



ontario
independent
facilitation
network
oifn.ca

FFACILITATING CHANGE, CUSTOMIZING SUPPORTS

OIFN

Looking Back, Moving Forward 2021

Reflections on a year of growth
and possibilities for the future

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OIFN Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs

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.

Dear Friends,

The world around us continues to move and evolve at a fast pace.

As we are faced with challenge and change, we are presented with countless opportunities to deepen our learning and to greet this time in history with a sense of wonder and curiosity and a posture of openness, as we explore and discover new things – about ourselves, our loved ones, our communities, social systems, and the world.

Although we have become all too familiar with “physical distance,” we have been astonished and inspired by the resilience of people, and delighted to have witnessed, participated in, and hosted courageous and creative ways to stay connected, grow our knowledge, share in storytelling, and gain new understandings of social change.

The OIFN Community of Practice is energized by your presence and offerings. You are the heart of our work. Your contributions remind us that our roots run deep, that our reach broadens, and that our branches are vibrant and full of life.

We are honoured to foster a network that has brought together a wealth of gifts, passions, and possibilities. We look back on 2021 with gratitude and look to the path ahead, excited to be on this journey together.

In the year that's come and gone, love, his flying feather
Stooping slowly, gave us heart, and bade us walk together.
In the year that's coming on, though many a troth be broken,
We at least will not forget aught that love hath spoken.

In the year that's come and gone, dear, we wove a tether
All of gracious words and thoughts, binding two together.
In the year that's coming on with its wealth of roses
We shall weave it stronger, yet, ere the circle closes.

In the year that's come and gone, in the golden weather,
Sweet, my sweet, we swore to keep the watch of life together.
In the year that's coming on, rich in joy and sorrow,
We shall light our lamp, and wait life's mysterious morrow.

IN THE YEAR THAT'S COME AND GONE
WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Joyce Balaz	Colleen Mitchell	Lynda Kahn	Cathy Stroud	Roz Vincent-Haven	Ashley White
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OIFN Stewards

Bill Rollo

OIFN Administrative Assistant

Invigorating Moments – Reflections on Our Work in 2021

OIFN Priorities in 2021

Building on our momentum in 2020, OIFN committed energy and resources in 2021 to the following priorities:

Growing and Engaging the Community of Practice

- Continuing to host **Community of Practice gatherings**, including Reflective Practice Conversations and Book Club meetings, and staying connected and communicating with local and regional Communities of Practice.
- **Telling OIFN's story** and continuing to publish newsletters and share stories, ideas, and resources – highlighting both OIFN's history and documents, as well as the work and resources of our allies and others who share our values and principles.

Building Capacity and Visibility of Independent Facilitation

- Continuing to offer **OIFN Shared Learning Events** to further build capacity of Independent Facilitation and build appreciation for ongoing learning and development.
- Promoting and maintaining OIFN's **Independent Facilitator Listings**, which were re-launched in 2020, and highlighting resources to support people and families to find independent facilitators.
- Preserving the **Integrity of Independent Facilitation** by continuing to nurture and ground the Community of Practice in the principles and values of our work.

Contributing to Collaborative Ally-ship

- Preserving the **Integrity of Independent Facilitation** by creating spaces for conversations that matter and growing and learning together with our allies and supporters.
- **Investing in What Matters** by deepening our relationships with people and families, independent facilitators, autonomous self-advocacy and family groups, grassroots organizations, supportive agencies, and others and supporting initiatives and movements for social change.

Sustaining the Network

- Thinking strategically about our **Developments and Investments**, so that OIFN can continue to foster a Community of Practice that is committed to facilitating change for people to live everyday, ordinary lives.
- Recognizing and acknowledging the many gifts of Community and Practice members and **welcoming and inviting the contributions** of people who are interested in offering their gifts in meaningful ways.

Social Media and Online Engagement

As part of all of these goals, OIFN is committed to **ongoing maintenance and development of OIFN Social Media platforms and our website**, which serve as spaces for the Community of Practice to connect to, inspire, and learn from one another.

