Tips from a father and Upper Fraser Community Council member

Below are tips and guidance from a father to service providers and support workers for how to best support his daughter, and others with diverse abilities, during this time.

1. Explain the situation as best you can to the person you support in terms and words they understand. Check to see if their understanding matches your explanation. This will take more than just one conversation.

2. Keep the person you support updated on new information as you receive it.

3. Validate all the things the person you support has lost due to the COVID-19 changes. For example: it's hard and frustrating when recreational and social routines are cancelled or not being able to see family and the people they care about.

4. Focus on things that can be done. Things/routines lost must be replaced by things that CAN be done. This is vitally important and is fun for staff to focus on something positive

5. Make sure the person you support feels like they are part of a team and they are helping to keep everyone safe. You NEED their help. Provide simple and concrete ways in which you need their help. For example: they are part of a team that is helping with social isolation, physical distancing, washing hands and keeping surfaces clean.

6. When having a conversation be sure to use "We", so they know they are part of your team.

7. Be honest and transparent. If you don't know the answer tell them you don't know.

8. Understand their ability to make sense of the world around them is compromised. We need to work together to keep those we support included and validated and give them the feeling that they are safe.

9. It is time to build new routines for the people we love and support. Fill their days with positive activities that fit within the health protocols you have explained to them.

10. Make sure people you support know that these rules apply to everyone, not just them. And that it won't be forever. Explain that we need to work together as one big team to keep everyone safe.