 7.9 million people in Germany, or 9.3% of the total population, had severe disabilities (Statistisches Bundesamt 2024). Severe disabilities are determined or officially recognized by a competent authority (BMAS 2021: 26). Among this group, 15%—approximately 1.2 million individuals—had a mental or psychological disability (Statistisches Bundesamt 2024).

Since ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) in 2009, Germany has committed to implementing its goals. Article 19 of the convention, "Independent Living and Inclusion in the Community," guarantees that all people with disabilities have the right to live in the community with the same choices as others. This includes the freedom to choose where and with whom they live, without being obligated to reside in specialized housing.

To align with these goals, Germany has been expanding alternative living arrangements, such as assisted living, where individuals with disabilities remain in their private homes while receiving tailored support. In contrast, inpatient living involves residents with disabilities receiving round-the-clock care in specialized facilities. Between 2014 and 2018, the number of individuals utilizing outpatient living services rose by 22% to approximately 197,600. This shift marked a milestone, as more than 50% of individuals now rely on outpatient rather than inpatient care (BMAS 2021: 324).

However, people with intellectual disabilities have not benefited from these developments to the same extent as others. They remain disproportionately represented in inpatient residential facilities (BMAS 2021: 13). Furthermore, most residents of inpatient facilities have intellectual disabilities (ibid.: 324).

For individuals not living in either outpatient or inpatient settings, many continue to reside with their parents or family members, often well into adulthood. While exact figures are difficult to ascertain, estimates suggest that 50–60% of people with intellectual disabilities live in family homes (Seifert/Metzler 2024: 55ff).

## Methods

The study was conducted between early 2023 and mid-2024 at Philipps University of Marburg, Germany, using a multi-method research design. Two methods were employed: a nationwide online survey (N=254) and telephone interviews (N=12). This article focuses on the online survey, which targeted managers and employees in leadership roles within disability care facilities.

The questionnaire incorporated both standardized and partially standardized open-ended questions, allowing for descriptive-statistical analysis as well as qualitative content analysis. The primary goal of the study was to explore the need for further education in the care of people with intellectual disabilities.

Survey topics were chosen based on an extensive literature review, previous publications by the research team, a desktop search, and a preparatory interview with a senior manager from a large disability care organization. Participants were asked to reflect on the training they had undertaken in the past five years and to evaluate the need for further education. A unipolar Likert scale, ranging from 1 (no need at all) to 7 (very high need), was used to gauge responses. To enrich the findings, respondents were segmented by their professional roles, hierarchical positions, and levels of personnel responsibility. These characteristics were then correlated with their responses. Additional survey elements were included to gain deeper insights into preferences and challenges related to further education. However, these topics are not addressed here; they are covered in a forthcoming monograph on the study (Trescher/Nothbaum 2025).

Before distribution, the questionnaire was reviewed by selected collaborators. The finalized online survey was distributed nationwide via email to disability care facilities across Germany. Additionally, the questionnaire was translated into English and Turkish, slightly adapted, and shared online. Disability care providers in countries such as Denmark, Australia, the Netherlands, the UK, Sweden, Norway, and Turkey were contacted via email or phone to gather international perspectives on further educational needs. However, due to limited responses from these countries, this approach was not pursued further.

**Results and Discussion**

This section highlights key findings from the online survey, focusing on the current state of further education and the identified needs. The areas of further education are presented in ascending order of demand, from the lowest to the highest need.

*School*

The life of people with intellectual disabilities in segregating organizations often begins at an early age. In the school sector in Germany, many people with disabilities attend a special school (Zölls-Kaser 2023: 51). Special schools are controversial; proponents emphasize the better support that people with disabilities can receive at these schools, while opponents emphasize the exclusionary effect of attending a special school and advocate, as also called for in the UN-CRPD, integrative or inclusive education (i.e. teaching both, people with and without different support needs in one class). In any case, it is a fact that there is an unbroken demand for special schools in Germany and that, in particular, people with intellectual disabilities continue to attend such special schools almost exclusively (ibid.). Pupils with intellectual disabilities are often still living with their family at this point in time, but some are (for various reasons) already more closely integrated into the structures of disability support, which can make the topic of school relevant for disability support staff. Through further education, they can be supported to help their clients who are still at school to deal with issues that affect them and to work together to develop prospects for their school career.

