

What is what they were prescribed or mandated

[Government](#), [Military](#)



What had been presented to the public by newspaper articles and interviews with staff was that Willowbrook State School had lovely winding roads that were lined by beautiful enormous trees that covered the buildings, with evidence that children resided on the campus grounds (Goode, 2013, 136). Families of the disabled children being admitted to the Willowbrook State School were told that the admission of their children would provide them relief from the burden of caring for their children's complex needs. At this time, there was a mix between mentally disabled children, and veterans of the Willowbrook State Schools previous residence known as Halloran General Hospital, which was first built as a hospital for " feeble- minded" children, and then was taken over as a military hospital from 1942- 1951 (Hamburger, 1947). The families of the disabled were promised that the school would provide a proposed centralized place for children who were intellectually or physically disabled. As residents, the expectation was that they would receive support and treatment designed to give habilitation.

This was also an effort to relieve the overcrowding of other institutions. However, while it did fulfill the promises made to the families, it had not disclosed that there were no clear habilitation programs for the school to actually implement for the students residing (Goode, 2013; Hill, 2016). In his recollection as a physician at the Willowbrook State School, William Bronston described it as, " Short of Dachau, or a concentration camp in Germany where they were actually burning people every day, they didn't have to burn people here. They needed to keep them alive because they needed to make money off them" (Goode, 2013, p.

138). A news article in a 1950's newspaper titled "The Living Dead at the State School" (Goode, 2013, p. 138) told some of the stories of medications that were distributed amongst the residents. Medications such as Thorazine, a heavy tranquilizer, were given to the patients, not because that is what they were prescribed or mandated to take, but to take the workload off of the staff and ease the burden of caring for the mentally disabled that resided there.