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**Re-Imagining the Unimagined: Making Visible the Stealth Restriction of the Futures of Learning Disabled Women in Secure Settings**

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Recent research demonstrates that learning disabled people are not expected to follow socially valued life-courses and this is expounded by the lack of available activities post- secondary education. US and UK theorists describe this as largely the result of the lack of 'imagined futures' for disabled people. This uncertainty can cause much distress for disabled people and their families at transition to adulthood and may result in people accessing crisis services. The assumed precarity of disabled bodies and their presumed uncontestable inability to be 'cured' ensures that disability is seen as the sign of no or very limited future. Disability is seen as negative, static and beyond the realm of debate or dissent.

This paper will present data from a recently completed ethnographic study on three NHS locked wards for learning disabled women. The study found that women were situated at the intersection of gender and disability, subject to essentialist ideas about both.' Treatment' programmes focussed on behavioural stability and were not clearly defined in terms of future goals or abilities for return to the community, disconnecting the present from the future. Women were not encouraged to consider personal outcomes from using the service. Despite this, learning disabled women had very clear ideas about what they wanted their futures to look like, and how to advance towards them.