

dehumanization VS DIGNITY



National Association for Retarded Children

INTRODUCTION: Because of the importance of developing and maintaining humane practices in institution work — and the corresponding danger of "dehumanization" when practices deteriorate, it is important for institution staff to constantly study, discuss and examine those systems and practices which adversely affect the dignity of the patient.

The purpose of this booklet is to illustrate a few of the ways which on the one hand lead to the process of dehumanization, and on the other to increased dignity. I hope that the booklet will stimulate further discussion and encourage staff to explore new ways to enhance the self-esteem of patients. No doubt you will have your own ideas about those things which contribute to dehumanization and dignity.

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Medical Director

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dehumanization is:



Being treated as a
prisoner—instead of
a patient.



Being called "Hey, you."
Being shouted at when a
normal voice would
do the job.

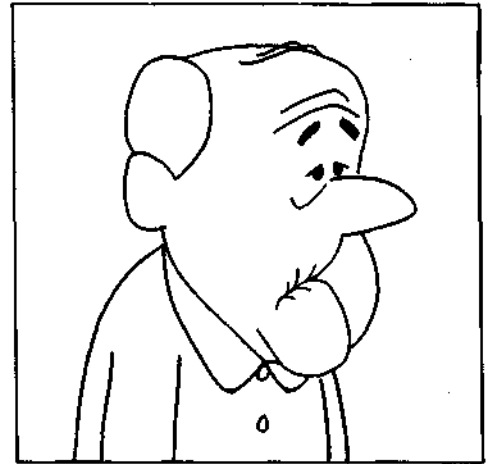
dehumanization is:



Having only
certain day for bathing
& shaving.



Being behind locked doors.
Being subjected to
standards set for
the least capable patients.

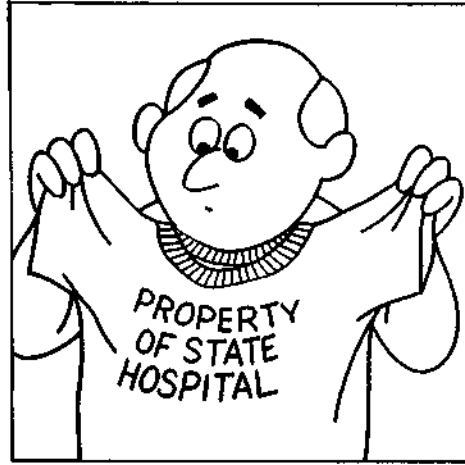


Not being able to
obtain dentures, eye
glasses or hearing aids.

dehumanization is:



Being expected to "Participate," even in childish games, regardless of your feelings in the matter.

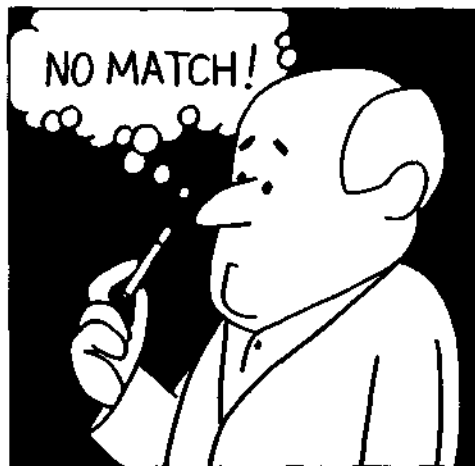


Having "State Hospital" stamped on your clothing.

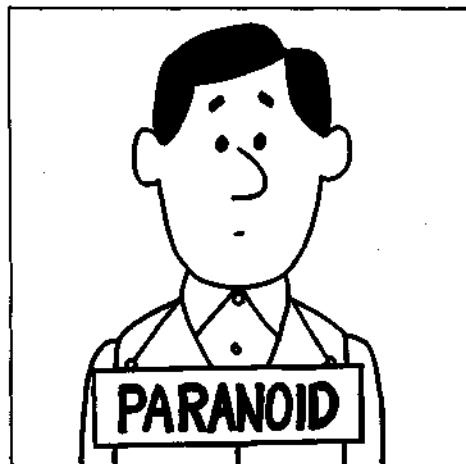


Being brought to the hospital by a sheriff or police officer.

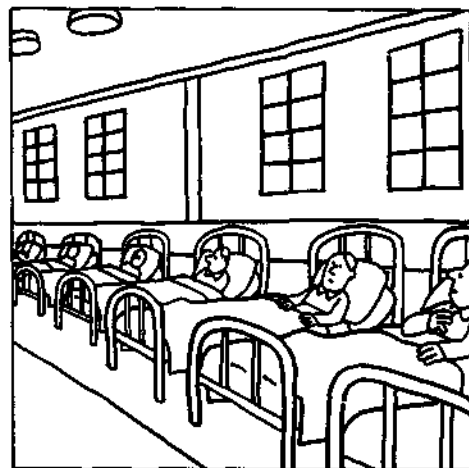
dehumanization is:



Having to ask
for personal items.

