

What's at Our Table

an opportunity to learn
about the unique work
and abundance on offer

2019

While the information contained in this document was accurate at the date of publication, please be aware that changes may have occurred since publication. Any changes since publication, and the most current overview, may not be reflected at the time of reading this document. This document is reviewed and edited annually.

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Introduction

Durham Association for Family Resources and Support services is a Durham-based, family support and resource organization that began with and for families over 35 years ago, and is largely but not solely funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). Our work is shaped by our relationship with a range of over 300 families and our mutual understanding of their potential and capacity, and of what supports, resources, and information they might welcome in order to pursue a positive Vision of a good life for their family member within their neighbourhood and community.

We are anchored by a deep understanding and thoughtful application of the **principle of Social Role Valorization (SRV)** which is explained on the following page. This guides us to promote and value **a good, ordinary life in every day community** for all through valued roles, relationships and places of belonging, and to design ways to make this the option of choice for people whenever possible.

What we offer, that is, what is on our table for families, is offered with trust in the capacity of family and ordinary people to truly want to build a community where everyone belongs and is appreciated and recognized for their contributions. Therefore, what is offered is done through a family lens - the intensity of participation, the selection of when and how to use the resources, and the ways in which families choose to take part in our resources and supports are, as much as possible, family led and decided.

At our table you will find a rich variety of such supports. Within our programmatic offerings under Family Supports, managed capably by Teresa Dale and Selena Blake, are facilitation and information supports, emerging practices and resources. Within our administrative side and through Central Administrative Department, ably directed by Sue Talmey, there is a range of financial management, accounting, and human resource supports provided both to our own organization and as supports to other non-profit organizations.

We are all steeped in common vision shared by families, staff and board members to live our lives and make our contributions, not in the separate world of Disability, but instead together where communities are stronger because we all take part.

What is all this talk about SRV? And why should it matter to me?

Social Role Valorization (SRV) Basics

SRV is simply a very powerful way to ensure that your family member lives and fulfills a life of value and belonging within the heart of real community.

IF you come to believe that this is most worth working toward - a life where your family member is full heartedly included and has value and worth in the eyes of family, neighbours, friends and community - because you believe that when everyone belongs and contributes then our communities are stronger and better...**THEN** SRV is for you.

SRV does not demand that this is your vision of a good life, but should it be, then SRV gives the most clear, unflinching analysis of why life is currently not like this for people with disabilities and what we might very effectively do to change that.

At DFR, this is our vision of the communities that we want to be a part of personally and as an organization. Therefore, we think about and learn to implement effectively the steps of this pathway that SRV gives us - and to share it deeply with families and other members of our community

Some Interesting Information about SRV

SRV is a powerful way to ensure that your family member lives and fulfills a life of value and belonging within the heart of real community.

SRV does not tell you what to do or why to do it - it does not tell you which ethical choices to make.

However, once you decide that living a life of value and inclusion (welcome, appreciation, expectation of contribution) is important or essential or a worthwhile endeavour, SRV provides a framework to do so in the most powerful and effective of ways.

So SRV states, that IF you want your family member with disability (or any other person living at the margins of society and always at risk of being undervalued or devalued altogether) to live a life of value and inclusion, and the benefits of having such a life, THEN here are some things to pay attention to.

AT DFR, upon hearing of the hopes, dreams and visions of many families we know that this is, in fact, a matter of great importance to many families and many people.

And so SRV uses information that arises through many, many fields of study to help us understand some important ways of the world and then design a path of implementation – one uniquely designed for each person.

1. First of all, SRV helps us to understand why and how it is that some people on earth are not valued by society as a whole, not seen as important and not seen as worth investing in as a society.
2. It then helps us to understand the impact on people themselves, and on society as a whole when everyone is not valued and included. This is an amazing description of current day society and how it functions and how it does value or include people with a disability, but also how everyone loses when some people are left behind.
3. And then SRV describes a pathway through this reality that wounds and abandons so many people. It outlines what to pay attention to and what steps might be particularly powerful.
 - a. SRV teaches us to pay attention to how others might see and perceive people with disabilities and come to understand their value, gifts and possibilities.
 - It teaches us to pay attention to the enriching and safeguarding value of relationships – especially those with no-disabled people.
 - It teaches us to pay attention to groups and to those with whom people with disabilities are grouped together.
 - It teaches us to pay attention to where and how people spend their time.
 - It teaches us to pay attention to how people are groomed and present themselves.
 - It teaches us that how we use words and speak about the person is important and life-defining. It helps us craft powerful, genuine introductions.
4. Essentially, SRV helps us to see that it is much more important to find out who we are and how we therefore contribute to our society and communities, neighbourhoods and families than it is to focus on activities alone. This focus on Roles provides us with the central pathway to leave a lifestyle where one is not very important and helps people, instead, to gain positive identity, purpose, offer contributions, be given expectations by others, and begin to engage with a range of others so that a wide range of friends and other relationships become possible.

SRV draws deeply from many other fields of study – it does not purport to be a single source of information. Even when there are very good examples of lives lived richly and fully within deep relationship without a single thought to SRV, it is possible to use the framework of SRV to understand the source and roots of that good life – and these will be in keeping with SRV principles. You do not need SRV to have a good life if you already have the means, resources, and people around who embrace the full capacity and potential of the person with a disability. But that is rarely so in our cultures around the world, and so SRV enables us to re-discover how to bring out what is missing and missed.

So, IF a life of value and inclusion is important for your family, SRV will become one of the key ways forward for you. For DFR as an organization, we are filled with board members, staff members, and families who deeply believe that we are missing something essential in our families, neighbourhoods, communities and the whole of our society when we do not discover and gain the very real contributions of our citizens with disabilities among all others.

For more basic information on DFR and its work through the SRV lens, see the Appendix at the end of this document *Durham Family Resources and the Principles of Social Role Valorization*.

Family Support - A Place of Welcome

Over the past year the Family Support Team has continued to offer a variety of resources and supports to families. Creative projects, emerging practices and evaluative methods are now key pillars amongst principled facilitation and planning. Currently 260+ children and adults are supported by the actions of this team along with our strong administrative department and collaborative management team.

The Family Support Team is dedicated to intentionally working towards assisting people, one person at a time, to find personal fulfillment and to contribute to their families and communities through the discovery of their places of belonging, nurturing their most personal desire to discover, to grow, to participate, to share, and to become part of something meaningful.