In the last five years, 9.6% of organizations have provided such or similar training (Table 1). With an average agreement of only 30%, the need is also considered to be rather low (Table 2). Overall, only 15% see at least an increased need. It can be assumed that the low number of offers in this area as well as the low level of need is because many of the organizations surveyed simply do not support any or only a few pupils with intellectual disabilities.

**Table 1. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
School	9,6%

**Table 22 Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating<sup>2</sup></i>
School	28,1%	24,1%	14,6%	18,1%	6,5%	6,5%	2%	<b>30% (2,8)</b>

*Family*

As mentioned in Chapter 2, people with intellectual disabilities in Germany live mainly in institutions or in family-based residential settings. But even if they live in institutions, the family often plays a central role for them and is characterized by a high level of intensity - often regardless of the age of the 'children' (Trescher 2017: 253f). These relationships are often ambivalent: on the one hand, the institutionalized children with intellectual disabilities

<sup>2</sup> The mean of the agreement here and below corresponds to the mean of the respondents' response behaviour, converted into a percentage for better presentation. The value 1 (no need at all) corresponds to 0% and the value 7 (very high need) corresponds to 100%. In numerical terms, the average support of 30% would correspond to an average of 2.8. This numerical mean value is also always given in brackets here and below.

experience communal practices independent of the organization through the family; on the other hand, the close relationship with the family can also complicate processes of independence and detachment, as lifelong dependencies can manifest in the relationship, in which adult children with intellectual disabilities are pushed into childlike subject (ibid.). This relationship arises, among other things, from the fact that people with intellectual disabilities are often financially and/or legally dependent on their family members, who are also the most important, if not the only, place where people with intellectual disabilities experience interpersonal closeness and affection (ibid.). Part of the work of disability support workers is therefore often to maintain contact with the client's family. This can always lead to conflicts, as the members of the family may have different ideas about the care for their child than the educational team of the organizations. To establish a professional approach to the family of those being supported and to support the process of detachment, it can therefore be useful to provide training in this area. The results of the survey show that 22.8% of respondents' organizations have provided training in this area in the last five years (Table 3). Looking at the levels of agreement, which indicate the extent to which respondents feel there is a need for training in this area, the average level of agreement is moderate at 41.7% (Table 4). 14.5% see no need at all in this area, while very few (4.4%) postulate a very great need. Overall, it can be said that in the organizations surveyed there has been little training in the area of 'family' in the last five years, but at the same time the respondents do not consider the need in this area to be particularly high.

**Table 3. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Family	9,6%

**Table 4. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Family	14,5%	17,4%	17,9%	20,3%	18,8%	6,6%	4,4%	<b>41,7% (3,5)</b>

### *Residential structures*

The different residential settings in which many people with intellectual disabilities live are sometimes quite different, but research shows that they all have structures that are more or less similar to so-called 'total institutions'<sup>3</sup> (Trescher 2015; Trescher 2017a; Trescher 2017b; Trescher 2018). Although more open forms of housing have now become established in Germany, the different forms of housing as a whole can still promote experiences of surveillance, regimentation, isolation, bureaucratisation and/or heteronomy. This does not always have to be the case, and it should be noted that processes have been underway for some time at the pedagogical-practical level to gradually open up the structures of the various residential facilities (Thesing 2009: 80). These opening processes are the result of long and arduous battles that are still being fought today in politics, science and practice. Despite all the support measures and the supposed protection offered by the organizations, they are subject to a wide range of criticisms, not least for the reasons mentioned above, and their gradual restructuring continues to be called for from various sides. A critical and, above all, reflexive view of the housing structures on which educational professionals themselves depend as employees, but which they also constantly help to create, is therefore indispensable for

<sup>3</sup> See here for more information: Goffman 1973.

professional educational action. In further education courses that provide such opportunities, such a view can be specifically promoted and/or a discussion can be held on how the specific design of residential settings can be further developed in a technical or pedagogical way. In the last five years, only 24.8% of respondents' organizations have provided such or similar training (Table 5). At the same time, with an average agreement of 55%, a medium to slightly increased need is seen in this area (Table 6), which indicates a certain discrepancy between coverage and need in this area.

