



Independent Facilitation: Facilitating Change...Customizing Support

What Difference Can Independent Facilitation Make?

Danika was living in an apartment building, alone with her mom, who worked two jobs. Danika finished school and was home alone with no support and nothing to do through the day, often leading to aggressive behaviours directed at her mom. The Independent Facilitator read in the documents sent by the DSO, that Danika was sexually assaulted by men in her building while her mom was at work. When the Independent Facilitator arrived to meet Danika for the first time, Danika got undressed thinking the visit was for sex. The Facilitator quickly learned the assaults had been going on for more than a year and the service coordination case manager “thought it had been resolved and closed the file”. The Facilitator asked Danika’s father with Danika and her mom’s permission, to get involved, which increased the supervision, worked at getting some flex funds and eventually Passport funding. Danika is now happily engaged in a variety of local community activities and started college in September. Her relationship with her mother is peaceful. She is fully engaged in her community through natural connections. She has been involved with independent facilitation since April 2016.

How will Danika stay on this course without continued independent facilitation?

Sophie-Lynne has Spina Bifida and a mild developmental disability. She lived with her single mother until she was a young teenager and was then placed in care with CAS. As she “aged out of the system” Sophie-Lynne was forced to move. She wanted to stay with her foster family and they were willing to continue supporting her, but the request was denied. Through service coordination Sophie-Lynne moved into a group home. As a result of this process, at 23 years of age, Sophie-Lynne was now living with 5 people in their 60’s who were former residents of Rideau Regional. For more than three years, Sophie-Lynne was very unhappy about her living arrangement. Sophie-Lynne became connected to an independent facilitator and was able to express that she wanted to live in an apartment. The agency was making internal moves in their group home system and it offered Sophie-Lynne an opportunity to live in an apartment. The agency recently leased a wheelchair accessible two bedroom apartment and informed Sophie-Lynne she would be moving there. Sophie-Lynne had never seen the apartment and did not know who the roommate would be or who the staff support would be. After she went to see the apartment she decided that it would be too small for two wheelchairs and an overnight staff and let the Executive Director (ED) know her decision. At that time, the ED said she would have to find somewhere else to live. In September, Sophie-Lynne ‘was presented’ to other agencies at the Community Services Planning Table. Sophie-Lynn was referred and has experienced ongoing support from independent facilitation since the summer of 2016.

Who will support Sophie-Lynn to continue claiming her voice and directing her life?



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Peter's was a high profile name in the community. Peter has epilepsy and a developmental disability and when he was 21 years old his family could no longer care for him and he was placed in a nursing home in Long Term Care. His story was featured in the media in August 2014 when he was 33 years old. At that time, the Independent Facilitation Organization reached out to the family and encouraged them to be part of the Person Directed Planning Initiative (2014-2015). The family was told by the service coordinator "that person-directed planning was not necessary because a spot in a group home was found". Peter is very unhappy in his group home. One of his house mates is violent, smashing walls and windows and Peter is often left afraid and hiding in his room all alone. He prefers the quiet and safety of his room and has isolated himself, wanting desperately to move, possibly to his own apartment with support. September 2016, Peter was referred to the IFDP.

What will happen to Peter's voice without the support of independent facilitation? As we know, behaviour is communication. How will Peter's housemate be able to find his voice and experience independent facilitation?

Josiah is a 36 year old man who was living in a family home share supported by an agency. For various reasons, the situation broke down and he ended up in hospital. When the Independent Facilitator met him he had been living on the psychiatric ward for six months. As the Facilitator got to know Josiah he was able to share that his dream was to live and work on a farm. Through conversations with his facilitator, Josiah now has a detailed, positive profile of his dreams, goals, strengths and gifts, as well as his important support needs. After working with his facilitator on building relationships in the community Josiah connected with a farming family who was interested in meeting Josiah. The first introduction with the lady of the farm went very well and the friendship evolved quickly with recognition of Josiah's capacities and assets. Shortly after, the farmers welcomed Josiah and he moved to their farm. The farmer thanked the Facilitator for helping Josiah to share his gifts and what he needs to be supported in the best way possible. Josiah now lives and works on this farm and there are plans to purchase his very own cow, also one of his dreams.

Where would Josiah be today without Independent Facilitation?

We have been supporting a young Somali woman who begun leaving her home and going off with strange men and putting herself in real danger. The second time she was kept in the man's home for three days against her will. We have been supporting her and her family through the ordeal and now through criminal proceedings. We have been helping her family figure out how to safeguard her safety and at the same time learn how to enter her adulthood. At the same time, she has begun her life over and started a college program that gives her hope and meets her need to be around others her age where she can learn and grow.

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Jenny is a young woman who was adopted from Croatia. She has Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and at 19 received our help in getting her first full time job. After several months of working she started having trouble coping. Her parents placed her in a Hospital Psychiatric unit for seven months. When she got home her family was overwhelmed and began asking the system to place her in a behavioural group home. Her brother who also has Fetal Alcohol Syndrome has already been placed in a group home. We began supporting her to create a plan for herself. She decided that she wanted to learn all she could about healthy eating and become a chef. She wanted to get in shape. She joined a rowing club and began cycling. We introduced her to a young woman her age and they began enjoying movies and long walks together. She continually said she wanted out of her small town. She wanted to be near the college where she could study to be a chef. We introduced her to another woman we support who lives in a housing Coop and is close to the college. We worked carefully with both families to discuss vision and safeguards to ensure that the arrangement would be good for both of the women. They now live together and because she and her family are now learning how her roommate has benefitted over the years from having a Support Circle are eager to create one for Jenny. She has just started working three mornings a week in the kitchen of a local restaurant. Her parents are astounded at how happy she is and cannot believe that they could not see any alternative but a group home. Her house warming party is next Sunday and it should prove to be a joyful gathering.

In high school **Brad** was considered not worth investing in. The school tried him in a placement at Canadian Tire. After that they felt he could not manage a coop experience and so had him work in the high school library. They made him do the WHIMS test over and over again as proof he was not able to work. With an Independent Facilitator meeting with the family and the school over two years, Brad developed a plan for leaving school. He loves all things to do with cars and street cars, tools, bikes... When he graduated we helped him explore places he loved to be in. He began a volunteer position at the Tool library near his home. He began learning woodworking there. He started volunteering at a local community bike repair shop putting bikes together. He started paid work at two Canadian Tires, one facing shelves and lot work and another in the warehouse compacting cardboard. He wanted to go back to school and just completed a 6 week course in car detailing. He hopes to have a business of his own this summer expanding on his lawn care for neighbours.