Virtual Reflective Practice Conversations (4)

As a Community of Practice, OIFN is committed to expanding and strengthening relationships and bringing people together for shared learning, collaborative action, and mutual growth. Reflective practice is about exploring ideas and making meaning together. When the Community of Practice comes together, we remain open to change and reflect deeply on principles and practice. To make the best use of our time together, most of the Reflective Practice conversations took place in small “breakout” groups of about 5 people, so that space was created for meaningful connections to happen, for all people to have opportunities to share and have their voices be heard, and for shared learning and growth to be cultivated.

We were very encouraged to see 133 people indicate their interest in these gatherings throughout the year.

February 10, 2021:

Exploring the Role of Facilitating Change

29 participants

Click here to read [Our Conversation Story](#).

May 5, 2021:

Tending to Our Roots: Growing Together in a Grassroots Movement

32 participants

Click here to read [Our Conversation Story](#).

August 11, 2021:

Tending to Our Roots: Growing Together in a Grassroots Movement – Part 2

22 participants

Click here to read [Our Conversation Story](#).

November 10, 2021:

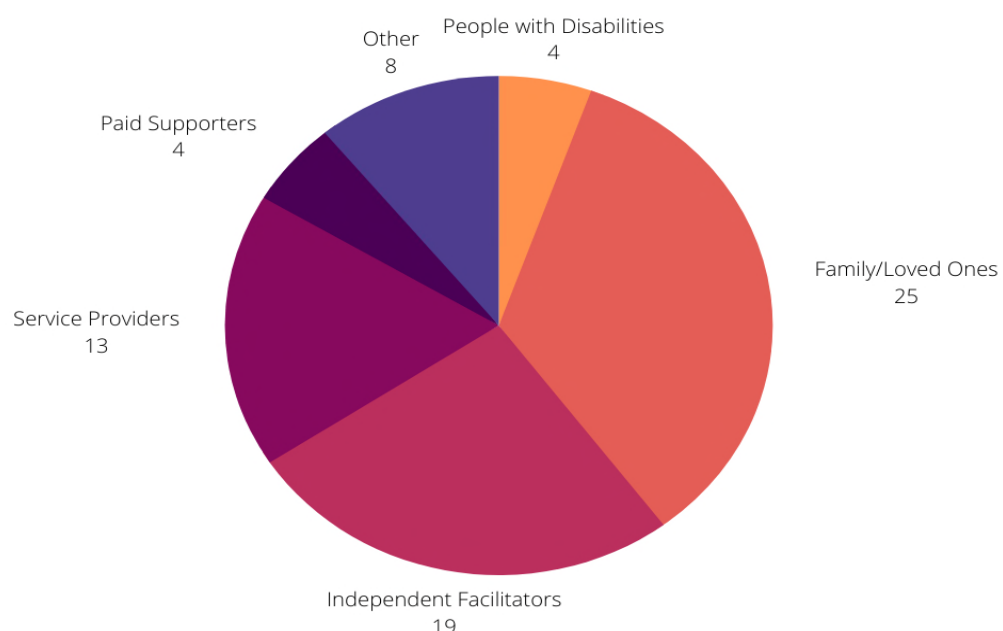
Foraging Our Heart's Work: A Virtual Road Trip

27 participants

Click here to read [Our Conversation Story](#).

OIFN Reflective Practice Conversations 2021

73 unique participants



OIFN Book Club Meetings (5)

The OIFN Book Club meets every few months, sometimes in person in Guelph, more recently over Zoom Video Conferencing, and also through a Facebook Group, to discuss books, articles, video clips, and other sources of inspiration that relate to either disability issues or to wider topics of leadership and community, in the context of Independent Facilitation. This casual club offers a chance to come together to share ideas and conversation, not only on the featured resources, but also on the general topics and through ongoing interaction in the Facebook Group. OIFN extends gratitude to Susannah Joyce and Joanna Goode for facilitating these rich dialogues.

Join the [OIFN Book Club Facebook Group](#) to get updates about upcoming meetings, gain access to debrief notes and reflections, and engage in ongoing discussion and sharing in between the meetings.

