If a woman was poor and failing in school they were often sent to live in the institution in Brandon. The government wanted to segregate or keep them away from society. The goal was to stop these women from having children. In 1921 town clerks were required to keep a list of children with intellectual disabilities living in their towns.

In 1929, the name of the institution changed to Brandon Training School. Vermont had one institution and it closed in 1993. During those years, a total of 2,324 people lived there. Vermont was the second state to close its institution.
Joan McDonald

I came to Brandon when I was 13 for medical issues. Epilepsy for one thing and epilepsy is a neurological disease.

The biggest takeaway was I didn't belong there. That's the bottom line I didn't belong there. Oh god, it was pitiful.
I wanted to be like everybody else. I think that's what hurt me. I was struggling to be normal like everybody else. The hardest thing was being down in Brandon and not being with my family. My father and mother were really upset that they had to do it. I think it took more out of them than me.

You didn't have your own private room. You slept in a ward where everybody else was so you heard everybody else snore. You didn't have your own choices of food and that was hard. You know you couldn't go down to the kitchen and get like a turkey sandwich, you had to eat everything with everybody else.

You had shower nights where you had to line up like a bunch of cattle without any clothes on. You had to stay in the line waiting to shower. You had no privacy. No doors on the toilet so everybody could see you. I mean I just didn't like the way everybody could take a look at you and see.

So you really didn't have your own freedom.

We worked for nothing, either work in the dormitories or in the laundry or in the main kitchen. We had to feed some of the people, take them to the dining room and wash them up. I had to sweep and mop up the floor. I worked in a workshop. I showed a friend of mine that was in a wheelchair how to work with his fingers. Then I worked with one person that was deaf.
Two staff to a dorm with 40 people.
We had to bathe 40 people every day.
Some residents were expected to take care of the other residents.

According to Marion Stokes, a former Brandon Training School employee, “That is how we managed to survive. With so many clients and so few staff, they would come down and work for us. They did a lot of cleaning and primary care of clients feeding dressing, and bathing.

We couldn't have managed without them. My view I never thought of the working clientele as being used I always thought of it as just part of the living experience at the school.”

The quotes and historical photos used in this poster came from the video Outside Looking In by Webster Miller posted at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B95XodbBPQ