Family Support at DFR is at the core of how we partner with families and is available to families through two general approaches: Facilitation and Planning and Emerging Practice and Evaluation. **Facilitation and Planning** provides ongoing partnerships with families (mostly 1:1 but also in family group formats) in order to build and strengthen families, support teams, and networks that bring about good lives for the person and the family in ways that impact on the whole community. **Emerging Practice and Evaluation** involves opportunities to trial and evaluate new and emerging supports, initiatives and resources that support families in their learning, planning and implementation. Some of these are short term projects, and others are ongoing initiatives that are continually tweaked and changed to better suit families. Many families experience the options of either approach in seamless and complementary ways.

The supports and resources of DFR Family Support are available to families in many different ways:

- Several family groups are facilitated here at DFR. Families that meet together regularly offer strength to each other and are a great source of encouragement and resource. Some groups are open to the wider community, interest based and/or ad hoc to focus on an issue; others are closed groups with members committed to long standing relationship with support from a facilitator.
- Countless more people are invited to participate in a variety of learning events via our Family Focus newsletter, word of mouth and respiteservices.com, where they will discover support to dream big, and network with others in order to turn those dreams into reality.
- We are into our fourth year of providing a guided family-to-family learning series, *Making the Most* which is open to all interested families who want to begin to think and plan differently.
- Several initiatives are happening right now. These Emerging Practices are designed for their ability to further the work of DFR to strengthen families and build community. CAD revenue allow us to run other family support initiatives deepening our support to those longing for

connection through their community involvement. These projects are described later on, but are all based firmly in the interests of the participants and the discovery of where those interests can be experienced within their local community as well as other ways of providing supports to families. These include innovative ventures such as the Bio-medical Approaches Study Group, Bio-medical Coach, Interest Based and Focused Recruitment, Housing, Assistant to Young Families, Mindfulness, Family Managed Care and Recognizing Capacity.

- Throughout the year there are many groups, learning opportunities and times set aside for families to drop by and meet with a facilitator to get information that can be very helpful for their family in trying to figure things out. Everyone who is interested is welcome to participate regardless of formal registration with our organization. This is our way of providing additional support to those not directly connected to our facilitation support.
- Many families take advantage of our increasingly rich Recruitment support, at the core of which is respiteservices.com as the recruitment and hiring of competent supporters is key to enjoying a good life in community. Additional recruitment support is available when requiring very specific qualifications or addressing interest-based mentorship.
- Some families make use of the opportunities provided by the Adult Respite Home. Many of them work with a dedicated facilitator who supports them to think about a life beyond the use of that home.
- Our monthly publication the “**Family Focus**” is broadly distributed both electronically and in print, keeping all who request it informed about relevant events and topics of interest.
- Additionally, many of our staff hold active roles with multi-agency committees always keeping in view our particular focus on the importance of one person at a time within the context of family, extended personal/natural networks, community, and valued social roles.
- Currently those committees include
 - Durham Systems Management
 - Durham Coordinated Response Committee
 - Durham Training Committee
 - Durham Special Needs Allocation Committee
 - Kerry’s Place Training Committee
 - Life on Campus
 - Respiteservices.com Provincial Network Committee
 - Durham District School Board Transition Advisory Committee
 - Durham Children and Youth Planning Network
 - Integrated Planning Committee
 - Durham Social Housing Advisory Group
 - Supported Decision Making Pilot

A Range of Possible Facilitation Support

In partnership with the individual, their family and where possible, personal networks of support, Durham Family Resources facilitators are available to:

Provide Planning Support

- Available on an as needed basis, for as long as it takes, and throughout the person's life
- Planning the supports needed to make personal and unique contributions to one's family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, classmates and civic. Includes all parts of life such as leisure pursuits, recreational involvements, faith communities, neighbourhood and country.
- Creating a vision of...a home of my own, the pursuit of their passions and interests, gaining more independence, learning and growing, etc. AND how to make the vision a reality. (Interests and passions, learning and growing)
- Planning: visioning, securing and creating, and maintaining a real home of my own-whatever that may be; by focusing on me personally, and person-centred.
- Transition planning; getting from A to B with the big picture and the details (from home to school, through school, to work and play and my contributions. Whole life continuum)
- Succession Planning: the people, the plans, the transitions, the information; usually but not always with aging families
- Crisis planning; avoiding it, getting through it, being prepared

Facilitate the Provision of Paid Direct Support

- All about Paid Supporters: in partnership with families we design supports, find, interview, mentor, provide support to supporters, coach people in learning and developing the skills of the overall management of supporters.
- Securing both private and public direct support funds such as Life on Campus, DSNAP, Passport, Bascule Bursary, Urgent Response Crisis funds, I.F., Residential, etc. ASD Children's respite, camp bursaries, Critical Intervention Funds for children and youth, and Dual Diagnosis funds.
- Support Funds: assist to design budgets, figure out ways to make the most of those funds, seek and secure other funds both temporary and long term

Ease the Way with a focus on:

- *Relationships*: strengthening the person and their family's networks of support, formal circles of support, family groups, connecting to other families, relationships and roles within the family
- *Finding Ways through Various Systems*: making the way through systems easier, to get the most of what is needed, and avoid pitfalls and dead ends. This could include all types of systems such as education, Developmental Services Ontario, health, ODSP, legal, etc.
- *Providing resources and information* about a multitude of things such as RDSP, estate planning, wills, trusts, guardianship, supported and substitute decision making, home

Facilitation Support for Young Families

Family Centered and Community Focused

Who do we serve

- Newborn - Children - 18 years old
- Children with disabilities - more broadly defined
- Young parents impacted by disability themselves
- Young parents needing short-term & longer-term assistance
- Grandparents raising grandchildren with impairment/disability
- Foster parents raising children with disabilities

Here at Durham Family Resources we currently do not have a waitlist for children. The Facilitator with a children's focus can personally connect with each young family. We get calls from an average of three new families regarding children each month.

How do families find us

- Most call themselves (often after a web search)
- Many are advised by others (other parents, community members etc.) to call
- Respiteservices.com referrals
- School and agency referrals
- Hospital/Doctor/Social worker referrals
- CAS referrals

When a young parent calls DFR a friendly staff person at the other end of the phone takes time to listen to them and offers some initial ideas/suggestions prior to a follow-up phone call and personal visit with the DFR Children's Facilitator.