February 1, 2021

Articles on actors with disabilities portraying people in movies and television who have a disability:

- [Should non-disabled actors play disabled characters?](#)
- [Why Holiday Movies Should Be Inclusive of People With Disabilities](#)
- [Disabled TV Characters Played by Disabled Actors](#)
- [Why are so Many Disabled Roles Played by Non-Disabled Actors?](#)
- [Is it ever OK for non-disabled actors to play disabled roles?](#)
- [Disabled actors say they're the 'last civil rights movement' in Hollywood](#)

March 22, 2021

Questions Change Everything in Community Engagement

[TED Talk by Max Hardy](#)

May 10, 2021

Two book selections by Japanese poet/author Naoki Higashida:

- [The Reason I Jump](#)
- [Fall Down 7 Times Get Up 8: A Young Man's Voice from the Silence of Autism](#)

June 28, 2021

Reflecting on Community – Video Clips:

- [What Does Community Mean to You?](#)
- [Communities of Character North Perth](#)

October 25, 2021

Remembering the Soul of Our Work

- [Stories by the Staff of Options in Community Living](#)
- edited by John' O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien

Building Capacity in Independent Facilitation - Shared Learning Events (4)

Developing Leisure Identities

January 13 & 20, 2021

Conscious Listening and Speaking

March 24 & 31, 2021

Deepening Mindful Practice

May 17 & 31, 2021

Fostering Conversations about What Matters

June 17 & 24, 2021

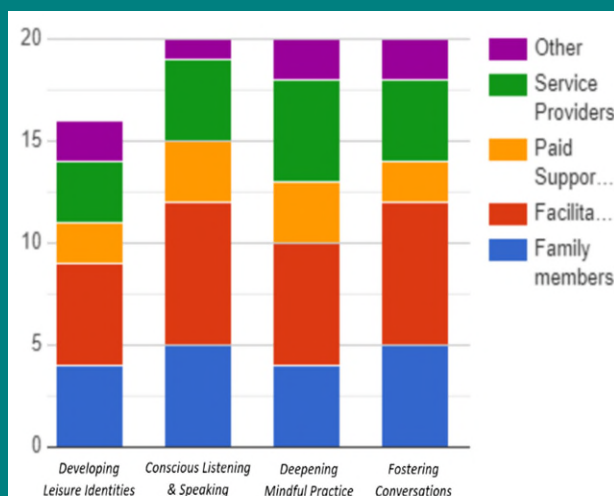
Following the success of the Power of Social Roles course in November 2020, OIFN was pleased to continue these offerings with 4 Shared Learning events in 2021, led by Judith McGill of [LifePath Facilitation and Training](#).

Held over two days, each course was delivered in an interactive format, to include a combination of presentation, small group work, reflective exercises, whole group dialogue, and review of key resources.

These offerings were developed with the intention of creating a shared learning experience for people living with disabilities, family members and/or loved ones, and aspiring and experienced independent facilitators. Participants learned together in an inclusive space where diverse perspectives were present and heard and where co-learning, reflection, and deepening of capacities were grounded in the insights and experiences of people and families and/or loved ones.

Participants were also invited to join small mentoring conversations in groups of 3, which offered a unique opportunity for participants to grow by discovering their own strengths and work through their own challenges in a safe encouraging context. Being mentored alongside others offered a meaningful way for participants to make sense of experiences and further explore the role of Independent Facilitation.

	Developing Leisure Identities	Conscious Listening and Speaking	Deepening Mindful Practice	Fostering Conversations about What Matters
Family members	4	5	4	5
Independent Facilitators	5	7	6	7
Paid Supporters	2	3	3	2
Service Providers	3	4	5	4
Other	2	1	2	3
Total Registered	16	20	20	21



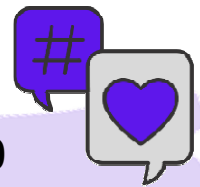
For information about upcoming

OIFN Building Capacity in Independent Facilitation Shared Learning events, please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/oifn-building-capacity-in-independent-facilitation-shared-learning-events-tickets-191890839667>

Online Presence and Social Media Outreach

In our efforts to delight, inspire, and start conversations that matter, OIFN continued to share information, stories, ideas, and resources on our social media channels each week.



