



OIFN Key Messages

The Ontario Independent Facilitation Network (OIFN) is a Community of Practice that includes people with developmental disabilities, family members and/or loved ones, independent facilitators, and other allies who are interested in supporting people to live meaningful, everyday lives in their chosen neighbourhoods and communities.

Our Community of Practice is dynamic in its commitment to expanding relationships, its action focus, and its reflective practice.

We gather together to work for justice and to bring about social change, so that people with disabilities are afforded the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities as any other citizen. We work to find common ground with other individuals, organizations, and stakeholders in our desire to further develop and promote ways for shifting our cultural understanding of how ordinary, everyday lives can be made possible for all.

We learn alongside others about the practice of Independent Facilitation and its contribution to a full life. We are committed to supporting those people we serve, their families, and/or loved ones by **FACILITATING CHANGE** and **CUSTOMIZING SUPPORTS**.

Vision

Our vision is an Ontario where all people experience full belonging and inclusion and have control over their lives – to make decisions, share their interests and gifts, and receive and direct the resources and supports they need in order to take their rightful place in Canadian society with the same opportunities as other citizens.

Mission

Our mission is to support people with disabilities, their family members and/or loved ones to pursue meaningful, everyday lives. We are committed to learning alongside others about the contribution independent facilitation can make to people strengthening their voices, claiming their power, creating change, and living full lives in their chosen neighbourhoods and communities.

Core Beliefs

We believe in the rights of all people to set the pace and direction of change in their lives so that they will be included in their neighbourhoods and communities and have the same freedoms and responsibilities of any other citizen, as upheld by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People Living with Disabilities, Article 19.

We believe in people having support to determine their lives, so that their voices are strengthened and amplified, as they take control of their own lives, with the support of their families and/or loved ones.

We believe in ensuring that people have meaningful support for decision-making and that each person has the capacity to express their will and their preferences in some way and can be involved in directing their life and taking charge of key decisions with the support of others.

We believe that natural neighbourhood connections and community resources are the first resort for people to learn and contribute in meaningful ways and become known and valued as contributors. People having strong and ongoing relationships based on mutuality and trust is fundamental to genuine inclusion and belonging.

We believe in reflective practice and shared learning through a Community of Practice that engages people with disabilities, family members and/or loved ones, independent facilitators, and other allies, in a collaborative approach, to co-create knowledge and reflect deeply on principles and practice.

We believe that partnerships and collaboration are necessary vehicles for bringing about justice and social change. We seek common ground with others to make shifts within systems and in society to achieve equity, fairness and respect for all.

We believe in a new framework for developmental services that acknowledges the uniqueness of each person and affords people freedom and support to direct their lives, rather than “doing for” people. We believe that sustainable options must be available for people and families who are looking for ways to manage their own housing, staffing, direct individualized funding, facilitation, and support resources, rather than control resting with any single organization.

We believe that Independent Facilitation has an action and change orientation with a focus on assisting to clarify vision, goals, and needs. Facilitators support people and their families and/or loved ones to identify next steps, so that they can take action on a day to day basis, move closer toward their vision, and shift what is possible. Through ongoing reflection, people and their families and/or loved ones think about their adult roles and what it takes to create and maintain these roles in their chosen neighbourhoods and communities. Facilitators focus on revising next steps so that goals and plans are clear to everyone involved.

We believe that independent facilitators must be free of conflicts of interest in order to be in right relationship with people and families. Independent facilitation safeguards are maintained through reflective practice and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Independent facilitation refers to person directed facilitation and planning supports that are offered by people and/or organizations who are “free of conflicts of interest” and do not:

- deliver residential or day services
- manage people’s funding allocations
- employ or provide support workers
- have responsibility related to assessment or eligibility, funding determinations, and/or oversight
- in the role as a facilitator, also enter into or assume the role of community support worker

Independent facilitators are not employed or paid directly by and do not take direction from organizations that offer the services listed above. As well, to be “free of conflicts of interest” means that independent facilitators are accountable to the people and families with whom they work and, if applicable, to the Independent Facilitation Organization by whom they are employed.