Common Requests for Assistance

- Support to the whole family with a broad range of family issues often beginning with respite
- Support to understand the impact of a new diagnosis
- Support with applications - government funding - community funding
- Support to navigate other systems - health, education, child protection, family law, immigration
- Support & planning during major transitions and/or crisis situations

Young parents make the first call to Durham Family Resources seeking assistance around several family issues. Respite is often a beginning topic of conversation because many families assume we provide traditional respite support. Initial conversations with families often involve offering a new conceptualization of the term 'respite'. Conversations over time facilitate a new vision for the child

Resources Accessed by a Facilitator to Support Young Families

- **Networking** – Family Groups, Durham Family Network, Experienced Parents, Community Resources
- **Family Learning** – Parent to Parent, Workshops both in-house and outside Durham Family Resources, print, video and social media resources
- **Funding, Investments, Planning**– Children’s Flex Funding Respite funding, Special Services at Home (SSAH), Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities, Private/charitable, Bascule Bursary, Family Leadership Fund, Disability Tax Credit, Registered Disability Savings Plan, Insurance, Child Support, Wills & Trusts
- **Summer Students**- support a thoughtful summer plan anchored by a holistic community centred vision for the child and family.



Ensuring an ordinary life in community:

In partnership with families we access small amounts of funding & community resources that can assist and support a child to participate in typical community opportunities such as summer camp, clubs, vocal & piano lessons, Girl Guides & Boy scouts to art lessons, martial arts classes- the recreational and leisure based roles and related activities are abound.



Assistant for Young Families

This part-time position has created the capacity to more intensively and intentionally support a few young families who are ready to move a new idea for their son or daughter into reality. In partnership with families and with the support from the Facilitator for young families a six to twelve-month short-term plan is developed involving concentrated direct support to the whole family to realize a new vision.

Facilitation Support for Young Families with Children

Conversations over time ~ Supporting families where they are at ~ Planning for the child and family is incorporated into ordinary conversation ~ Creating & Sharing resources to support new ways of thinking ~ Shedding light on the multitude of potential and new possibilities for the child.

Supporting access to family learning opportunities ~ Building family/parent/child capacity ~ Connecting families to other families for support and learning ~ Planning & developing initiatives & opportunities to build family/parent/child resilience, that allow families to find and support each other ~ Developing networks of relationships so that families remain in the lead using agency support only as needed ~ Supporting the development of new Ideas ~ Sparking new vision for the child.

A New vision for the child with a disability ~ yet it is the typical vision all parents have except when disability is present parents can be directed/lead down a different path ~ intentionally choosing to chart a path that leads to authentic social inclusion ~ Supporting the family to support the child to be an integral part of their family, church, school & neighborhood ~ New vision that puts the child at the center and leads a young parent away from choices that could result in exclusion towards choices & opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion in typical community.

Adult Respite Home

The Adult Respite Home is a small, cozy, three- bedroom, bungalow in North Oshawa which has been owned and operated by Durham Family Resources since 1989. We think of it as our own Bed and Breakfast.

Currently we are running at capacity with 50 registered families who book stays at the house for their adult sons or daughters. Weekends are most popular, followed by holiday time in the winter and summer months. Time at the house is given on a first come first serve basis, although accommodations are made where possible if an emergency should arise. We can host 4 guests at a time. The house is partially funded and is open approximately 280 days of the year. All new families wishing to access the house must be referred to us by the DSO (Developmental Services Ontario.)

While staying at the respite home our guests are supported to do what they would normally do during the day or evening, for example, going to work. Activities are planned according to people's personal interests. Compatibility with others is also considered when making guest arrangements where possible.

The house is wheelchair accessible with a ramp, however there is no specialized equipment available for people with complex physical needs, limiting us to only providing respite for those people who can be safely cared for.

We maintain a diverse staff team in order to compliment the varying personalities and abilities that our guests bring. Two permanent weekend positions have been created to strengthen the team. The Weekend Team Leader works from Friday to Sunday for 3 out of 4 weekends per month and is responsible for the smooth running of the house during these times.

There is a small group of parents who form a Parent Advisory Committee that meets periodically and has input on various things regarding fund raising and special events and purchasing decisions from any money raised.



Emerging Practice and Evaluation

The Durham Association for Family Resources and Support tries to be timely and responsive to the growing and changing interests and needs of families. The development of projects is often a good way to test new ideas, listen more quickly to families, implement more focused actions and plans, and explore new ways to communicate and work with family members.

Project staff are keen and full members of our staff team and we welcome their new energy, approaches and insights. Sometimes project staff become more permanent members of our staff team, and sometimes projects are seen as so valuable that we have been able to make them a part of our core offering. For us, Projects allow us to learn, to share our learning, to discover new and effective ways of offering support and to discover keen new staff to join and bolster our team.

Current Emerging Practices include:

Making the Most of Funding Dollars	Biomedical Approaches Study Group
Imagining Home	Biomedical and Holistic Approaches Coach
Mindfulness	Recognizing Capacity
Focused Recruitment	Out of Region
Assistant to Young Families	

At the foundation of each project, SRV principles are the corner stones upon which everything else is built. These guide our projects and safeguard good work. We hold strong to individualized options only, a mindset of doing with families and not for families, understanding that family-to-family conversations are key to learning, and always looking to a person's family/neighbourhood/community for ordinary and typical resources and places of belonging.

EVALUATION

At Durham Family Resources we are dedicated to offering resources and supports that make positive impact on families and community. Evaluative processes are rooted in our definition of a *Good Life and Guiding Principles*. In addition, because each *Emerging Practice* is a potential source of rich learning, we are taking the time to reflect our learning in written reports. For us, this means reflecting back to the original purpose behind each project to ask ourselves: Is this project achieving for people what we thought it might do? Does it make a positive difference in a person/family's life? Is this leading us to equally good but unintentional places? What could be better next time? What else do we need to know? In the understanding that busy family members vote with their feet and their presence we also ask who is interested and making the time to be a part of this project. We also are interested in knowing what was not helpful what the impact is over time for the person and their family. This learning will ultimately be for the benefit of all the families we connect with at Durham Family Resources.

Making the Most of Your Funding Dollars

The Making the Most learning series is a dynamic six-week series that welcomes families to reimagine opportunities and explore creative options in using their Passport funding, or other direct or personal resources. The heart of the series is to go beyond the traditional standard of uses for funding, and utilize funds in a way that is authentic and purposeful to support family members in building good full lives in their communities.