49,700

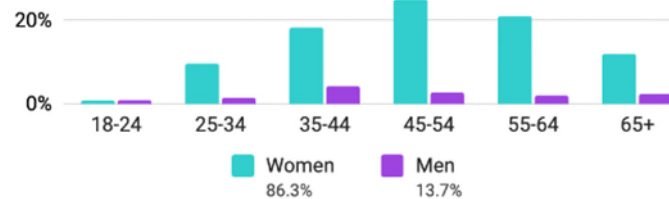
total unique impressions in 2021

Facebook

Facebook Page Likes

918

Age & Gender



10,553

unique users saw our Facebook posts

Top Posts

Boost post

Good news. People with disabilities in Ontario will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccin...

Good news. People with disabilities in Ontario will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations under the government's Phase 2 vaccine distribution rollout. Learn more by clicking the link below. Studies have shown that people with disabilities are among the highest risk groups for contracting severe COVID-19. We're glad to see the government prioritizing these citizens.

Boost again

Save the date! OIFN's next Reflective Practice Conversation will be Wednesday Au...

Save the date! OIFN's next Reflective Practice Conversation will be Wednesday August 11, 2021, from 1030 - 12 pm EST. The topic is "Tending to Our Roots: Growing Together in a Grassroots Movement - PART 2" Come connect, share, learn, and listen with others on our shared journey for social change. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/OIFNAug2021>

Performance

Reach

Total: **661**

This post reached more people than **98%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reach: 661

Reactions, comments and shares

Total: **113**

This post received more reactions, comments and shares than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reactions: 63
Comments: 20
Shares: 30

Results

Total: **106**

This post received more link clicks than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Link clicks: 106

Performance

Reach

Total: **4,935**

This post reached more people than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reach: 4,935

Reactions, comments and shares

Total: **22**

This post received more reactions, comments and shares than **96%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reactions: 12
Comments: 0
Shares: 10

