

Contents of the Members' Handbook

In this Community Council Handbook, you will find information on:

- [Community Living British Columbia](#) (commonly referred to as CLBC)
- The role of Community Councils and how they do their work
- What is involved in your “job” as a Council member

Speaking of Developmental Disability

This Handbook often speaks about the importance of building and strengthening communities to be more inclusive of all members. As a community extension of CLBC, Councils pay particular attention to the daily experiences of people with developmental disabilities. For example:

- In what ways do they feel welcome in their community?
- What contributes to them feeling unwelcome, avoided, invisible or isolated?
- What needs to change so that all people enjoy the benefits and share the responsibilities of living together in community?

CLBC's vision of “lives filled with possibilities in welcoming communities” does not deny differences or require that people change to fit more into a community that will welcome them. In our vision of an inclusive and welcoming community people join as they are, with their individual differences and diversity respected and valued.

We are aware that language evolves over time, changing to become more acceptable or the preferred way to refer to people. We also know that labels do not describe people as they really are; more often than not, they set them apart.

So, the question is: **How do we acknowledge our interest in wanting to improve the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in community life while avoiding seeing people through labels?**

We have heard from many people who say that if we must identify a group of people they would like us to use self-advocate, persons with diverse abilities, or people who live with a label of developmental disability. Each person has a good reason for her / his preference. We have chosen to use language that is consistent with the language that is used by CLBC, and so we will use adults / individuals / people with developmental disabilities. However, as you think about language, keep in mind that [People First of Canada](#) reminds us that we should “**Label jars, not people**”.

Councils are encouraged to discuss the impact of language on community inclusion and on individual experiences of feeling welcomed or excluded. In keeping with this focus, different ways to support meaningful involvement of adults with developmental disabilities on Community Councils are found in **Appendix 1**.

Need Help with the Handbook?

If you need help reading or understanding anything in this Handbook, please contact your Integrated Services Manager. You can reach your Manager by calling toll-free to Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867 and ask them to connect you to the CLBC office in your community.