

The L.I.F.E. Service

Dave's Story

A Story Demonstrating the Rhythm of the L.I.F.E. Service

Dave's Story

Dave, a young guy who is eligible to use CLBC-funded services, celebrated his high school graduation with his family and friends then took a much-needed vacation early in the summer. Somewhere around Canada Day Dave and his parents decided to attend a Welcome Workshop series they heard about from CLBC. They understood that this session would be a good place to learn about the opportunities and services available to Dave. And so they went. They did learn lots – about adulthood, community resources, ways to plan, and CLBC – and they reviewed the CLBC Catalogue of Services that describes all the services Dave might be interested in using. They came away from the workshop with lots to consider. By Labour Day, while Dave was pretty happy that he wasn't going back to school, he did really want to be doing something with his life – summer vacation was over! With clarity and conviction Dave declared to himself, 'I guess it's time to get my act together'. He knew he should find a job, but, like most people, he didn't want just any job- it had to be a job he would find really meaningful – a local company to work for that believes in the things he does – co-workers who share his passions and might want to share a beer or two after work. Dave and his family remember hearing about L.I.F.E. service during the Welcome Workshop series and thought that maybe this would be a good match for Dave.

So, Dave and his parents take the next step and meet with a CLBC Facilitator named Taylor. They bring up the idea of L.I.F.E. services. Facilitator Taylor is enthusiastic about their interest in L.I.F.E. service and runs through a checklist to help them decide if the L.I.F.E. service is right for Dave. The whole family loves the idea of flexible hours, personal service design and intentional on-going improvement. They also like the idea of a service that always includes a focus on strengthening Dave's capacity, confidence and informal network. They are a little worried about support decreasing when Dave doesn't need it, but as long as support will increase when it needs to and Dave doesn't have to go to the 'back of the line' and wait, things should be just fine. They decide that the L.I.F.E. service is the way to go. So, Facilitator Taylor prepares a request for service and once approved connects Dave and his family with Inclusion Terrific, the local community living agency that is contracted with CLBC to provide the L.I.F.E. service.

Dave, his parents and Staff Sam from Inclusion Terrific meet up to have an initial planning session. At first Dave and his family found the session very familiar...Staff Sam asks, "What are your goals in the areas of learning, inclusion, friendship and employment – 'OK' Dave thought, I've done this before and begins to share a few of his goals. He doesn't have a goal in every area but Staff Sam says that as long as he has a goal around employment all was good! Then Staff Sam asks Dave...'So when you achieve your goal, what difference do you hope it makes in your life?" Ohhhh this is a bit different, Dave thinks. As he, his parents and Staff Sam go through the session it begins to dawn on Dave that the L.I.F.E. service isn't just about making and achieving goals – it's about those goals being like stepping stones to live the life you really want. It really hit home when Staff Sam said to Dave..."OK so your goal is to find a job. Once you have a job how do you imagine your life will be different?" "Well", says Dave. "If getting a job is going to make a positive difference in my life it can't be any old job. I love the environment and won't work for or with polluters. If I had a green job I would be proud of myself and proud of my company and co-workers. So, I guess maybe the right job would make me proud of myself...that's the difference I want in my life."

"Ok, we've got some goals and differences, next thing we need to do is figure out how we're going to check in with you to see how things are going. For instance, you might like to talk every week over the phone and every second week in person – it's up to you. And so Staff Sam and Dave decided they would meet once a week on Tuesdays at 2:00 at Starbucks on Yew Street. "If while we are meeting," Staff Sam says. "it turns out something about your support isn't working well and needs to change, we'll change it and we call this a tune up. Sometimes we might make the changes right away but sometimes I will need some time to research some new support strategies before making the changes. When I need to do this, I will do it on my own and then share it with you for feedback, how does that sound?" "Great", Dave says.

Dave's Mom says, "So, Staff Sam, it seems like you're going to be doing a lot of research and service designing as well as actually spending time supporting Dave." Staff Sam says "That's right! The L.I.F.E. Services acknowledges that good support isn't only face to face support. When Dave does use face to face support we call it Direct A Support. The research and development we do is in service to Dave, even though we may not be directly with him and this is called Direct B Support. The amount of time I spend supporting Dave will increase and decrease over time depending on how things go but I will always be available to Dave as long as Dave needs it. Overtime Dave may

just want to email or text to ask some advice or maybe we will always meet up in person once a week, or more, we'll see."

Staff Sam tells Dave and his parents that he needs a week to design the support strategies and service schedule that will propose to them how, when and where Dave's service will be offered. They decide on a date and time to meet up again.

