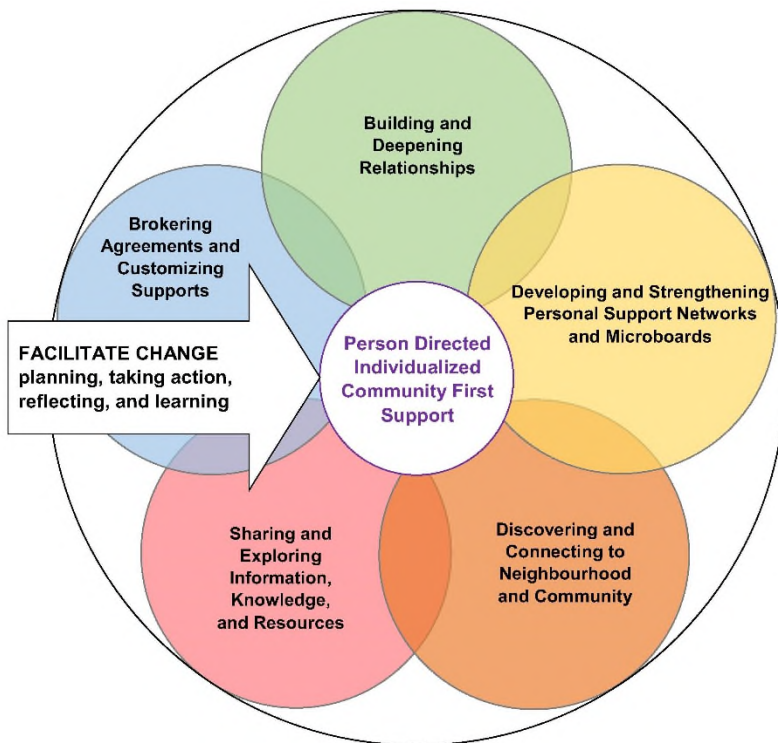


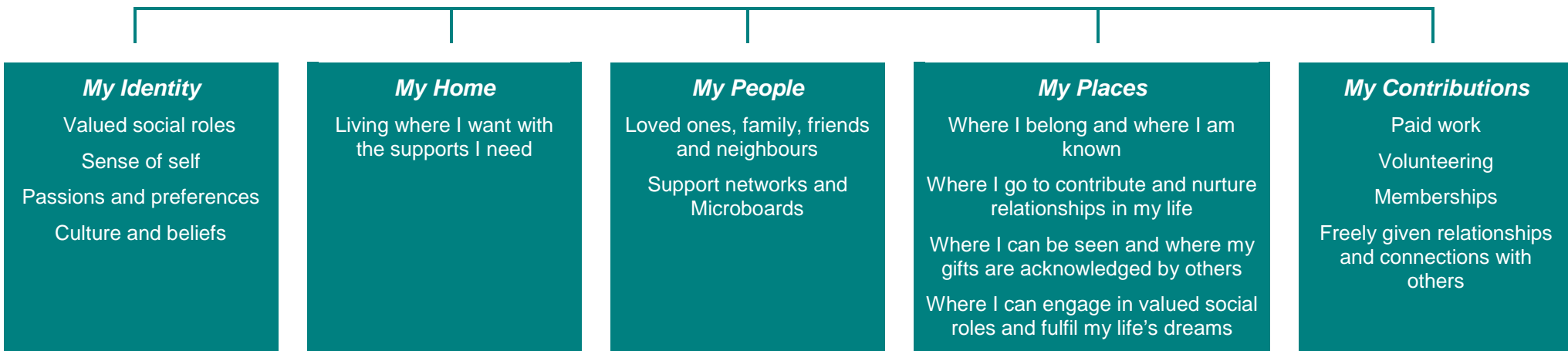
## Facilitating Change and Customizing Supports

- Action and Change Orientation
- Choice and Control
- Free of Conflicts
- Freedom and Equity
- Neighbourhood and Community Inclusion
- Respect



- Rights and Responsibilities
- Supports for Decision Making
- Safeguards
- Self-determination
- Sustainability
- Voice and Vision

## Assistance to figure out and build an ordinary, everyday life



## What is Independent Facilitation?

Independent Facilitation is an ongoing process that supports people to create change. Through conversations over time, people and their family members and/or loved ones are supported to imagine possibilities, make their own choices, think about, plan for, and take steps toward creating the ordinary, everyday lives that they want in their chosen neighbourhoods and communities.

