



# Navigating the Journey to Independence: Challenges and Strategies for Individuals with Severe to Profound Disabilities



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## Introduction

- ❖ Transition from school to adult life often presents new challenges and responsibilities for youth and young adults with disabilities and their families
- ❖ Students with severe disabilities lose their entitlement-based support systems once they leave high school and will have to rely on adult services that are much more limited (Morgan & Riesen, 2016)
- ❖ One effective way to build understanding and improve future quality of life is by exploring the experiences of older individuals with severe disabilities (Zhou et al., 2024)

## Research Questions

- Q1 What strategies do participants use to achieve independence?
- Q2 What challenges do they face during the process of achieving independence?

## Discussion and Implication

- ⚖ Independence for people with disabilities is a justice issue
- 🤝 Families should shift from protector → collaborator
- 🏗 Systems must be built with, not just for people with disabilities
- 🔒 Adults with disabilities have the right to independence

## Method

10  
participants

Semi-  
Struct  
interviews

Taiwan  
Location

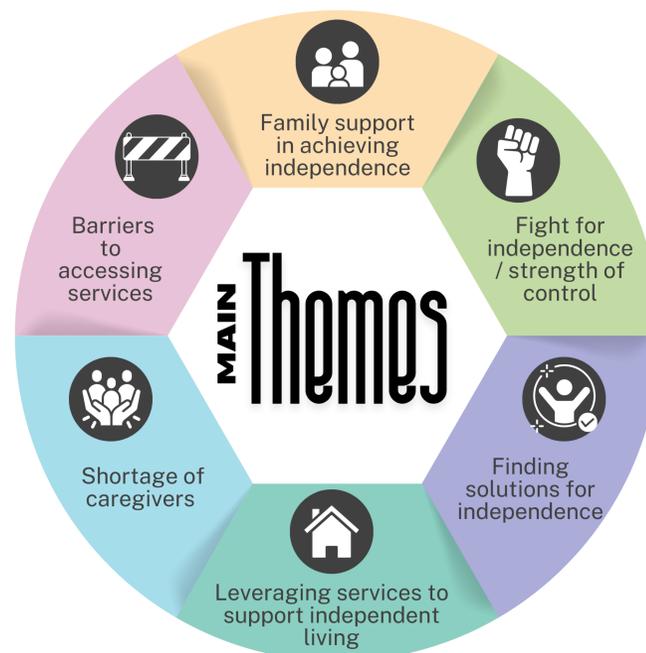
Adults with physical or multiple disabilities at a severe to profound level (ICF classification).

## References

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- ❖ Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.
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- ❖ Zhou, W. Q., Gao, Y. T., Wang, Y., Liu, J., Wang, Q. Y., & Zhou, L. S. (2024). Understanding care needs of older adults with disabilities: A scoping review. *Journal of multidisciplinary healthcare*, 17, 2331–2350. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S454985>
- ❖ For more references, please contact **Yi-Fan Li**

## Results

- ❖ The findings revealed 6 main themes (see visual)
- ❖ Family Support can be both a benefit and a barrier to independence, as some family members are overprotective
- ❖ Participants had to be creative to find solutions for problems that arose affecting their independence
- ❖ It is important to be strategic with government-provided resources, including personal assistants and long-term care services
- ❖ Services are not always available when needed
- ❖ The community in general is not always accessible



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