**Table 5. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Residential structures	9,6%

**Table 6. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Residential structures	7,4%	11,6%	11,2%	19,1%	25,1%	15,4%	10,2%	55% (4,3)

*Work*

Many people with intellectual disabilities in Germany work in sheltered workshops (Bernasconi 2023: 220ff). The wages paid there are far from sufficient to finance an independent life, which means that they are usually dependent on additional social benefits. The low wages act as a disabling factor, limiting personal economic agency (Trescher 2017a: 255). In addition, despite all the support and protection they can offer, workshops as a separate system are coming under increasing pressure as a result of the inclusion debate and the UN-CRPD (Schachler et al. 2023: 9). In theory, the medium- to long-term goal of sheltered workshops is to integrate their employees into the primary labour market, but in practice this rarely happens. The path from special school to workshop is not without alternatives, and the support and social system offers opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to engage in various work activities over the course of their lives. However, people with intellectual disabilities seldom make use of these opportunities, and even the staff of disability support services are unaware of them. However, the world of work is also very important for people with intellectual disabilities, as it is the place where social contacts are made and maintained outside the family or the residential facility. This area therefore offers various approaches for further education that can help people with intellectual disabilities to have a certain degree of freedom in the design and choice of their work.

40% of respondents reported that training in this area had taken place in their organization in the last five years (Table 7). When asked about the need for training in the area of 'work', a balanced picture emerges (Table 8): The majority of respondents perceive a medium to slightly increased need. This is also reflected in the average agreement of 56.7%.

**Table 7. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Work	40%

**Table 8. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Work	6,2%	10,9%	15,2%	18%	21,8%	13,3%	14,7%	<b>56,7% (4,4)</b>

*Counseling*

Counselling is generally understood as a process in which (at least) two people interact to gain greater clarity about challenges, coping options, decision alternatives and development prospects, even if there is sometimes no specific understanding of the term. Nevertheless, there is a variety of (further) understandings and forms of the term, and the meaning of the term differs depending on the area of application, especially in specialized science. However, it can be said that counselling in social and educational fields of work is particularly characterized by its reflexive character. A special feature of disability care is that the high complexity of the fields of action with regard to and the contradictions of various demands make support in counselling activities necessary (Schlienger 2016: 353). In the practical work of disability support workers, there can be a variety of situations in which educators take on an advisory role and talk to different people about a wide range of topics: For example, in counselling interviews with clients, families of clients, colleagues, funding bodies etc. It may therefore be useful to provide further education for staff to enable them to provide counselling.

According to the respondents, 38.4% of them had received training in guidance issues in the last five years (Table 9). When asked to assess the need for such training, respondents indicated a slightly increased need overall, with an average agreement of 60% (Table 10). Despite this at least slightly increased need, the range of training courses offered over the last five years appears to have been comparatively expandable.

**Table 9. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Counseling	<b>38,4%</b>

**Table 10. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Counseling	1,9%	7%	16,9%	19,7%	24,9%	17,8%	11,7%	<b>60% (4,6)</b>

*Sociological topics*

Social science topics are researched and dealt with by various scientific disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, economics, education and many other professions and disciplines. Depending on the subject, they contribute to a deeper understanding of social phenomena (e.g. intellectual disability). In education and disability services, social science topics are important because they help to understand the social, political and historical conditions in which educational professionals work and which ultimately influence the people they work with. Reflection processes on one's own pedagogical practice can be initiated on the basis of social science knowledge. If only to be able to deal with the concepts of providers, who often use terms such as inclusion, disability, participation, empowerment, etc. as a matter of course, although it is often unclear what exactly is meant by these terms, as is the case with

inclusion, for example (Dannenbeck 2012: 55). It therefore seems useful to take a closer theoretical look at sociological issues and concepts.

According to the respondents, 61.6 % of them had received further education on social science topics in the last five years (Table 11). The average agreement of 61.7% of respondents indicates a slightly increased need in this area (Table 12). 57.5% of respondents see at least a slightly increased need, while only 17.7% see a rather low, low or no need.