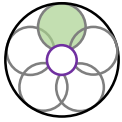
Independent facilitators support people to strengthen their voices, share their wants, needs, and gifts, and work toward their visions of a promising future. Independent facilitators work with people and families over time, assisting people to tell their stories, identify and work on action steps, and reflect on learning and new possibilities as they come into and move through their adult lives. As things evolve, independent facilitators support people and families to talk about changes, so that next steps reflect people's current wishes, preferences, and visions for their lives.

People, along with their families and/or loved ones, who choose to work with an independent facilitator, enter into a working relationship that is rooted in the belief of people's capacity to direct their own lives. Independent facilitators are allies of the person with a developmental disability, and their family members and/or loved ones. Independent facilitators work with people and families through supportive relationships that are built on:

- **Listening:** Facilitators listen deeply, with a genuine intent and desire to understand who this person is and what they truly desire and need. Facilitators communicate with people in ways that let them know that they have been heard and understood.
- **Trust:** The work of facilitation begins with the development of trusting relationships that lets people and families and/or loved ones know and experience that the facilitator is "on their side." When facilitators enter in the homes and lives of people and families, they do so with respect. Setting the foundation for ongoing work involves deep listening, communication, and actions that align with what the person has expressed as important. Independent facilitators can be counted on to follow through on their commitments.
- **Prioritizing:** When people and families begin to talk about the things that they want and need to change in their lives, facilitators support people to make decisions about what is important to do first, given the vision they have expressed, the needs that are most urgent, and the resources of people, money, and time that are available.
- **Ongoing Planning, Action, and Reflection:** Conversations lead to decisions about what will be done, who will do it, and when it will be done. Independent facilitators support people to follow through on plans that have been made and learn from experiences, in order to guide future planning and action. Facilitators guide the learning process, and action steps strengthen people, family members, and/or loved ones to be more powerful and more confident in directing their lives.

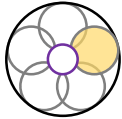
## The Work of Facilitating Change

OIFN has identified 5 interconnected areas that make up the scope of practice of Independent Facilitation:



### Building and Deepening Relationships

Independent facilitators work within the context of meaningful relationships, acknowledging that an important part of a full life is being in connection with others and freely giving to and receiving from one another. Supporting people to deepen their relationships with self, with family members and/or loved ones, with friends, with neighbours and community members, and with services and systems is at the core of Independent Facilitation. When we nurture mutual relationships based on trust, we are safer, more likely to be healthy, and live longer.

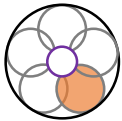


### Developing and Strengthening Personal Support Networks and/or Microboards

While the role of an independent facilitator is to be “someone to turn to,” the ultimate vision is for people to have a group of people, beyond any paid supports, who know the person well; who the person knows well, feels comfortable around, and trusts; and who the person can turn to for support. Independent facilitators assist people to identify the people who are important to them - their family members, friends, loved ones, neighbours, and others with whom they share close, freely given relationships or with whom they want to deepen their relationships - and look for opportunities for the person to invite others in, for trust to be built, and for the person to be heard.

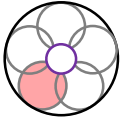
As trust is built over time, people may invite others to be part of their support circles or personal support networks; a support circle or personal support network includes the people that the person loves and trusts and chooses to bring together to think, plan, act, learn, and celebrate with them. Circles and personal support networks are people who celebrate success and accomplishment together, move through life’s challenges, crises, and losses together, and work to create change together.

Some people may choose to formalize their support circle and incorporate as a Microboard. Independent facilitators can support people to explore this option and learn about the values and benefits of a supportive non-profit corporation.



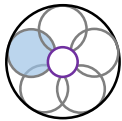
### Discovering and Connecting to Neighbourhood and Community

Independent facilitators support people to experience full inclusion and belonging in their neighbourhoods and communities. Ordinary, everyday lives are made possible when people make connections outside of services and programs and share their gifts beyond only segregated settings. Independent facilitators work with people to find and be part of natural neighbourhood and community spaces that any other citizen would access, including those in leisure, education and ongoing learning, employment and volunteerism, cost effective and personalized housing solutions, and transportation. Facilitators learn alongside the people and families they support about new things in their neighbourhoods and communities; they pay attention to possibilities and opportunities and reach out to others to find out what is available - who people are, what they offer, what they need, and more. Facilitators assist people to discover their interests and passions and encourage people to share their gifts; when people are ready to make new connections in their neighbourhoods, facilitators sometimes make the initial contact and introduction, accompany the person to make the connection, or support the person to do things on their own or find the right person to go with them.