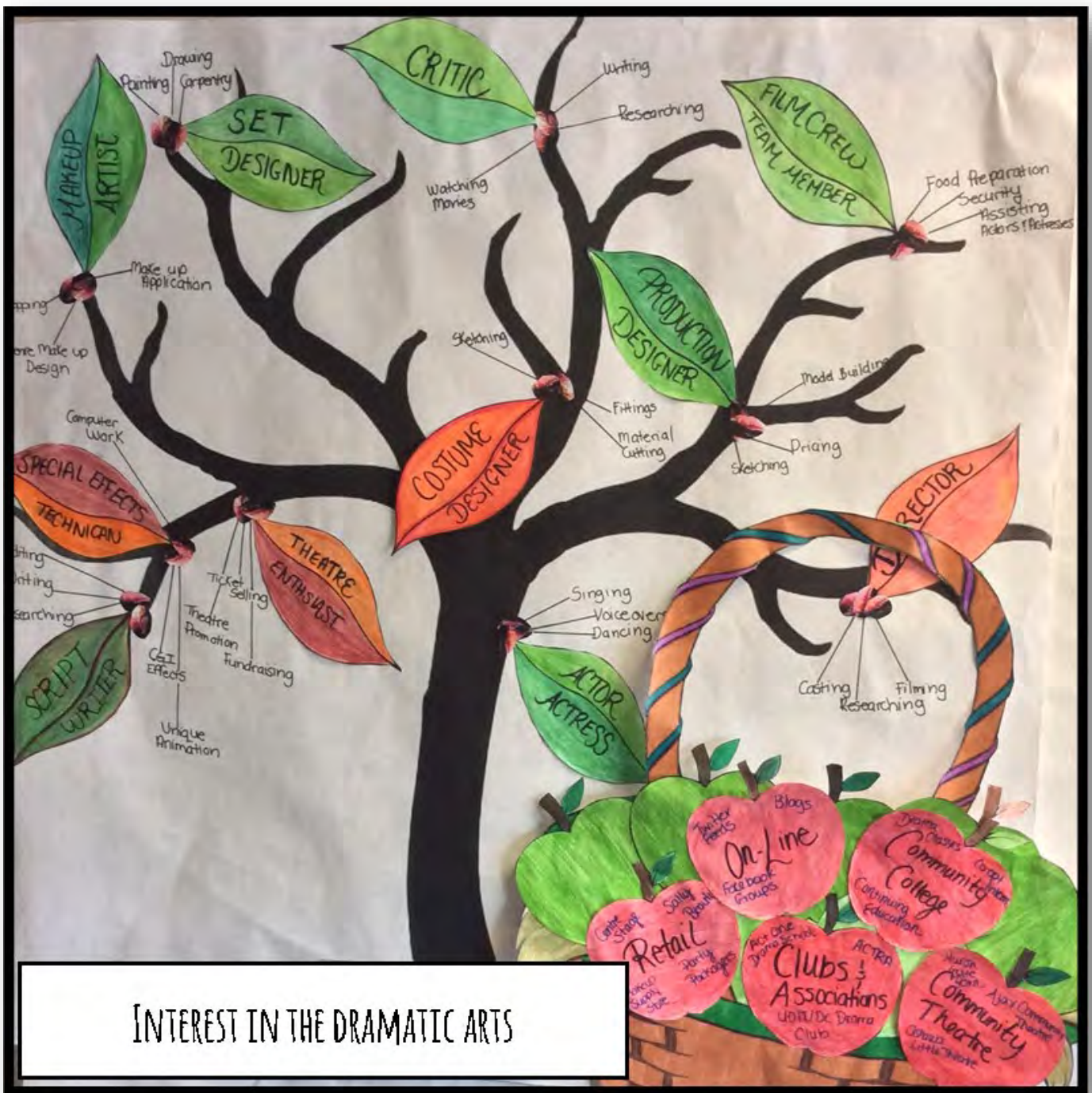
The series is led by two mentoring families and support from Durham Family Resources staff that engage in rich and thoughtful conversations, sharing their experiences from years of planning and creating opportunities for their sons and daughters. These conversations highlight the simple choices that families can make to discover ordinary, yet significant ways for their family members to be involved in their local community.

Many families that have participated in the series have developed a deeper understanding of the individual interests of their sons, daughters, sisters and brothers, providing a springboard for implementing ideas leading to more meaningful and fulfilling lives. Furthermore, the series has created a better sense of our abundant community as a place of welcome and belonging.

Making the Most Study Group

Those who have completed any one of our Making The Most learning series are invited back to a MTM Study Group! Graduates are welcome to drop into these monthly gatherings, where participants, mentoring families, and facilitators delve deeper into the topics and activities which were presented throughout the series' six sessions. There is support and guidance to families who have been working through some ideas or want to spend more time on a particular area or exercise presented at the series.





Imagining Home

Durham Family Resources supports families across Durham communities in many ways, including thinking about long-term, sustainable housing for and with their family member with a disability. Rather than grouping and setting apart people with disabilities in 'disability-focused' housing, we partner with families to help them imagine and uncover the contributions of their family member, and their inherent value in being part of creating and sustaining resilient neighbourhoods together with others. We focus on diverse and vibrant communities where there are places of belonging, mutual relationships and natural safeguards. Home, housing and support although intermingled, are thought of as separate pieces in a larger vision to be figured out one person at a time.

Fostered and connected through the Durham Family Resources housing project *Housing is a Community Issue: Fostering Innovation Toward Vibrant Neighbourhoods (2015-2017)*, **Imagining Home** is a vibrant family-led group, whose initiatives are anchored in roughly 30 families' journeys to realize a 'home of one's own' for and with their loved ones with a disability. Guided by a set of foundational principles for housing, this highly engaged group have been meeting on a monthly basis or more, for over 3 years since the conclusion of the project. The focus of their partnerships has always been that housing is a community issue, not a disability Issue.

Each month, families meet to think about and discuss their vision of housing for their loved one, the importance of community, neighbourhood and connection, and what makes a home. They engage in family to family learning by sharing their personal stories and exchange knowledge through collaborative discussions. Invited guest speakers add yet more opportunity to deepen perspectives and understanding and help us work together to explore housing as a community issue and understand how engaging with others might help us all learn. This work is currently supported by the Board through fund raised dollars for a part-time housing specialist.

Quite a few members of Imagining Home, are also part of a smaller incorporated group of twelve families who call themselves **Intentionally Built Community**, better known as IBC. This is an incorporated autonomous family group who demonstrate serious intent and readiness to engage with developers for a new build in Durham, develop partnerships to advance sustainable and affordable housing options, and apply for grants such as seed funding or renovation dollars.

All families engaged in our housing group are looking to be active, contributing partners in creating viable housing solutions for all people, but especially those who are most vulnerable – they are active members of Municipal and Regional housing Committees, engage with government around housing and policy planning, and advocate for community-wide affordable housing options, and while great strides have been made, we see many more untapped possibilities.