**Table 11. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Sociological topics	<b>61,6%</b>

**Table 12. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Sociological topics	2,8%	6,5%	8,4%	24,8%	28%	19,2%	10,3%	<b>61,7% (4,7)</b>

*Transitions between life stages*

Human life practice is generally structured by socially predetermined transitions based on chronological age (Amrhein/Backes 2008: 383). The age associated with passing through socially structured 'stations', which make ageing a social process that can be experienced by the individual (Börner 2023: 40f), is what makes the issue relevant for everyone. Hard transitions, such as the transition from work to retirement, are often described as particularly challenging (Bigby 2021: 243). On the other hand, such transitions can also be opportunities to develop new interests (ibid: 244f). In any case, transitions (and any associated 'crises') have a profound impact on how one experiences and develops as a subject. In the context of intellectual disability, transitions are events such as the transition from school to work, from work to retirement, changing workshops, moving out of the parental home or moving house (Börner 2023: 45ff). Accompanying and supporting people with intellectual disabilities in this process is to be understood as part of the educational work of staff working in disability services. How this can best be achieved can be addressed in further education courses.

In the last five years, 30.8% of respondents have provided such training in their organizations (Table 13). The average level of agreement with which the respondents indicated a need in this area is 61.7%. 13.8% of the respondents even see a very great need and only 4.6% see no need at all in this area. Overall, therefore, the need can be classified as slightly increased (Table 14).

**Table 13. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Transitions between life stages	<b>30,8%</b>

**Table 14. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Transitions between life stages	4,6%	6,5%	12,4%	13,8%	27,2%	21,7%	13,8%	<b>61,7% (4,7)</b>

*Development of concepts*

In disability services, a policy is usually a written statement of an organization’s educational and service priorities. The term concept comes from Latin and means to have an idea and to make a draft (Kluge 2011: 530). A concept is therefore a normative starting point for action or can provide a framework for action. Accordingly, concepts can be understood as an orientation framework for the means by which a certain goal is to be achieved (Wüllenweber/Theunissen 2009: 22). Concepts are usually quite broad, which is challenging in that they are often one-dimensional and neglect the ambivalences of practical action (Trescher 2018: 51ff). In any case, concepts are in themselves ambivalent, as on the one hand, they function as guiding principles that should serve as orientation for educational professionals, but on the other hand, they can also restrict freedom of action (ibid., p. 264). Developing a policy and keeping it up to date can therefore be challenging and policy development should be seen as an ongoing process involving (ideally) as many staff as possible. Further education can be a way of empowering staff to (co)develop and implement pedagogical approaches.

When asked whether their organization had provided training in this area in the last five years, 24.4% responded positively (Tabl 15). This rather low figure contrasts with a much higher perceived need, with an average agreement of 61.7% (Table 16). The majority of respondents (81.5%) perceived the need to be at least medium, suggesting that there is a need for action, especially given the paucity of provision in institutions over the last five years.

**Table 15. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Development of concepts	<b>24,4%</b>

**Table 16. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Development of concepts	1,9%	7,6%	9%	24,6%	25,1%	19,9%	11,9%	<b>61,7% (4,7)</b>

*Death and mourning*

Despite disagreements about what exactly death means and how to deal with it, there is a tendency in Western societies to repress it; yet it is unavoidable and part of life (Gadamer 2002: 288ff). The social repression of death takes a particular form in institutionalized residential

contexts for people with intellectual disabilities, as the residents there are often only able to relate to the topic of death through outsiders or in old age, due to their detachment from the everyday world and the infantilizing practice that they are usually not trusted to deal with the insurmountable crisis of the finiteness of life (Trescher 2015: 307f). As a result, many people with intellectual disabilities do not experience death until they are old (e.g. when parents, relatives or flatmates die) or come to terms with their own ageing. Although all people generally have fears and insecurities when dealing with this topic, these can be heightened for people with intellectual disabilities due to the even greater mystification of the topic (ibid: 308). There is therefore a clear need to educate and raise awareness among people with intellectual disabilities. This also applies to education, which could, for example, set up counselling and support services for people with intellectual disabilities. However, this presupposes that the educational staff themselves have first dealt with the subject. This can be achieved through further education.

