

Investing in People

Periodic Updates from the Individualized Funding Coalition of Ontario
3:3 *October, 2002*

The Next Step after Engaging an Agency

In the last newsletter, I talked about some strategies for engaging an agency in the individualized funding process. This time I will share some thoughts about deciding what funding you need and want - from my Executive Director point of view!

Most agencies are struggling with basically the same issues that you are, such as providing good support and managing everyday needs and problems. In addition they are dealing with chronic under funding of services, waiting lists, and a host of other costly issues that you may never encounter. I know of a situation where just a change to the provincial fire code added more than \$100,000 to one agency's monetary requirements. The pressures to keep a balanced budget can be tremendous.

Know What you Need and Want

To get the attention of a financially stressed Executive Director know what you need and want, and the difference between the two. At a recent meeting of Executive Directors I discovered that they were not necessarily opposed to

individualized funding, but almost all had had experiences of being approached by families who asked for much greater amounts of funding than they actually needed. To them, finding \$250,000 to \$300,000 to support an individual is totally out of the question. Many individuals served by agencies require only \$15,000 to \$20,000 for respite or other services. People entering our programs through the coordinated access point rarely require more than \$80,000 a year. The average funding allocation to an individual coming from an institution to the community is \$55,000.

This doesn't mean that Executive Directors expect you to think of money first and the person second. It means that you really have to know up front what you need and plan your request from there.

Individualized Planning

One key is doing good individualized planning that is centred on the person. Such planning is best done at arms length through a third party. This means that the planner is not an employee of the agency, but, like a service broker, is

independent and free to concentrate on finding out what will really work for the person needing support.

The less conflict there is between the individual and the agency that will ultimately deliver services the more powerful a plan can be. It is only then that all of the elements of natural supports - support circles as well as relevant community and family supports - can truly be worked into a person OEs plan. It is this ability to freely look at using all possible resources in any given community that make these plans both efficient and very effective at providing the desired outcomes for individuals. Experience shows that an independently created, person-centred plan, with detailed support strategies and clear costing, can provide better outcomes for people, and be less expensive to administer.

OK, So What Happened To The Rock?

In the last newsletter we left my friend John stupefying over what happened to the rock in his landlord's basement. Many people have been trying to get the answer from me, but

I have been tight lipped. Remember that this was an exercise in thinking outside of the box. No, he did not break it into little pieces or make it into a coffee table. He dug a hole next to it, rolled the rock into the hole and buried it under the cement floor! If you figured this out call me and let me know. I have a job for you!

In the next issue I will outline the principles of individualized planning. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 519 284 1424 ext. 225.

Wolfgang Struss
Executive Director
Community Living St. Marys and Area

The Coalition and nine other provincial organizations continue to advocate with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to support the STATEMENT ON ALLOCATING RESOURCES FOR 2002 You can help by writing a letter to MCF&CS – or call the Coalition for information

The Individualized Funding Coalition supports the self-determination of persons with disabilities and their full participation in community life.

Coalition co-chairs: Yona Frishman & Judith Snow

To learn more about the Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario or to become a member, please go to our website at: www.individualizedfunding.ca
