



Ontario Independent Facilitation Network Briefing Note for the Government of Ontario

THE ISSUE

There are approximately 70,000 people in Ontario with developmental disabilities and their family members who require support.

ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION

<http://www.oifn.ca>

The Ontario Independent Facilitation Network (OIFN) is a growing Community of Practice comprised of people with developmental disabilities, family members, independent facilitators, and other allies interested in creating new ways for people to be supported.

OIFN is committed to **FACILITATING CHANGE** and **CUSTOMIZING SUPPORT** in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

OUR VISION

OIFN's vision is an Ontario where all citizens have a decent place to live with the resources and the ability to direct their lives in an accepting, inclusive community; our mission is to advance citizenship for all people of Ontario and to enable people with disabilities and their families to receive and direct the resources they require to live as full citizens in the community of their choice.

BACKGROUND

As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, Canada has an obligation under Article 19 to recognize the right of all persons with disabilities to:

- Live, participate, and be fully included in the community.
- Have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and not be obliged to live in a particular living arrangement, but deciding where and with whom they live.
- Have access to in-home residential and other community support services necessary to support their meaningful life in community.

The developmental service system continues to practice a "placement and care" model, rather than a model based on true citizenship. People's lives are divided between where they spend their days during the week and where they spend the rest of their time.

- Programs originated as an alternative to large institutions.
- Segregated/congregated group programs in community are directed/managed by agencies.
- Programs are designed to provide "safe" places (protect people who are seen as vulnerable from a community that does not appear to be welcoming).

Current programs are organized and funded into two broad categories:

- Group "day" programs (life skills programs, sheltered workshops).
- "Residential" programs (mostly group homes).

Group Homes, Day Programs and Sheltered Workshops are very costly government-funded services and are insufficient to meet the growing demand.

- Agency directed group programs receive the largest investment from the Ontario Government.
- Average annual cost of a group home exceeds \$100,000 per person.
- Average annual cost of a day program exceeds \$35,000 per person.

In *Nowhere to Turn*, Ontario’s Ombudsman Paul Dubé states: “Ontario’s systemic failure to help desperate families who are unable to care for loved ones with developmental disabilities has left vulnerable people in dire and often dangerous circumstances.” The current reality for people and families can be described as:

- A great black hole when school is over.
- A harmful, negative characterization of people, required for eligibility for and access to supports.
- A confusing maze trying to access supports, where rules, policies, and procedures get in the way of an everyday, ordinary life.
- A perception that people are a burden to society.
- A forfeiture of authority to agencies around how resources are used and managed.
- A lack of choice, voice, and control, in needing to conform to “spots” and vacancies.
- An experience of isolation and depression, where relationships are stagnant or lost.
- A life of poverty due to inadequate support funding.
- A lack of consideration, priority, and value for planning.

There are an estimated 50,000 people in Ontario waiting for supports.

Agency programs have a limited number of “spaces,” and the demand far outweighs the available spaces.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

I. New Developmental Disability Legislation

- Cultural change away from a one-size-fits-all approach to a more person-centred approach, as identified by David Carter-Whitney (MCSS Assistant Deputy Minister of Social Policy Development) in the deposition to the Select Committee on Developmental Service, October 30, 2013.
- Shift in societal norms and attitudes around the full inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.
- Core vision to support adults with developmental disabilities to live as independently as possible in the community and to support their full inclusion in all aspects of society.

II. Moving to a Person-Directed, Individualized Community First Model

- Assistance for people and their families to have control over their lives and the supports they receive.

Individualized Funding	Personal Support Networks	Relationships	Independent Facilitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goes directly to people/families - Provides portability or the freedom to choose where and how supports are delivered - Not dependent upon agency “spaces” - Provides opportunities to use existing, natural community supports as a first resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides safeguards for vulnerable people - Provides support for families as their children moves through various life stages - Helps people to find their voice - Helps people explore their gifts and talents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining relationships with family, friends - Developing relationships with people in neighbourhood and community - Developing relationships with systems people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an important support piece in a citizen-focused framework - Assists people and families to explore gifts, talents, and contributions to create a full life in community - A ‘start from scratch’ effort that incorporates a dynamic, step-by-step planning process

WHAT WE WANT TO EXPLORE WITH THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT

We hope to gain a better understanding of the public policy, political context, and environment surrounding this issue, so that we can better work together to resolve the growing crises in the developmental services sector.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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