According to the respondents in this study, 57.6% of the respondents had received training in this area in the last five years (Table 17). At the same time, respondents rated demand in this area as rather high, with an average of 63.3% (Table 18).

**Table 17. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Death and mourning	57,6%

**Table 18. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Death and mourning	4,7%	4,7%	10,2%	14,9%	29,8%	22,3%	13,5%	<b>63,3% (4,8)</b>

*Medical knowledge*

A more medical-biological understanding of disability often dominates in disability services. This is accompanied by the belief that people's supposedly unchangeable characteristics (in this case intellectual disability) can be dealt with primarily through medical access (Zola 1972: 500). For example, when (usually sedating) medication is administered for behavior that is construed as deviant, and no consideration is given to the fact that deviant behavior may also be an expression of rebellion against existing organizational structures or the effect of hospitalization, rather than an unchangeable personality trait of a person qua disability (Trescher 2017b: 237f). In disability care, therefore, it is common for employees to be tasked with administering medication to clients and dealing with their (permanent or temporary) illnesses. Medical knowledge, e.g. about diseases or medication and taking medication, is therefore often of great importance in practice. In order to acquire the necessary skills and in-depth knowledge about certain types of diseases, medical training courses are often offered in institutions for people with disabilities. This is particularly important, as institutions for people with disabilities are responsible for the health care of their residents.

In 69.2% of cases, medical training was provided in the respondents' institutions in the last five years (Table 18). At the same time, the need in this area can be classified as rather high, with an average agreement of 65% (Table 19).

**Table 18. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Medical knowledge	69,2%

**Table 19. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Medical knowledge	0,9%	5,6%	12,6%	17,8%	22,9%	25,2%	15%	<b>65,0% (4,9)</b>

*Sexuality*

The issue of sexuality among people with intellectual disabilities has long been ignored in Germany and many prejudices still exist today (Specht 2021: 178f). Since the 1980s, however, sexuality has increasingly been seen as an important part of the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, and current efforts in special education are also aimed at reforming traditional approaches and focusing on goals such as self-determination (including in the context of sexuality) (Trescher/Börner 2014). Some facilities already have policies in place to support their clients to manage their sexuality as self-determined as possible. Nevertheless, for a large proportion of people with intellectual disabilities, self-determined sexuality is only possible to a limited extent (Rimbach/Römisch 2023: 207). Moreover, sexuality, especially in combination with the demand for (more) self-determination, is ambivalent and can lead to challenges (Trescher/Nothbaum 2024). It is therefore essential that this area is covered by further education.

The respondents stated that at least one training course in this area had taken place in 46.8% of the facilities they represented in the last five years (Table 20). With an average agreement of 65%, the demand in this area is considered to be rather high (Table 21). There seems to be a general imbalance between supply and demand.

**Table 20. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Sexuality	46,8%

**Table 21. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Sexuality	2,8%	5,5%	7,8%	19,8%	28,6%	19,4%	16,1%	<b>65% (4,9)</b>

*Law*

The topic of law and knowledge of legal requirements is of great importance in disability care, as it helps to protect the equality and quality of life of its clients (Loeken/Windisch 2013: 96). It creates a legal framework in the form of laws to ensure that people with disabilities have the

same opportunities and possibilities as all other citizens. However, the living conditions of many people with (especially intellectual) disabilities sometimes fall short of the legal achievements and guarantees (Trescher/Nothbaum 2023: 392). It is for this reason that disability workers should have a basic knowledge of the law, as this will enable them to legally enforce the rights of their clients. In addition, their own work must be in accordance with the law. The external requirements in which educational staff are bound by the applicable law can therefore in turn lead to control or at least (co-)influence pedagogical action (Trescher 2018: 57ff). It is therefore important to be familiar with the current regulations in order to be able to differentiate between actions within the given limits. This is not always easy, as the law is constantly changing and needs to be kept up to date and older workers in disability services in particular need to acquire new legal knowledge if it has been several years since they last had to deal with it. This knowledge can be imparted in the form of further education and the perspectives of new legislation can be discussed.