Over the next week Staff Sam dives deep into researching and then designing Dave's support strategies. Everyone gathers back together and Staff Sam shows Dave and his parents the support strategies. They think it looks pretty good. Mom says, "Every support strategy includes a focus on strengthening Dave's capacity, confidence and informal support network, how come". "That's right," Staff Sam says. "That's a key feature of the L.I.F.E. service. You can always expect to see support strategies related to these things. We think focusing on capacity, confidence and strengthening informal supports are key strategies to help Dave achieve his goals and experience the difference in his life he wants while not creating an unnecessary attachment to staffed services". Now, together they begin to build Dave's service schedule which describes where and when his service will take place.

For the first week Dave and Staff Sam are working on a few of his highest priority goals – which Dave set. One support strategy related to getting a 'green job' was to attend the Green Peace Games night at the local brewery in order to network with the environmental folks. This required some transit training, conversation practice, a trial run at the brewery so Dave would feel comfortable ordering beer, and then the event itself. Staff Sam met Dave there, as planned, and just hung in the background as planned, and left when Dave gave him the signal that all was well. Dave, as planned took the bus home and texted Staff Sam when he got home.

Then the first check in at Starbucks happens...Dave's parents come too. Pretty good week all around but one thing was a dud. It seemed like a good idea to attend Green Peace Games Night at the local brewery, but it really wasn't. The transit training went well, so getting there and back was fine, it was just that none of the Green Peace people wanted to 'talk shop' they just wanted to play their games and Dave is definitely not a Gamer. So, the Green Peace Games Night support strategy needs some work.

Staff Sam goes into research and design mode to try and come up with a strategy to replace it. It turns out that the Green Peace Office is just around the corner from the brewery and they are looking for volunteers to stuff envelopes every Thursday from 5-7, pizza included. This could be good Staff Sam thinks because Dave already knows the

bus route. Staff Sam decides that he better go scope the scene before suggesting it to Dave, just to make sure the volunteers chat about environmental issues while they stuffing envelopes and eating pizza. So he went and discovered they were a chatty bunch – a vibe Dave would probably really enjoy. Staff Sam revised the support strategy and scheduled a time for them to meet to review it.

Staff Sam shares the new support strategy with Dave and Mom, who decided to join in. Mom wonders if the volunteering will lead to work...“It might not,” Staff Sam says – but Dave says, “I want to give this a try anyway because the ‘cause’ is important and these people could be my people”.

Time goes on, and after about three months of using the L.I.F.E. services Staff Sam shares Dave’s Individual Report with him and his family during their regular check in. Dave and his parents find it fascinating. It detailed everything about Dave’s L.I.F.E. service experience over the last three months. It was very interesting to look back at the goals and differences achieved, how many check ins and tune ups occurred, and how much Direct A and Direct B support he got.

Right around the six-month point, Dave and his family attend a Difference Reflection hosted by Inclusion Terrific. At this session the group of families and individuals gathered to share their experience with the L.I.F.E. service so that Inclusion Terrific can work to make the improvements they need to keep things working well and make things better.

Staff Sam also attended a Difference Reflection with all his team mates.

Since we’re at the six-month point, Staff Sam’s boss submits the periodic report to the CLBC Quality Service Analyst Ali. This is a compilation of all the individual reports of the people served through the L.I.F.E. service at Inclusion Terrific.

Staff Sam’s Boss hosts the CLBC Quality Service Analyst Ali for an on-site monitoring visit.

Eventually Dave gets a part-time job he finds meaningful with co-workers he enjoys and a company whose values align with his. For the first little while Staff Sam and Dave spend a lot of time together while Dave is learning the ropes at work but as he becomes more comfortable Staff Sam’s time with Dave decreases with respect to employment.

Things go smoothly for a couple of months and then boom! A new time sheet process is instituted at work and the support Staff Sam had been offering around timesheets needs to change. Staff Sam and Dave get together and Dave tells Staff Sam all about the problems with the time sheet. Staff Sam knows that they have to act fast on this because the timesheet is due in a couple of days. Staff Sam asks Dave to bring a timesheet home from work tomorrow. Dave and Staff Sam will meet up when Dave gets home at noon to figure it out.

After Staff Sam leaves he reflects on how stressed out Dave was – he seemed super anxious. Staff Sam suspects that Dave’s confusion over the timesheet was made much worse by his anxiety. Learning how to do the timesheets is one thing, but helping Dave calm his anxiety is very important too. Dave likes to listen to podcasts and Staff Sam wonders if he has ever tried ‘Guided Meditation’ podcasts to help relieve stress and anxiety. Staff Sam does a bit of research and quickly puts a list of links together and texts them to Dave with a little note that says, ‘Something to help you chill until we get the time sheet thing sorted tomorrow’.