## Sharing and Exploring Information, Knowledge, and Resources

In order to make it easier for people and their families to make good decisions, set and work on action steps, and direct their lives, independent facilitators bring good information and assist people to find and make sense of new knowledge. Sometimes the information is about people, places, and organizations in neighbourhood/community, such as jobs, classes, volunteer opportunities, and/or social groups and events that match the person's interest and goals. Facilitators are available for support throughout the planning process; they provide information, assist to interpret what it all means, and attend meetings with people, when requested. When sharing and accessing knowledge and resources, facilitators support people, along with their family members, loved ones, and/or support circles to develop their capacity to do things on their own.



## Brokering Agreements and Customizing Supports

Facilitators can also have a role to play in brokering third-party agreements. By building trusting relationships with people and their family members and loved ones and taking the time to form a good understanding of people's visions, facilitators are then well-positioned to take on a broker function, assisting people to ensure that available services are tailored to support people's decisions for how they want to live their lives in their neighbourhoods and communities.

In this role, facilitators may be asked to support people, along with their family members and/or loved ones, to review potential options and assist in implementation (for example, with innovative housing options as well as alternatives to group living situations) and to interview, select, and negotiate with services and supports in neighbourhood/community and/or with service providers.

For people and families who enter into support/service agreements, facilitators can assist them to negotiate customized arrangements that support people to set the pace and direction of change in their lives, along with their families and/or loved ones.

A major part of the brokering function is to ensure that the person and family are accompanied throughout the process of negotiating the agreement and that they are heard and understood by the support/service organization. In turn, the facilitator ensures that the person and family and/or loved ones fully understand system procedures, the cost of services, and service provider requirements. It is important for facilitators to assist people and families in brokering agreements that clearly lay out in writing the respective roles and responsibilities of everyone involved, including the person, their family member and/or loved ones, support network and/or Microboard members, support providers, and the service organization. These agreements need to outline the mechanisms for reviewing, making changes and resolving concerns and problems that may arise in the arrangement over time.

Facilitators who have taken up the brokering function can also assist people, when directed, to 'move' their funding from one transfer payment agency to another.

## Principles of Independent Facilitation

OIFN believes that the following core principles guide the work of independent facilitators:

- **Action and Change Orientation:** Independent facilitators support people and their families and/or loved ones to clarify goals and needs and 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.
- **Choice and Control:** Independent facilitators assist people to be in charge of their lives. Each person has the capacity to express their wishes and preferences in some way. Facilitators do not rely on generic solutions, but take direction from people, along with their family members and loved ones, to tailor options that fit with their personalities, their gifts, their needs, and their unique visions for a full, meaningful life.
- **Free of Conflicts:** 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.

- **Freedom and Equity:** Independent Facilitation is rooted in the work of social justice — creating a society where everyone is afforded economic, political, and social rights and equitable opportunities for personal change and growth. Independent facilitators uphold Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People Living with Disabilities. Facilitators assist people to live ordinary, everyday lives that give them meaning and purpose, so that they can address and transform the inherent challenges and societal roadblocks they sometimes face on a day to day basis.
- **Neighbourhood and Community Inclusion:** Independent facilitators support the inclusion of all people as valued members of society. Facilitators are committed to supporting people to find places in their neighbourhoods and communities where they can gain a deeper sense of belonging. These are places where people are invited by others to join in and offer their gifts and contributions and/or where they

intentionally create opportunities to be part of and contribute to the whole. By exploring and coming to know their neighbourhoods and the many places where citizens typically engage with one another, people can be supported to find a meaningful connection with others through their valued social roles and participation.