Families are asking the Region of Durham to consider only supporting or approving the most inclusive, diverse and vibrant housing developments. This means not supporting segregated, institutionalized or ghettoized models of housing. Families are asking for low cost renovation dollars to be available to either pursue separate housing for their family member in their own home or a move where a renovation will be needed. These dollars could ideally be generated in Durham with affordable housing ideas. Families also call for deeper portable rent subsidies for individuals with disabilities on fixed or limited incomes, so they may live in individualized housing of their choice.

Recognizing Capacity Pilot Project

In 2017 a group of families were invited to come together to talk about and describe *Ways of Knowing* – what are the many and varied ways that families observe, recognize, pay attention to and “hear” what their family member with a disability who does not speak in words wants to communicate about their life, their choices, their current circumstances and the direction of their lives.

These gatherings of families were sparked by the release of the Law Reform Commission of Ontario’s report which recommended AGAINST allowing supported decision-making to be used as way for people to influence the decisions that shape their lives and to offer an alternative to Guardianship.

Guardianship, or substitute decision-making, is when someone else is given the authority to make all decisions in relation to a person, thus stripping them of their legal capacity and recognition as a full person in law. It can happen to anyone who is deemed to lack the cognitive skills to make decisions independently. Yet everyday, most citizens typically seek the support and input from family, friends and/or professional advisors before making important decisions. These are the everyday normalized supports for decision making that we all rely on and in no way invalidates decisions or challenges it as reflecting our own will and preference.

This year, together with CLO, IRIS, and five other provincial regions, DFR has commenced a pilot project seeking to demonstrate how people at risk of having their legal capacity removed, can be supported to continue to be central to all decisions in their life. This would be either through solid decision-making assistance, or through the setting up of formal supported decision-making arrangements, whereby a group of people who know the person very well, come together to provide interpretation of their will and preferences and communicate this as the authentic and legal voice of the person.

This pilot also seeks to collaborate with a range of sectors within our community, in places where people with cognitive impairments can face barriers to having their capacity recognized. This may involve educating various community representatives, identifying more inclusive universal practices, revising policies, and challenging legal interpretations of the Substitute Decisions Act. By creating a community of well informed citizens, and documenting examples of how legal capacity can be both recognized and enacted, with support as required, it is hoped that eventually provincial law will be reformed to reflect the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Canada ratified in 2010.

Meantime this pilot gives DFR the opportunity to consider how recognizing capacity threads through so much of our work with families and community allies. While we intend to be led on this journey by a small group of families who agree to document and share their stories, we also plan to continue to hold regular public shared learning events, open to both families and other interested parties. In addition, we will work alongside other community organisations who support people that share in their vulnerability to losing legal capacity, and seek to build a strong ground swell of understanding and appreciation of this issue and address the inequalities and discrimination faced by an ever growing proportion of our population.

Bio Medical Approaches Study Group

The Bio Medical Approaches Study Group evolved from learning events held at Durham Family Resources and has been meeting for over three years. The group consists of family and community members who come together to make sense of and share their first-hand experiences with many bio-medical practices and alternatives. The group has been influenced by and often resourced by the work of Conscious Care and Support (Peter Marks) and others who have more to offer than diagnoses, traditional medical and behavioural approaches.

We begin with an interest to responding to the whole person and what they may be telling us about their diet, their nutrition deficits, their sensory imbalances, their ongoing feelings of deep anxiety, and more. By listening deeply with more and more understanding, we can often find less intrusive and more effective approaches to helping the person feel well and move on with their life.

Since the most helpful information is dense and learning from each other is so effective, a small group of families meet together on the second Friday of each month to talk about our learning and personal experiences with all family members. Our conversation focuses on the whole person and how people may respond to their environment, including diet and nutrition, brain coherence, sensory integration issues, the calmness or agitation of those around them, and more.

We bring in guest speakers, other parents with something to share, new books, and our own thoughtful ability to listen and respond to one another.

Biomedical and Holistic Approaches Coaching

The Biomedical & Holistic Approaches Coach was implemented in order to extend the reach of the collaborative efforts, learning and recommendations from our relationship with Peter Marks (Conscious Care and Support). The coach is a Registered Nurse who primarily assists families to implement strategies and alternatives that assist the overall health and wellbeing of their loved ones.

For this role, the particular focus is on dietary, sensory, environmental and mindfulness-based tactics that may optimize physiological and emotional wellness. The coach is responsible to assist families in their individual, person-centered approach to health and strive to support families while working within the mission and values of the organization. Work will be done directly with families in ways that are integrated with their Family Facilitator.

Mindfulness Project Overview

This project, now in its third year, is geared to provide Mindfulness training and learning in family home settings with all family members who are experiencing stressful situations. Through our involvement over the past several years with Peter Marks (Conscious Care and Support), a past event with Susannah Joyce and recently our engagement and learning about Soles of the Feet with Dr. Nirbay Singh, we appreciate the benefits of mindfulness in our own lives, and the potential for families who are most stressed. One of the challenges over years has been trying to find a way to tap into this kind of potential when families need it most. This project has built on this earlier investment and is now making the impact and learning available to families in ways that they can readily access.

We have been seeking ways to help families in times of ordinary and extraordinary stress – especially but not only those with teens – and to prevent deeper crisis. Out of a desire to be helpful, we brought a local mindfulness practitioner with a specialty in children and teens to begin with two families who at the time, told us they are in critical situations. The results were very positive and thus shortly after the project's inception it was expanded extending the reach to adults.

We feel we are learning something important about how to help families as they need it most- sustaining resilience for the longer term. We acknowledge that mindfulness is not a magic solution but a way of providing space and time to address root causes of family stress in a gentle, helpful, and supportive way. All participation in

Recruitment

Family Support includes partnering with families to recruit supporters who will focus on implementing one's plan for a full, contributing life in community. The recruitment process is family led. Facilitators may be enlisted to assist in areas such as, posting job ads, pre-screening interested candidates with interviewing and reference checks. Facilitators work alongside the family to find the right individuals who will be a bridge to community belonging.

Respiteservices.com

Durham Family Resources also hosts www.respiteservices.com, which is the Community Helpers for Active Participation (CHAP) program for the Durham Region. This provincially-funded website is a valuable resource for families who are in need of accessing support workers.