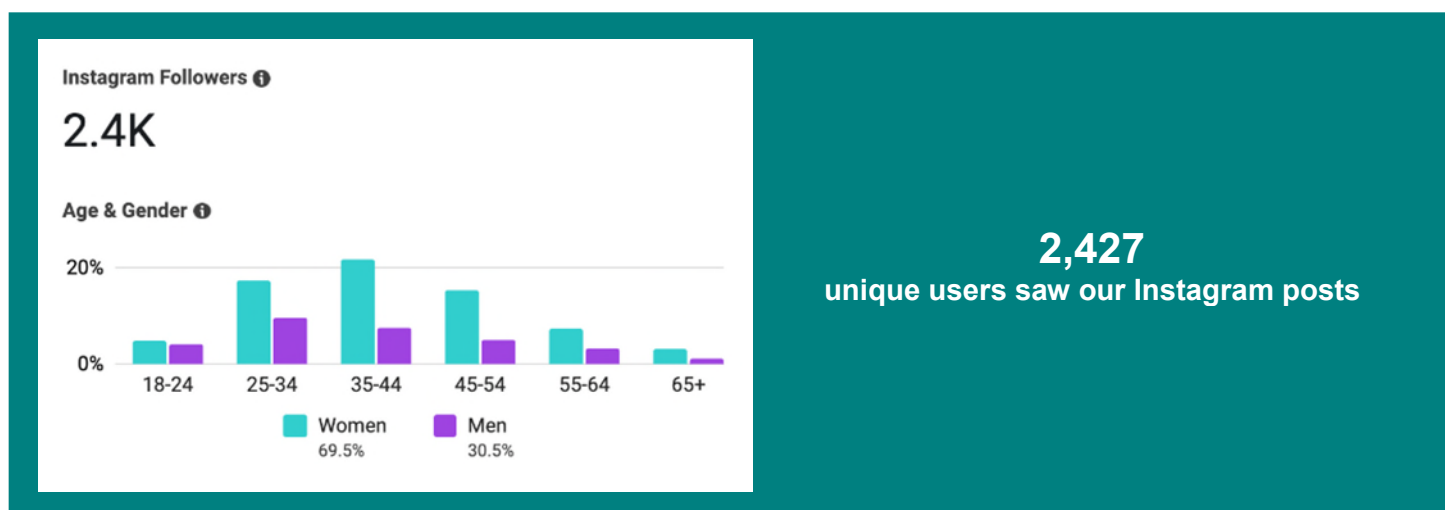
Results

Total: **94**

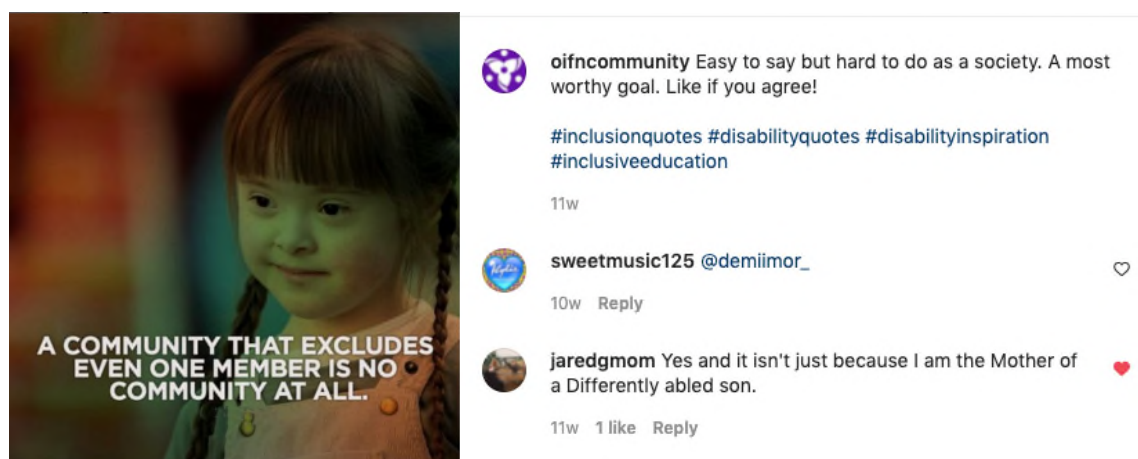
This post received more link clicks than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Link clicks: 94

Instagram



Top Post



73 likes

Virtual Engagement Survey

Over the fall of 2021, Joanna Goode, a long-time participant in the OIFN Community of Practice and Director of Facilitation Wellington Dufferin, began a community engagement placement with OIFN, to explore social media trends and gather ideas and feedback. In addition to feedback received through an online survey, small group conversations are being organized with 13 interested participants. Both the written feedback and group dialogues will inform opportunities for further interaction and connection among the OIFN Community of Practice.



Our Journey Forward – Focusing Our Priorities in 2022

Over the past couple years, OIFN has been greatly encouraged by the broad participation in our virtual gatherings and events, and we are inspired by the contributions of participants – both familiar with and new to the network.

Moving forward, we are focusing our resources and energies, as we strive to continue to foster a dynamic Community of Practice and bring together 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.

Moving forward with limited resources, OIFN will continue efforts to share information and ideas, bring people together for inspiration and co-learning, deepen relationships, and work with partners and allies to amplify the voices of people and families, while focusing on sustainability of the network and seeking out possible funding sources.

Growing and Engaging the Community of Practice

- Continuing to host **Community of Practice gatherings**, including Reflective Practice Conversations and Book Club meetings every few months.
- Staying connected and communicating with our allies.** We are excited to review the feedback and harvest learning from our virtual engagement survey and follow-up conversations (late 2021 to early 2022) to guide further meaningful engagement at local, regional, and provincial levels.
- Endorsing and promoting opportunities for capacity building** around the principles, values, and practice of Independent Facilitation. OIFN is shifting from hosting course offerings and engaging in more intentional outreach, in order to promote training and learning events from like-minded friends and allies. In this supporting role, we are committed to launching a clarified endorsement process, maintaining an active Events Calendar on oifn.ca, and using our social presence to raise awareness of valuable capacity building opportunities.
- Telling OIFN's story** and continuing to publish newsletters and share stories, ideas, and resources – highlighting OIFN's history, documents, and learnings about Independent Facilitation, as well as the work and resources of our allies and others who share our values and principles.