- **Respect:** Independent facilitators are committed to social change, so that people with disabilities are seen, known, included, and valued as contributing members of their neighbourhoods and communities. This shift in culture and perspective becomes possible when people with developmental disabilities connect with and relate to others and take on valued social roles in places where they have previously been excluded.
- **Rights and Responsibilities:** Independent Facilitators assist people to embrace roles as contributing citizens. While citizenship is about rights and opportunities, it is also about taking responsibility for and actively participating in making society work for everyone. The work of Independent Facilitation makes it easier for people to take on valued adult roles and contribute alongside other citizens in their chosen neighbourhoods and communities.
- **Supports for Decision Making:** Independent facilitators assist people, along with their family members and/or loved ones, to have meaningful support to direct their lives and take charge of key decisions. Through supportive relationships that are based on respect, mutuality, trust, and a commitment to listening to the person, people can be supported to express their wishes and preferences, to have choice and control, and to exercise their autonomy. Facilitators support people to talk about what matters and make decisions about how to take action on their vision with the support of their family members and/or loved ones, support networks, and/or Microboards.
- **Safeguards:** Independent facilitators approach their work with an ethic of “do no harm,” focusing on strengthening the capacity and resilience of people and their family members and/or loved ones. Facilitators support people and their families and/or loved ones to consider action in light of a person’s biography, their gifts and talents, as well as their needs and particular vulnerabilities, in order to put safeguards in place.
  - *Supportive and Mutual Relationships:* Independent facilitators are focused on the importance of trusting relationships with family members, loved ones, support networks, and Microboards. Where there are no existing family connections, effort is made to recognize and foster relationships with people who love and care for the person and who are prepared to stand by them over time.
  - *Strengthened Voice:* Independent facilitators support people to strengthen their voices, so that they are more able and willing to enter into dialogue with their loved ones about things that are troubling them and what they envision for themselves. This sense of freedom to express themselves assists people to understand who they are and what their own story is. This commitment to supporting people to have a “say so” in their own lives goes a long way in safeguarding them against abuse, becoming silenced, and not being taken seriously by others. Fostering a context for Supported Decision Making is a key aspect of strengthening the voices of people with developmental disabilities and lessening their vulnerability.
  - *Resilience and Growth:* Independent facilitators acknowledge the steadfastness of people and families and/or loved ones who have overcome significant challenges and adversity. Independent Facilitation plays a role in assisting people to find solutions to the challenges of accessing and managing housing resources, direct supports, and funding. This work is an investment in people, family members, and loved ones; as their capacities are strengthened and they reflect on their growth over time, people and their families and/or loved ones require less support moving forward, due to the knowledge and skills developed through experience.

- *Portable and Customizable Supports:* Independent facilitators recognize the important role of Individualized Funding in ensuring that resources meet the unique needs of each person, and people have the freedom to choose where they live, what a full, meaningful life means to them, and who supports them to work toward their visions of a promising future. Funding and supports need to be portable and move with the person — from one location to another, from an agency to self-directed supports, and/or from one area of the province to another.
  - *Sustainable and Diverse Resources:* Independent facilitators assist people, their families, and/or loved ones to research, review, access, and make the most of generic neighbourhood and community resources and Developmental Service offerings. People are encouraged to think about tailoring individualized supports so that they are sustainable over time.
- **Self-determination:** Guided by the five principles of self-determination, independent facilitators invite people, along with their family members and/or loved ones, into a person-directed process that supports people to experience:
    - *Freedom:* to make their own decisions and choices with the support of others with the support they need to live an ordinary, everyday life in their neighbourhoods and communities.
    - *Authority:* over their funding, the services and supports they choose and/or purchase, and how these supports are delivered.
    - *Support:* to re-imagine their lives and figure out what a full, meaningful life looks like and how to move forward.
    - *Responsibility:* to identify, strengthen, and use their gifts to contribute to the greater good, as valued, contributing members of their neighbourhoods and communities.
    - *Recognition:* of the importance of all people and the inclusion and engagement of all people as citizens.
- **Sustainability:** Independent facilitators promote individualized, innovative options that are accessible, equitable, and possible over the long-term for people and their families and/or loved ones who are looking for ways to manage their own housing, staffing, direct individualized funding, facilitation, and support resources. A number of separate functions must work together to support people to direct their lives, including: adequate Individualized Funding; customized, affordable, and accessible housing resources; direct support resources administrative resources; inclusive neighbourhood and community resources; and Independent Facilitation (action-oriented support to figure things out).
- **Voice and Vision:** Independent facilitators listen deeply and assist people to find their voices, express their passions and preferences, discover visions for their lives, take next steps, try new experiences, succeed, fail, and learn from these experiences. People want and need to be heard and to communicate what is important to them. They want other people to listen to, acknowledge, and respect what they are saying. They want to be actively involved in creating their own unique lives, instead of living with the consequences of other people's decisions. Supporting people to clarify their vision, strengthen their voices to communicate it, and claim their power to act on it, is at the heart of what Independent Facilitation is all about.