

Core Values Enhance Individualized Funding

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A Key Message from the Individualized Funding WorkFest

Values Do Matter

Values are the foundation for the change we need. Current service systems often focus more on compliance and congregation than self-determination and community. The implementation of individualized planning, support, and funding for disability supports must be based on intentional values of citizenship, person-centredness, relationships and community. These values challenge us to focus on what we must do before we get Individualized Funding. We must create opportunities for families to dialogue about what is important and how they might choose to work differently with their family member. Government policy and programs must reflect this desire for engaging people in good meaningful process.

Vision of the Core Values

The person is included:

- Inherent worth/value of each person
- Person-directed, family-driven
- Nothing about me, without me
- Accountable to the person.

Goals are positive in terms of people's dreams, gifts and strengths.

A person's life continues to unfold

- Individualized funding will be used differently over the course of the time to follow new goals and dreams.

People experience citizenship.

Authentic relationships are developed to keep people safe and enrich our lives.

The goal is typical, valued presence and roles in community

- The pursuit of real work, of one's own home, community-based, typical, familiar, individual participation in the real community are always preferable (over programme-based, agency-created, congregated, segregated choices).

Small is beautiful (and workable while we figure it out)

Families grow and gain strength and depth from continual opportunities to meet and talk.

Facilitation support involves planning and planners that are *independent* from the service system.

General Principles to Guide Individualized Planning, Support & Funding

Individualized funding must be:

- individualized and personal
- an option for all people with disabilities
- direct and portable
- flexible and adaptable
- responsive and available
- accountable

Disability support Policy must be based on:

- rights and dignity
- community capacity and inclusion
- freedom and choice
- information and self-determination
- personal relationships and contributions

Round Table Report on Individualized Funding

Barriers to Ensuring that Core Values Make a Difference

Lack of political will

- Government doesn't respect family struggle or trust families to make good decisions
- Difficult to change government and/or bureaucracy attitudes
- Government is often faceless, difficult to engage on values.

People do not typically talk about our values in this way

- People with disabilities are not valued, too often seen as a burden
- Many programs require that families devalue their family member to get funding
- Too often, Individualized Funding is only about money.

Challenging to draw in families

- Hard to engage new younger families
- No one clear, strong family voice – it's hard to get families together
- Families are often confused by the word CHOICE and what it could mean.

The immensity of the service system

- Agencies control valued resources
- Many agencies fear talk of Individualized Funding and citizenship
- Very difficult to transform thinking of families when services so dominant.

Two Central Ideas from the Core Values

Within the dialogue about values, there are two ideas that stand out as we work to expand Individualized Funding in Ontario.

First, the move to individualized planning, support and funding represents a *paradigm shift* for many families, governments, and community agencies. This shift means embracing the values, engaging in dialogue, and creating genuine options for people that reflect the values and principles. Families and governments must work together to help people make this shift in thinking and valuing.

Second, the move to a provincial policy and program for Individualized Funding must be *consistent with local conversations* and community building. For example, the government may support independent planning with both policy and funding. While this would be good, the core values strongly suggest that it is the conversations and activities of local communities that will inform what independent planning might look like on-the-ground.

Values, then, inform how any proposed changes will actually look when implemented. Values serve as a touchstone for government and families as they construct new pathways and practices. Principles, on the other hand, provide the guidelines for how the values will be expressed in action. Building new approaches in Ontario that includes Individualized Funding will require both strong values and meaningful principles.

Strategies for Enhancing Core Values

Strategies related to the core values are to ensure that they influence the future of how Individualized Funding is organized, and that the values serve as a guide for funding decisions. Specific strategies are:

1. Common core values will be widely approved and embraced by families (developed, shared, discussed and understood) by:
 - Creating frequent opportunities for groups of families to get together and think about what they want and could have for family members
 - Building a critical mass of families, friends and significant others who understand and share the core values
 - Strengthening families in preparation for asking for funding (& to resist compromises), including groups of families supporting one another and working together to deepen their growing understanding of the core values and what's needed to ensure a good life.
2. Families/parents (who embrace these core values) will be equal partners with government in developing allocation criteria for individualized funding by:
 - Sharing, discussing and distributing our core values (in unique and creative ways, such as storytelling) to MPPs, civil servants and others.
 - Creating an approach with government that honours family and self-advocate involvement.
3. Core values and principles will be the foundation of each proposal for Individualized Funding by:
 - Working with government to create principle-driven approach to every proposal
 - Working with government and communities to ensure that facilitation and independent planning is central to individualized approaches.

Outcomes by 2006

- Individualized Funding and citizenship values will be well established
- Government and families will be on the same page with values and directions
- IF proposals from individuals and families will reflect the values of citizenship, participation, community, and relationships
- Government and families will have developed a tool for assessing how disability supports in Ontario reflect the core values and principles
- New family groups will be funded each year as a way to build interest and capacity.