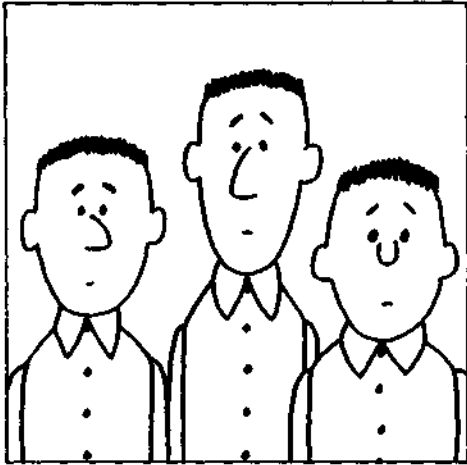


Being treated &
referred to as a diagnosis.

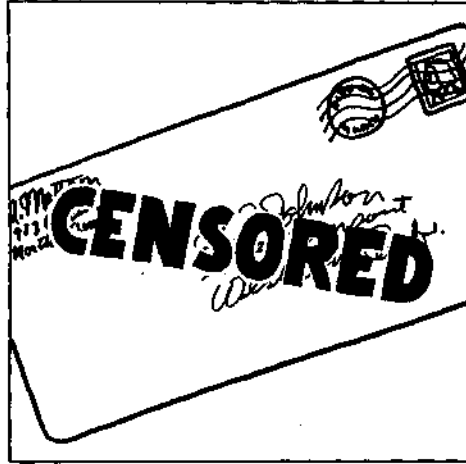


Having 40 room-mates.

dehumanization is:



Being subjected to
the "batch" process.

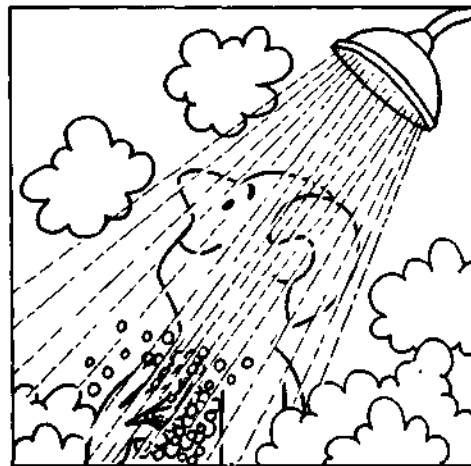


Having mail & packages
opened & censored.



Being discussed as if
you were not present.

DIGNITY IS:



Privacy in dressing,
in the lavatory
and the showers.



Receiving encouragement
& an occasional word
of praise.

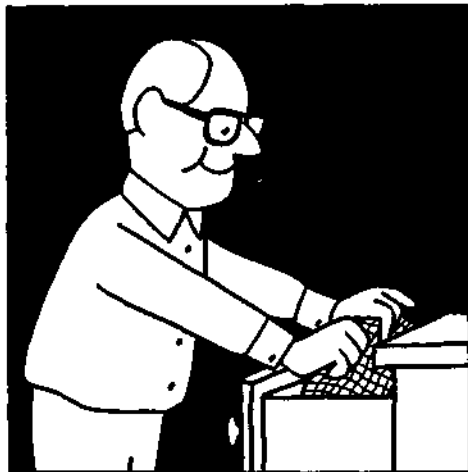


Being recognized
as an individual—
with individual needs.

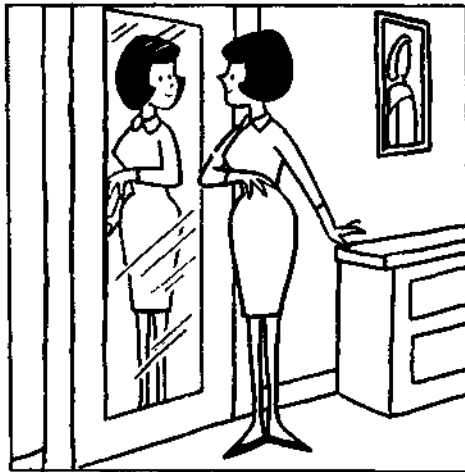


Having someone care
enough to listen to you.
Not being ignored or humored.

DIGNITY IS:



Having a place
of your own for
personal belongings.



Being able to see yourself
in a full length mirror &
having clothes that look
and fit appropriately.



Being told "why"
about things affecting
your health & welfare.

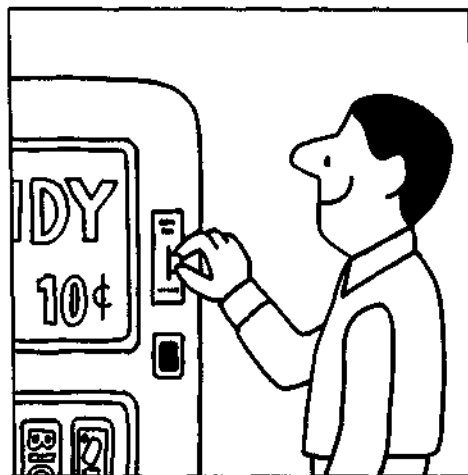
DIGNITY IS:



Being paid appropriately
for work performed.



Having an opportunity
to contribute your ideas
or suggestions.



Having money
in your pocket for
ordinary purchases.

The suggestions for the cartoons in this booklet were contributed by the staff and patients in Minnesota's state hospitals for the mentally ill and the mentally retarded. The Humane Practices Committee, consisting of Central Office and institution staff, also contributed to its development. Miriam Karlins, Director, Public Information, Minnesota Department of Public Welfare

Copies of this booklet are available from : The National Association for Retarded Children
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