The CHAP Program is an online database. It connects families who are registered on the site with supporters based on the family's needs and the supporters' availability and skills. The supporters complete a structured pre-screening process before being listed in the registry. In addition to online connecting, Durham Family Resources hosts "Meet and Greet" evenings, which provide the opportunity for families and supporters to get some face-to-face time in order to secure the right fit and to introduce themselves.

The registration process, uniquely crafted by the Durham Family Resources team, has contributed to the success and quality of this valued, community-based opportunity, open for both families and supporters in Durham Region.

Intentional and interest-based recruitments help create a good life by increasing the chances of established places of belonging provided by the hired supporter.

Having good quality supporters helps people to be meaningfully engaged and connected to their community.

Internal Recruitment Support: Focused Recruitment

When Facilitators require additional recruitment assistance, they will approach the Recruitment Specialist to review and outline a process.

Recruitment may focus specifically on the particular interest of a person and on accomplishing goals related to the development and momentum of interest-based roles. Interests are as diverse as people. One person could hold a passion for the dramatic arts and wish to become a theatre supporter; another may fancy a great game of golf and dream of

being an avid golfer. The supportive partnership could take the form of a mentor, teacher, industry expert, or someone with a shared passion.

At times, recruitment is urgent and the recruiter must utilize various sources of finding candidates rapidly. The Recruitment Specialist and Facilitator working alongside the family decide the most appropriate method of recruitment (i.e. online, job boards, educational institutions, and through contacts). Pre-screens of candidates are either conducted by the Recruitment Specialist, the Facilitator, or by the families themselves, and the information is recorded for the interview. Interviews are conducted by the families or by the Facilitator at the request of the hiring family. Once suitable applicants have been identified, the Recruitment Specialist will be advised by the Facilitator. Data is collected and maintained for reporting purposes including the assessment of efficacy this support.

Family Learning Events

Durham Family Resources partners with families, other community members, and organizations to develop and present gatherings and workshops on various topics we think are relevant or of interest to families in Durham Region. We network with other local agencies, which in turn welcomes and supports the participation of their member families. We have Durham Family Resources representation planning Kerry's Place Training Events and developing training with the Durham Region Staff Training Committee. We host and participate in workshops with the Southern Ontario Training Group which bases all of its training on Social Role Valorization. Durham Family Resources also engages with independent trainers, some of whom are known internationally.

Durham Family Resources has a long history of supporting family and staff attendance at learning events in line with the values and principles of our agency. To date in 2019, for example, the number of attendees for events is over 600, advertised both through our agency community networks and our monthly newsletter.

Topics have included:

DURHAM FAMILY RESOURCES HOSTED:

A Brief Introduction to Social Role Valorization

Peter Marks' Conscious Care and Support

Recognizing Capacity (Michael Bach)

Supported Decision Making as an Alternative to Guardianship (Audrey Cole)

The Art of Resilience

Supporting People Who Are Seen to Have Uncommon and Complex Needs (Michael Kendrick)

A Sister's Story (Libby Ellis)

DURHAM FAMILY RESOURCES PRESENTED:

Discovering Gifts and Passions

Biomedical Study Group

Planning: Finding and Designing Support that Works

Leaving the Nest: Creating Home and Unique Support Arrangements

Workshops for young families on the IEP (individual education plan)

Hiring and Cultivating Good Support

Making the Most of Funding Dollars (family series – 3-4 times per year)

Building a Context for Relationship

Stories by the Fire

Community Living Ontario conference presentations (*Family Leadership and Leadership in Families*)

International SRV conference (Winnipeg, Manitoba – *Helping Families Apply Generalized SRV Theory in Real Life: A Family-to-Family Learning Series that Leads to Action*, and *Kicking the Tires of Inclusion: Developing Skills in Essential Critical Analysis and Coherent Model Construction within Families and Their Allies*)

HOSTED with OTHERS:

Taxes and RDSP, Wills and Trusts

OIFN Independent Facilitators Forums

Moral Coherency, Sanctity of Life, Introduction to PASSING & Personalism

Family Leadership

Family leadership arises out of the family experience being articulated, heard, validated, and acted upon – locally, within one’s community, or on a broader societal level. Sometimes family leadership looks internally and is done for oneself and each other. Very often family leadership emerges through one family sharing part or whole of their story in conversation with other families who are inspired, encouraged, and shown new ideas. And time and time again family leadership arises most powerfully when families – often in partnership with a principled support organization - together figure out what response, or collection action would be helpful for making more lasting or societal change for the community as a whole.

When families take action, they bring skills, energy, resources, and ideas that are effective because they take place in real family situations, they are designed for one beloved family member at a time, and they are based in love.

Support for the family leadership and pathways of families is an important part of bringing about effective and lasting change. If as a society we want to make a positive, valued difference in the welcome and resilience of our neighbourhoods and communities, support families and do it well.

At DFR we aspire to be led and directed by families and their real experiences. We have found it is essential to be family-led, based in roles and experiences for all family members in real ordinary community, focus on making it right for one person at a time, and to present a clear and principled ways so that our support is predictable, relevant, reliable and effective.

Family Leadership at DFR is expressed and supported in a number of ways- it is at the core of our work. Families are involved in hosting, presenting, leading learning series, and more. In our learning events, family mentors are sought, family leaders are often found to be co-leaders and facilitators, and emerging leadership skills are recognized and encouraged. Families are engaged in project development and implementation. Our small Family Leadership fund allows family leaders to attend learning events locally and further afield.

In addition, through both CAD and DFR supports we are supportive in a range of financial, skill and in kind ways to support the work of Family Alliance of Ontario, Durham Family network, and several other small, emerging family.

Our ways of working together have long standing roots. Through the DFR family leadership is promoted, role modelled and celebrated.

Involvement with Durham Family Resources is an opportunity to feel the collective strength; the ever expanding wisdom and the support of many families who have been truly the architects of this organization and continue to shape and direct our work together.

Communication and Information Supports

Our information and resources reach a diverse audience both within Durham region and its surrounding areas. A large portion of our audience does not have access to a facilitator, or are not directly working with DFR. That being said, we feel we offer fantastic opportunities, helpful information, and a strong SRV perspective which no one should be “wait-listed” for.

Our efforts are always striving for family-led, community-minded opportunities for people to meet and forge relationships amongst each other. We believe in capacity building and in the natural authority of families, and try to keep that front and center in both our dialogue and our offerings.

