7. Appendices

(A full list of the appendices is found in the Table of Contents.)

Appendix 1 – Supporting Adults with Developmental Disabilities on Community Councils

Community Councils can model valued and meaningful participation in how they operate, as well as in how they support leadership development and community relationships for people with developmental disabilities. Below are some strategies to support individuals with developmental disabilities to participate on Council. These strategies will also help with recruitment and retention and ensure a wider range of members with diverse abilities on all Community Councils.

A self-advocate's point of view

If I was to go back on the Community Council, I would want members to:

- Have a better understanding of what self-advocacy is and how it's organized at a provincial level
- Have more conversations with the whole Council so we all have the same understanding of what self-advocacy means
- Have presentations by local groups and / or leaders to learn more about self-advocacy and to think about projects we can do together

This is the kind of support I'm looking for:

- I had an idea for a December 3rd International Day for Persons with a Diverse Ability event but needed help from my Council to plan and organize the details. But it was still my idea and my voice first and foremost. It was good to have the Council in the background supporting me when I needed it. When I am the one doing the talking and presenting it changes other people's ideas of what I can do
- I would want to be seen as a Council member, not the "self-advocate". I don't want to be labelled and only do things about self-advocacy
- Meetings need to be in plain language and explained in a way that everyone can understand what is going on and have something to say

Connecting to the self-advocacy movement locally and provincially

Self-advocacy is a rights movement led by people who have been labelled as having a developmental disability. It began in the 1970's as people began moving from institutions to community. It's about working together to make sure everyone has the same rights and life opportunities as everyone else. The principle of self-determination (having a voice, regardless of one's label or perceived level of ability) is a core principle that should be at the heart of any work we do alongside people with developmental disabilities. However, it is also important to remember that while anyone can be a self-advocate, not everyone identifies themselves as such.

The self-advocacy community and Community Councils both work to ensure all people have equal opportunities to live inclusive lives and to be treated with dignity and respect. If a Council wants to learn about the self-advocacy movement, or to consider opportunities for collaboration, visit these resources:

- Ask **BC People First www.bcpeoplefirst.com** to give your Council a history on the self -advocacy movement in BC
- Visit the **BC Self Advocate Net website www.selfadvocatenet.com** to read stories and learn about different groups in BC
- Connect with the **[CLBC Self-Advocate Advisor](#)** to find out what CLBC is doing to partner with the self-advocacy movement in BC

Councils should give consideration to how the self-advocates' motto, "*Nothing about us without us*", can impact their own planning and processes.

Enabling leadership and community connections

Council demonstrates the value of inclusion and full citizenship when all members have an opportunity to contribute to discussion and exercise the roles and responsibilities of leadership. This is especially true of those times when the Council and its members are visible and are providing leadership and/or are working alongside others in the broader community.

Take time to talk and share stories. It is a great opportunity to find out what people are interested in and good at. Be conscious of using plain language - avoid acronyms. Don't assume all Council members with a developmental disability would want to be involved in work that has to do with developmental disability or self-advocacy. Find ways for members to try different roles.

Councils are positioned perfectly to support their members to identify spaces and places where their voice is missing in community leadership **inside** and **OUTSIDE** the community living sector. Here are some ideas and questions to consider when getting started:

- How do we get to know our Council members?
- How do we incorporate sharing stories in our meetings?
- How do we find out what each Council member is really good at?
- How do we make sure each member has a valued role on the Council?
- What are the different ways we can support self-advocacy leadership in the community? What are the opportunities for all Council members to learn from this leadership?
- How do we ensure our work is alongside people – and not on their behalf?
- When representing the work of Council in community how do we ensure self-advocates get to tell their own story?
- How does community building create opportunities for valued roles and relationships for those who live with developmental disabilities?
- How can we find opportunities for the broader community to learn from the stories and leadership of those with diverse abilities in our community?

- Where are the contributions and stories of those with developmental disabilities that are missing in community?

Ensuring meaningful participation

It is extremely important to ensure Council meetings are conducted in a way that welcomes diverse learning and communication styles. Individuals who live with being labeled because of their disability are often very familiar with the feelings of isolation that come with being with others who use complicated language and 'talk around' rather than 'talk with'. Council meetings are a perfect opportunity to experiment and be creative in how to run meetings in a way that ensures that everyone feels important and heard.

Take turns at the beginning of each meeting to share a personal story about something important to the work of the Council. For example, "*What does inclusion mean to me?*" Invite members of your local self-advocacy group to make a presentation about their values and what they are working on. Spend time mapping out possible community initiatives (youth groups, accessibility committees, Arts Councils) and how to support those with developmental disabilities to participate and perhaps take a leadership role.

Here are a few tips taken from Inclusion BC's **Guidelines for Self Advocacy Involvement**.

- When planning self-advocate support, always begin with consulting self-advocates and respect their right to choose what the support will best look like to them
- Take the time; there is no quick way to create meaningful participation. It requires a commitment to the process and willingness to challenge the boundaries of what we think is possible
- Make sure to spend time clearly defining the role of the Council; what it does and does not do
- Help self-advocates define particular areas of interest. This will enable each individual to get a clearer sense of purpose of his / her participation
- Make sure meeting notes and agendas are written in plain language
- Take time to review the agenda and issues with self-advocates ahead of time
- Plan extra time for de-briefing to make sure everyone knows what the main issues are and what everyone's role is in addressing them
- Give people time to respond to questions. Sometimes it takes a few minutes to formulate an answer; it is okay to ask if more time is required
- Try to ask specific, not open-ended, questions
- Check-in throughout meetings to make sure everyone is following the discussion. Ask if anyone is confused or has any questions
- Build social activities into your meetings and work plan. It is often through informal participation that self-advocates get to make the biggest contributions and play an integral role

Some Important links

- BC People First – **www.bcpeoplefirst.com**
- No More Barriers Campaign - **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oz0zU_cQbFg**
- BC Self Advocate Net - **www.selfadvocatenet.com**
- People First of Canada - **www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca**
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (plain language version) - **http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/uncon/easy-read-un-convention.pdf**