The relevance is also shown by the fact that 68.8% of the respondents indicated that the institution they represent had organized training on this subject in the last five years (Table 22). The need in this area can even be classified as rather high, with an average agreement of 66.7% of the respondents (Table 23).

**Table 22. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Law	68,8%

**Table 23. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Law	0,5%	3,6%	11,3%	19,5%	25,8%	24,4%	14,9%	66,7% (5)

*Staff management*

Training in people management and leadership helps people in management and/or leadership positions to be more effective and their interactions with people have a positive impact on their teams. This in turn can lead to increased employee satisfaction and a positive working environment. Leading and managing people with disabilities requires a mix of interpersonal empathy, technical knowledge and organizational skills. In order to provide the best possible care for people with intellectual disabilities, it is important that managers and supervisors recognize the needs of their staff and ensure that they have the necessary resources and support to do their jobs successfully. In concrete terms, this means, for example, learning psychological, economic and/or pedagogical strategies and acquiring specific skills through training.

In the last five years, such or similar training courses have been offered in 75.6% of the institutions represented by the respondents (Table 22). In parallel with this high figure, the assessment of the need for continuing training in this area shows an average agreement of 71.7% (Table 23). Only 1.4% see no need at all and a full 75.5% see at least an increased need.

**Table 22. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Staff management	75,6%

**Table 23. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Staff management	1,4%	3,6%	8,2%	11,4%	25,9%	26,4%	23,2%	<b>71,7% (5,3)</b>

*Attitude*

Attitude is a widely used but not clearly defined concept in education (Fiebert/Stolzenbacher 2014: 17). It is usually understood as a personal attitude, including moral and ethical convictions, which is acquired in socialization and reflection processes and which, in addition to basic theoretical knowledge, influences the orientation of actions (Wrana et al. 2014: 174f). Decisive for the development of one's own attitudes are the abilities and opportunities to initiate reflection processes in order to establish a critical distance to oneself and one's own actions. This is not a never-ending task but an ongoing process with oneself, others and the external environment. Further training can help professionals working with people with disabilities to develop and maintain their own pedagogical stance.

In the last five years, about half (50.8%) of the respondents ran such courses in their organizations (Table 24). When asked about the need in this area, an average agreement value of 78.3% shows a very high need (Table 25), which reveals a clear discrepancy between the actual supply and the need in this area.

**Table 24. Current status in the following field**

	<i>Further education received in the last 5 years</i>
Attitude	<b>50,8%</b>

**Table 25. Requirements in the following field**

	<i>1 no need at all</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7 very high need</i>	<i>Average approval rating</i>
Attitude	1,8%	2,3%	5,4%	10%	17,6%	20,8%	42,1%	<b>78,3% (5,7)</b>

**Conclusion**

The evaluation has shown the areas in which training has taken place in the respondents' institutions in the last 5 years and how the demand in these areas is perceived. From this comparison, the following statements can be made about the relationship between supply and demand in the area of training in the care of people with disabilities: 'Attitudes', 'Concept development' and 'Transitions between life stages' are the main areas in which an imbalance can be seen. Overall, it can be said that a need has been identified in almost all areas, but that there is a certain match between supply and demand. It should also be noted that both values can be correlated, so that although the area is generally considered to be highly relevant, the demand is not considered to be as high because it may be better covered. Demand should therefore not be misinterpreted to mean that low demand means low relevance or vice versa.

In any case, the partial results of the study were able to provide initial insights into the field of continuing education in the care of the disabled in Germany, which is still under-researched in

some areas. It should be noted that there is a great need for a variety of training courses. In conclusion, therefore, it can be argued that further training opportunities for employees in the care of people with disabilities should be firmly anchored in the institutions as part of personnel development. This has already been implemented in many institutions for a long time, but further optimization seems possible in order to (even) better match supply and demand. In other countries of the world, disability services are organized differently, and therefore the organization and implementation of education is usually very different. Scientific comparative studies between different countries would certainly be desirable for the future in order to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the respective systems and to be able to make adjustments, if necessary.

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