Currently we have a few ways in which we distribute information:

Newsletter – DFR Family Focus

We currently have over 550 subscriptions to our monthly *DFR Family Focus*. Most of the recipients are sent this newsletter via email, though we are also mindful of those who prefer a mailed hardcopy. Facilitators find this a helpful resource to take along to families; often as a resource and prompt for engagement with various learning opportunities. *DFR Family Focus* is our way to promote news from our organization, and to present ideas and conversation in a manner that is consistent with our strong values and principles. We are mindful of the words we choose, the pictures we use, and the content we share. We focus on what everyone has in common (those with and without disabilities), the significance of valued social roles, and make a conscious effort to present ordinary and typical vs “special”.

Website – dafrs.com

We currently rely on our website as a landing zone for lots of things we reference in our newsletter as well as in our conversations with families. Along with an introduction to our organization and the values and mission we work within, we are open with our contact details and try to keep information current and accessible. We have restyled and reconfigured our website with the aim of using it more efficiently to be able to share and link material we have created and come across through different projects and presentations. As we continue to think through using technology creatively and well we are sure this will positively impact and support our other strategic objectives and work in general.

Website – imagininghome.ca

The Imagining Home website was originally created to support our Housing Task Force pilot project, “*Housing is a Community Issue*”. Although this pilot project has come to an end, our work around housing, and the website itself, is something we are committed to supporting. Currently, we use this website to hold information about the *Imagining Home* housing group, to inform people of upcoming meetings, and as a blog for relevant housing resources we consider worth sharing. As the *Imagining Home* group continues to define itself and its area of focus, we will adjust and tailor the website to suit the group’s needs.

Resource Library

Our larger board room contains a library in which new material is added regularly. Families and facilitators are free to browse the selection of books and DVDs and sign out materials to borrow. We have various topics of interest including: planning, health care, community, compassionate care practices, inclusive education, Social Role Valorization, family leadership, and more. We encourage the suggestion of new material and find the resource library a great tool to further bolster families with information along their journey.

Technology Support

The Family Support team works in a myriad of different ways with families, using techniques as unique as each family we support. When opportunities arise that call for using technology creatively and well, the Data, Media, and Communications Coordinator often supports the family and facilitator in these endeavors. We have used Google applications (such as Forms, Docs, and Drive), Adobe applications (Acrobat, Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), and presentation software (Prezi, Powerpoint) to be successful with certain goals. We have used video editing and animation software to help illustrate, in different ways, important information to different audiences. Building a good life means evolving and being flexible- we strive to support families and our own team with technology that is current and available to us - always looking at creative and sustainable ways to accomplish what we are trying to do.

Nature of Family Support

This document is important as a vision and set of principles for our organization, and much of it is a reflection of the current work that fits many families so well. *The Nature of Family Support* document helps guide how we should partner with families, what new directions we should take on, and what to avoid. It was created with lots family input and much reflection by the staff team.

One at a Time Press

One at a Time Press is the publishing arm of DAFRS. Initially created for our distribution of the NavCare series, we hope to publish more in the future.

The NavCare series is composed of 7 volumes and is the result of a collaborative project amongst 15 organizations. Its intent is to help people: We hope to distribute the series, as well as individual books, to other organizations and families.



Navigate complex healthcare, legal, government, financial, and other systems;

Negotiate the best care and services possible;

Mediate problems if they arise;

Reduce the stress on these systems by helping people use them more effectively.

The Collaborative Administrative Department - CAD

This is a small independent group, providing a high level of service at a reduced price for organizations and individuals who may not otherwise have access to this level of service.

The Collaborative Administrative Department (CAD) which was established in April 2000 has proven to be a successful and thriving project. Start-up funding was provided by the Ministry of Community Family and Children's Services and the Trillium Foundation. The goal was to save not for profit organizations administrative dollars while providing a higher quality of financial and administrative support. Four organizations were involved in the start-up however only two carried through with the project.

The CAD provides organizations, which would not normally have funds available or the need for full time "qualified" staff, to benefit from the expertise of a collaborative group with varied professional backgrounds. In some cases we provide ongoing support, in others we step in for short periods of time for specific projects.

In addition, the CAD provides direct support to families in the areas of financial guidance and management, income tax preparation, human resources issues, dealing with outside government agencies and payroll service.

The CAD has never actively solicited new business. All new clients have been through referral. We have some strong supporters across the province, including MCSS and audit firms.

It was never the goal of the CAD to earn a profit. The goal was for all organizations to receive a high level of service while reducing administrative costs. As these costs are reduced within DAFRS, there is more money available for family support. Over the past several years the CAD has generated significant net revenue which has helped to offset operating deficits.

In 2000 there were 4 full time staff supporting 2 organizations. The CAD currently has 7 full time staff supporting 18 organizations and many families. The ability to share established processes, systems and knowledge creates much efficiency. We continue to receive request for support. These are carefully reviewed to determine if we have the capacity to assist the organization. The call typically comes when the organization is in crisis. We have to be careful that their crisis doesn't become ours.

We have assisted other organizations in setting up a similar model, although they have restricted their collaborative support to sharing between 2 agencies.

Although we are CAD to everyone externally, at home we are the DAFRS finance and administration team, and we all work at DAFRS because we embrace the opportunity to "give back". CAD staff understands the organization's values and work hard to incorporate those values in our day to day work.

Collaborative Administrative Department (CAD) - Supporting Organizations

The CAD is essentially responsible to ensure that all financial, administration and personnel functions of the organizations supported are conducted in a professional, accurate and timely manner in compliance with legal requirements and according to the policies and procedures of these organizations. The CAD will embrace the philosophy of the organizations supported. Service will be provided on a not for profit basis.

Finance & Administration:

- Development and preparation of annual budgets. Presentation of budget to Executive Directors and/or Boards of Directors.
- Document and evaluate financial performance monthly, annually or as requested
- Prepare, review and present financial results to staff, Boards of Directors and funding Ministries or organizations.
- Develop and implement necessary plans for corrective and precautionary action as required.
- Prepare year-end audit files and work with auditors during their year-end review.
- Provide accounting systems and handle accounts payable/receivable, payroll, and human resources
- Coordinate ongoing use of computer technology and required upgrades.
- Assist staff of supported organizations in administrative areas as requested. This may include rental agreements, leases, and funding proposals.
- Participation on management and board committees as requested.

Staff Relations:

- Development and maintenance of job descriptions, evaluations, pay equity plans.
- Develop, coordinate and administer staffing requirements and staff training plans.
- Where required interview, hire, dismiss staff and assist in union negotiations.
- Insure the development and implementation of personnel policies and procedures.
- Respond to all staff inquiries regarding payroll and human resources issues.

