

# What is dignity-condition and why does it matter?

At A Wider Circle, we re-distribute more than four million pounds of furniture each year, but that is **NOT** our goal. Our goal is to bring dignity, stability, and hope to people who have lived far too long in the appalling conditions that poverty brings.

There is a sentiment in our country that if people have nothing, they should be happy to get anything. We do not see it that way. We believe that if people have nothing, they have already gotten the worst in life. Now, it is time to **give them the best**.

When we distribute items, we focus intensely on giving people a huge uplift in their lives. We consider our donations to them as gifts - long overdue and well-deserved gifts. Accordingly, when you donate items to A Wider Circle, we only ask that you think of your donation in the same way. If you were starting your home new - a fresh start for a family that has suffered - would you want that item to be how you start?

"Dignity-condition" is the phrase we use and, to be honest, that is the minimal standard. What does dignity-condition mean? It means that there are no rips and no stains on the item. (Personally, I have never purchased an item for my home that had rips or stains.) I have felt strongly since I started A Wider Circle that we should not give out items with rips or stains. So, I ask you - as a kind-hearted, generous donor - to apply that same standard when you donate.

Perhaps, as we do this work together, we can change how our nation thinks about people in need. We can stop believing that they should be happy to have only the things that we no longer want. We can give them what we want and need - because we know that it is harder for them to get these items than it is for us.

This change in perspective may compel us to donate the best of what we have, not the throw-aways. For example, I always ask young volunteers that if they had two sweatshirts - a nice, new one and an old tattered one, which is better to donate? They always say the nice, new one. They know they can get another nice one easier than the people we serve can get one. The same applies to all of our stuff. I know it may be asking a lot, but the large majority of individuals and families we serve have been in poverty since birth, so they deserve a lot.

Thank you for reading this and for thinking differently about how we help our neighbors in need. We are grateful - extremely grateful - for your support. I know that the only way we are going to end poverty is by everyone caring enough about it. This is a beautiful way to start.

With respect,



Mark Bergel, Ph.D.

Founder, Executive Director