

**The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario:
Facilitator Forum Response
to 'Opportunities and Action, Transforming
Supports in Ontario for People Who Have a
Developmental Disability'**

June 2006

**The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario:
Facilitator Forum Response
to 'Opportunities and Action, Transforming Supports in
Ontario For People Who Have a Developmental Disability'**

Context

The Individual Funding Coalition for Ontario (IFCO) has been host to a number of Facilitator Forums over the past year. These forums provide an opportunity for facilitators who are involved in assisting folks that have developmental disabilities, their families and network to plan for a meaningful future. Facilitators are invited from across the province to come together, to share, inform, mentor and educate each other.

Most recently, this group of facilitators gathered in order to respond to MCSS “Opportunities and Actions” blueprint document. In particular, we focused on Independent Planning and Facilitation. The following is the result of that gathering. This Facilitator Forum respectfully submits our collective thoughts and advice to MCSS.

General Comments

The IFCO Facilitator Forum would like to compliment the Ministry of Community and Social Services for recognizing the importance and value of people with disabilities, their families and their support networks having access to facilitation that is separate from service delivery. We are very supportive of this insight and think that the citizens and communities across Ontario will benefit from this. Our comments reflect the best practices of our collective experience with facilitation and planning as well as the value based work in which we do.

1. Provincial Body

“Opportunity and Action” emphasizes the need for Independent Facilitation and Planning to be present in our communities. This service would be a support to individualized/direct funding.

As facilitators, we suggest consideration be given to the formation of a Provincial Body as a support to Independent Planning and Facilitation. Ideally, the provincial body would provide support through the following functions:

Holding Values and Principles - the provincial body would have a role in developing guiding principles. It also has a role in ensuring the work done adheres to those values.

The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario: Facilitator Forum Response to 'Opportunities and Action, Transforming Supports in Ontario For People Who Have a Developmental Disability'

Clarifying Definitions - the provincial body would have a role in ensuring a shared understanding of the definition of planning and facilitation. There also needs to be clarity about the role of a facilitator.

Being a Resource - the provincial body would have a role of providing and sharing information, publications, best practices and stories with the facilitators, persons with disabilities, their families and networks.

Assisting Communities - the provincial body would have a role in ensuring that there is province wide training, coaching and mentoring of both paid and unpaid facilitators.

Making Connections - the provincial body would have a role in linking as well as networking facilitators and communities with each other.

It is our vision that this provincial body would be fully funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. However, it would also have the ability to be accountable to the local community, the person, their family and network.

2. Availability

There will need to be a number of independent facilitators throughout Ontario. Independent facilitators need to be available to the person, their family and network in their local community. It is imperative to the success of independent facilitation and planning that facilitators be separate from service delivery and separate from access centres.

3. Building Capacity

There needs to be a focus on capacity building, not only as it relates to facilitators but also as it relates to people with disabilities, their families and networks. Capacity building includes learning and gaining confidence through participation, information, and experience.

It will also be necessary for facilitators to have time together on a regular basis. Facilitators will benefit from being able maintain a network that includes: networking, sharing, learning and informing.

**The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario:
Facilitator Forum Response
to 'Opportunities and Action, Transforming Supports in
Ontario For People Who Have a Developmental Disability'**

4. Collaborative Model

As Independent facilitation unfolds in the province, it will be important to collaborate and utilize the strengths that already exist in the local community. This strength will exist differently in each community. It only makes sense to build on what is already present in the community. The values and principles must drive the work at a local level.

5. Training

The Facilitator Forum sees a need and value in offering ongoing training, mentoring and coaching. We feel that there are a number of people to draw upon to do this work within the province of Ontario. This facilitator's forum does not support the idea of a professional designation for facilitators. It is our belief that the training needs to be driven by the values and principles.

6. Person and Family Empowerment

The facilitator's forum is clear that the need for decision making rests with the person, their families and network. The person, their family and network need to be strengthened, trusted and believed in throughout the planning and decision making process.

Summary

The Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario: Facilitator Forum wishes to thank MCSS for this opportunity to respond to "Opportunity and Actions". We look forward to a time when persons with disabilities, their families, and networks can engage in a meaningful planning process assisted by an independent facilitator that will lead to creating a meaningful life in community.