Other Duties:

- Develop and administer ongoing maintenance systems for all properties and equipment.
- Plan, develop and monitor financial investment and borrowing strategies in consultation with Executive Director or Board of Directors.
- Development, coordination and maintenance of information systems including client database and service statistics, insuring confidentiality.

Collaborative Administrative Department (CAD) – Supporting Families

Accounting Services:

- Administer Individualized Funding Contracts (includes SSAH, Passports)- broker or hold funds in trust.
- Administer payroll for families – set up a payroll account with CRA, coordinate receipt of timesheets, process payroll, prepare government remittances and filings.
- Administer payment to self-employed support workers on behalf of families.
- Provide assistance to families with general accounting guidelines and basic requirements.
- Work individually with families to review their processes and set up of their accounting system.
- Work with families to meet with government agencies.
- Administer other agency funding contracts for families- such as Insurance, CCAC.

Human Resources:

- Provide information related to employee issues, Employment Standards Act and Labour Laws.

Income Tax:

- Income tax preparation service provided at a not for profit rate – this is provided for anyone interested in the service.

DURHAM ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

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ADULT RESPITE HOME

Melissa Reading Supervisor, Adult Respite Home
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Durham Family Resources and the Principle of Social Role Valorization (SRV)

The principle of social role valorization (SRV) is not immediately familiar to most people who come to Durham Family Resources as board members, families, or even as new staff members. However, the depth and truth of this anchoring principle and its implementation framework is often clear and recognizable to people once they hear it described in common language, and once they understand its effectiveness as it guides the implementation of strategies that make a positive difference in the lives of people who are vulnerable. Fairly quickly, most people can appreciate this framework as a way to safeguard and build lives of value and meaning within the hearts of our communities.

Simply put, SRV explains that human beings are hard-wired to judge one another and quickly decide whether the other is "like me and mine" or "unlike me and strange and different". Those we recognize as like us and ours, we embrace and treat well. Those whom we judge to be essentially different, we push away and distance ourselves from. Much of this interaction is unconscious; however the impact on people and their lives and opportunities is very real.

Two things impact powerfully upon whether another person is seen to be "one of us" or "one of them " and these are: a) the company we keep lets others know that we (a new person) are okay if we are seen together with people, singularly or in groups, that they already know, like, understand and value; b) the roles we are perceived to hold - everyday, familiar and valued roles (sister, employee, and teacher) help others to see a person as knowable and sharing common values, while weird, unfamiliar and negative roles (adult day programme participant, special needs guy, and criminal) make others see the person as different and discomfoting, causing them to withdraw or turn away. Some roles are chosen by us in our lives (teacher, swimmer, neighbour) and others are thrust upon us by circumstances (poor person, sister, disabled person). The roles we are seen to hold are powerful ways that influence how the other will judge us. Interestingly, building relationships (i.e., the company we keep) that are rich, rewarding and safeguarding most easily arise when a person holds a range of typical and familiar roles in their lives (uncle, neighbour, drummer, volunteer, church member).

As an organization, as staff and board members, and as families and community members we can use this principle to positively influence the perception of the people with disabilities we love in our community, so that other community members are able to perceive their interests, gifts, talents and the things they have in common with that community member.

When people with disabilities are included in everyday family and community life - among their non-disabled family members, peers and neighbours and holding typical, ordinary roles - the aspects of their lives and personalities that are familiar, knowable and in common with others are emphasized. The disability does not disappear, but it becomes less important, not the only thing known about the person. This allows

community members to share common spaces and experiences and to include each other as "like me and mine". They come closer, ask questions, invite, offer opportunities and enter into relationships.

When this is not done, people with disabilities are almost always grouped together- to work, to live, to recreate - and set apart from others so that what is emphasized instead is their disability, the ways that they are different, and their strangeness from "the rest of us". Other community members who come across people in such groups and settings turn away, feel uncomfortable, address the group rather than individuals, and save their best opportunities and genuine relationships for people who are more "like themselves".

More specifically, as an organization, through board, staff and families, we can assist families to see and bring out the wonderful and positive and ordinary aspects of their family member's personality and lives; we can help families to remember the value and benefit of just being one of the family or one of the crowd in ordinary ways; we can offer strategies that assist people with disabilities to make their contributions in regular society in typical ways; we can promote ways in which people are seen and become known among their non-disabled peers so that their common interests and familiar roles shine through; and we can identify interests and build strong and new roles based on these. We can use all of this as a context for encouraging relationship - which will bring new opportunities of its own. We can gently bring awareness and teach about the impact of a life where the person is seen and treated as different, and how simple changes can more effectively bring about the Vision for a good life that almost every single family member has for their whole family.

Therefore, the resources, information, and supports offered to and with the families of Durham Family Resources are provided within an SRV mindset. This means that from board to staff to volunteers to mentoring families SRV is a lens through which we design, develop and offer ourselves. Durham Family Resources was started and developed many of its programmes and services in the past without a conscious thought to the principle of SRV. However, when this principle and framework became known, it was thought to be a natural fit for providing guidance to the work of the organization.

Although the work within Durham Family Resources has long been steeped in the ideas of SRV, it is only in the past few years that this is being applied consciously and with some rigour. This work will continue into the future. This means that we continue to think about the parts of our supports and resources that seem to challenge the principle of SRV and

keep on trying to figure out how to offer supports in a way more consistent with this guiding principles and therefore, likely more able to bring the people into a good life in their community.

For the time being, where we might offer a resource that is not fully true to the principle of SRV - and therefore less effective in bringing about good life opportunities for the person - we allow our deep caring and respect for the family to come first. We identify what is a compromised situation, we do not judge familiar and comfortable supports but focus on the family experiencing something different which they may possibly come to see as better. We encourage families to give the new and unfamiliar a try in small well-supported steps, and meanwhile we ensure that whatever supports and resources we do provide is of the highest possible calibre.

Over the course of the Board's year, we will spend more time understanding the principle of SRV and its practical implications and we will discuss the ways in which we are working in line with the principle and where we still have work to do.

In the meantime, the following is our current working definition of a good life in community:

The aim is to belong to a community where all people are valued, our differences are respected, our contributions drawn forth, and our needs are met in typical and valued ways so we can live in dignity among and in valued relationship with all others, and in typical life circumstances as enjoyed by all of us, as citizens.

A socially inclusive society is thereby evidenced by people -

- o being present regularly and frequently in ordinary places in their communities,
- o in typical and normative ways,
- o in demographically representative groupings,
- o holding valued social roles based on their interests and passions and choosing
- o wherein they make relevant and welcomed contributions
- o in and through their relationships with a range of valued and typical citizens