Sustaining the Network

- Thinking strategically and dedicating our resources to **opportunities that are energizing** and relevant to the needs, interests, and passions of the Community of Practice.
- Recognizing and acknowledging the many gifts of Community and Practice members and **welcoming and inviting the contributions** of people who are interested in offering their gifts in meaningful ways.

As part of all of these goals, OIFN is committed to **ongoing maintenance and development of OIFN Social Media platforms and our website**, as interactive spaces for the Community of Practice to connect to, inspire, and learn from one another.

Priority	Actions & Opportunities	Next Steps/Commitments	
Growing and Engaging the Community of Practice	Gathering Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Reflective Practice Conversations - virtual Monthly OIFN Book Club 	OIFN Social Media and Website Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain dynamic elements on oifn.ca (Events Calendar, Independent Facilitator Listings, etc.) Continue weekly social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter Continue to highlight excerpts and quotes from OIFN foundational documents Strengthen the synergy of CoP elements (Reflective Practice and social media) Ensure OIFN has clear training resources to on-board social media volunteers (training documents and videos, guidelines and procedures, etc.)
	Connecting with Allies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to partners and history (IFCO, People First chapters, Family Networks, FAO, etc.) Endorsement of ally capacity building and training opportunities Virtual Engagement Survey – Calls to Action 	
	Telling OIFN's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly newsletters OIFN Foundational documents Year in Review 	
Sustaining the Network	Exploring Opportunities & Pursuing Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit grant proposals Launch fundraising opportunities 	
	Inviting Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite others to join working groups (OIFN Social Media, OIFN Reflective Practice Planning, etc.) 	

Staying Connected

There are many ways you can stay connected with our Community of Practice, as we share with and learn from one another about choice, control, and citizenship for all people.

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/OIFNCommunity/>

Follow our Facebook page to explore the latest news, learn about events from our network partners and Independent Facilitation Organizations, and engage in conversation!

OIFN Book Club – Facebook Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1653162541383633/?source_id=199085563818403

The OIFN Book Club gathers in person every few months to discuss great reads, insights, and different perspectives. This Facebook Group offers an online space for ongoing sharing of ideas and conversation. Members comment not only on the books or articles, but also on general topics and on others' posts.

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/oifncommunity/>

Our Instagram page connects with a broad audience beyond those interested in Independent Facilitation to talk about the importance of inclusion and citizenship.

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/OIFNcommunity>

Our Twitter page is a place for Community of Practice members to connect and find stories, resources, and more about belonging and inclusion, Independent Facilitation, and social change.

Ideas Blog

ideas.oifn.ca

Our Ideas Blog shares different ideas and perspectives from self-advocates, family members, community allies, and more! We invite the voices of our network to share their unique perspectives on self-determination, citizenship, belonging, and how independent facilitation is one way to facilitate person-directed change.

Stories Blog

stories.oifn.ca

Our Stories blog helps illuminate the scope of work of Independent Facilitation. Stories let us see people as they are, unique, like every other citizen.

OIFN Mailing list

<http://www.oifn.ca/sign-up/>

Sign up to receive e-mail updates and newsletters, which include network highlights, upcoming events, resources, and more!

Website

www.oifn.ca

Visit the [Resources page](#) to find OIFN's Foundational documents and other resources.

OIFN is greatly enriched by the contributions and gifts of the Community of Practice.

If you are interested in joining an OIFN Working Group, such as the Reflective Practice Planning Group or Social Media Group, or exploring other ways to contribute to OIFN, please contact Bill Rollo, OIFN Administrative Assistant at brolo@oifn.ca or 519-966-8094, Ext. 6.

If you are considering making a financial contribution to OIFN, please visit: <https://www.oifn.ca/contribute-to-oifn/>

Any contributions you are able to offer will allow OIFN to continue to provide gatherings, resources, and more as we strive to foster and sustain a Community of Practice committed to facilitating change for people to live meaningful, everyday lives.