Dave and Staff Sam meet up and Dave has the time sheet and the confusing instructions. Dave and Staff Sam work through it. Dave completes the time sheet as best he can and then he and Staff Sam make up a list of all Dave’s outstanding questions. Staff Sam helps Dave email the questions and the completed timesheet to the Supervisor. Staff Sam suggests putting on one of those podcasts he sent because he notices Dave is pretty anxious. And so they do, and Dave really likes it. By the time the podcast is over the Supervisor has replied with all the answers Dave needs to fill his timesheet in correctly and submit it on time and he has a new support strategy to help manage anxiety.

Then, one day a couple of months from the Canada long weekend Dave and Staff Sam meet up at Starbucks. Dave explains that there is a camping trip coming up at Alouette Lake – not a work thing, but a bunch of people from work were going. They put a sign-up list in the coffee room to see who had tents, barbeques, who was going to bring what food – seemed like all you had to do was sign up. Everyone seemed welcome, but Dave wasn’t sure. Dave had loads of questions – where is Alouette lake? How might he get there? How do you build a campfire? Do people still sing songs around the campfire? Dave hadn’t been since he was a kid. What if it rains? Is it really just a party in the woods? He’d be OK with that if it was. Should he bring a friend? Would other

people be bringing friends? And so... Dave asked Staff Sam to help him become part of the camping trip.

Staff Sam did some research into Alouette Lake, location, cost, rules, activities. He also made up a list of all the camping gear Dave would need. Staff Sam made up a card deck of 'conversation starters about the camping trip' for he and Dave to practice with to ease Dave's anxiety about talking to his work mates about the trip. Staff Sam decided he would suggest to Dave that he bring a friend, and makes a few practice day trips to the lake and maybe an overnight, just to get a lay of the land. And with that, a new support strategy was ready for Dave's review.

Dave and Staff Sam met to review the support strategy, and once Dave was OK with it they put the strategy into action.

Dave went to coffee breaks ready with a bunch of questions to work into the conversation, he researched Alouette Lake himself, invited a friend to go on a few trial day trips, the first trip Staff Sam drove them, and the rest of the time Dave's sister did. In fact, Dave's sister and a couple of her friends went with Dave and his friend for the practice overnight. When the trip date was getting closer Dave signed he and his friend up for a car pool with others from work – and went.

After the trip Dave and Staff Sam met up. "It poured" Dave said. "Me and all my gear got soaked. This girl I sort of like from work got sprayed by a skunk. We almost got kicked out from playing the car stereo too loud and then the car battery was dead in the morning from playing the stereo all night. It was a great time."

Staff Sam really wanted to keep the momentum of Dave's confidence going and so he thought the time might be right to introduce a new support strategy related to one of Dave's goals around health and fitness. Staff Sam researched a number of different gyms and weight loss programs, locations, costs etc and went to check them out and then prepared a strategy for Dave to review.

When Dave and Staff Sam met to review the new support strategy Dave said "No, way, I'm not doing any of this'. There's a gym at work and some people go at lunch. I'll do that". "Perfect," says Staff Sam. "I'll write that up; everything doesn't have to be a complicated big deal, it's just good to keep track of stuff".

In September, just about a year since Dave started using L.I.F.E. services, the Supervisor at work announced another change to the time sheet system. "Oh not again," Dave said out loud. "I hear you," said skunk girl from camping (and the work gym). "Maybe we can team up and figure this out together. Can I buy you a beer after work?"

Dave met up with Staff Sam that week, and no changes were needed related to work or friends. It has been a year since Dave began using L.I.F.E. services and three months since Staff Sam last shared Dave's Individual Report and so it was time to do so again. Staff Sam, Dave and his parents were again pleased to review Dave's service experience over the last three months and review the last year.

Dave and his parents were invited again to join with other families and individuals to participate in a Difference Reflection to reflect upon their experience with L.I.F.E. services to help shape Inclusion Terrific's on-going improvement efforts.

Staff Sam also attended a Difference Reflection to reflect upon their experience with L.I.F.E. services to help shape Inclusion Terrific's on-going improvement efforts.

Since it's the one-year mark, Staff Sam's boss submits the Periodic to the CLBC Quality Service Analyst Ali. This report is a compilation of all the individual reports of the people served through L.I.F.E. service at Inclusion Terrific.

Staff Sam's Boss hosts the CLBC Quality Service Analyst Ali for another annual on-site monitoring visit.

So, it's nearly Thanksgiving and Dave and Staff Sam meet at Starbucks at the regular time for a Pumpkin Spice latte. Dave says he's really getting the hang of L.I.F.E. services. His check ins always happen as scheduled as he has come to see them as a bit of a safety net. Staff Sam always has great tips for strengthening his connection with his co-workers both inside and outside work. Dave has been really thinking about a couple of new goals and differences he'd like to include in his plan. He asked Staff Sam when his next personal planning session would be, and Staff Sam said, 'let's do it now or whenever suites you, it's really just a check in and tune up ...no need to wait'... and the cycle continues!