

November 2020



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Durham Family Resources

# FAMILY focus

SO THAT ALL PEOPLE ENJOY A FULL AND MEANINGFUL LIFE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

## Focus on Family Learning an Annual Priority at Durham Family Resources

Coming into November and the close of the year, we often reflect on what the past year has looked like in terms of our work, including what our priorities turned out to be and what accomplishments we achieved. Although this year has caused us to pivot due to new restrictions and considerations, we find that much of our core work has remained unchanged, the delivery has just adapted!

Our definition of Family Support involves bringing about opportunities with individuals with disabilities and their families to build their capacity within themselves and, along with others, to bring about a good life in community - where relationship is key and where there is clarity that we all stand to gain when all members of our communities contribute and belong. Knowing that families are a unique and valuable resources to one another, our learning events are one way that we support opportunities for families to connect, support one another, and build capacity for change.

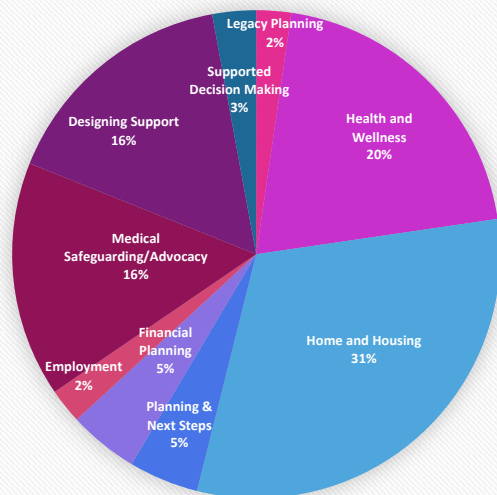
This year we have hosted over 50 events, and welcomed (both in-person and virtually) over 750 attendees. These events range from small, regular facilitator-connected family groups, to larger, ad hoc open invitation workshops. We also have a few "working" groups; select interested families join us for project-specific groups to help research, advise, and guide the work being done. Most popular are our regular, topical groups - particularly our Imagining Home and BioMedical Approaches Study Group - which are open to anyone interested and meet monthly to continue conversation and further group learning. Even though we've needed to keep more physically distanced from one another, this year is turning out to be our largest in terms of attendance!

Along with some of our long-standing topics of interest, such as *Building a Context for Relationship* and *Imagining Home*, we have taken our cue from families to offer topics which are relevant now, most notably our

new *Safe at Hospital* working group and *Meaningful Support in a COVID World* workshop. Hosting meetings via Zoom has enabled great participation in follow-up conversations in our usual one-off workshops. We look forward to the time when we will be able to gather in larger numbers physically in our Gathering Place - but

until then, are excited about the opportunities to meet virtually and continue our learning together.

2020 ATTENDEES BY EVENT THEME



**Thinking if I**  
What is "school" look like for my Septonide  
Parents have been asked decision regarding their returning to school. For more information, contact Erin at 905.439.5500 ext. 2511 or erin@familyresources.com

**BACK TO SCHOOL**  
Join us on August 27, 2020 from 1pm-2:30pm with other families from 2nd to 8th grade and a homeschooling parent who is in the classroom at home and in the classroom.  
Thursday, August 27, 2020 1pm-2:30pm  
Register here to receive your Zoom link

**Imagining Home**  
Wednesday, August 12, 2020 6:30 pm online via Zoom  
Real Homes Now: Things Happen When Families are in Charge  
At Imagining Home this month, we are excited to welcome the Durham Family Group from Oakville, for the launch of their new video which highlights their journey into homes of their own and takes them to their own community.  
This is a group of 8 families who, with the help of some modest funding and a dedicated family facilitator, were able to imagine, find and create homes for their loved ones within just 2 years. We'll hear from the project coordinators Karen Alexander, who will share a bit about the project as well as their own family journey over these past two years. Once again, this month's meeting will be held via Zoom!  
If you are new to Imagining Home and would like to attend this meeting, we welcome you to contact Erin at 905.439.5500 ext. 2511 or erin@familyresources.com. We hope you can join us this Wednesday, August 12 at 6:30pm via zoom meeting. Please contact Erin at 905.439.5500 for more information about connecting to the Zoom call.  
DURHAM ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY RESOURCES & SUPPORT  
One Person at a Time - Together with Purpose!

# Clinical Ethics: Bridging Gaps and Building A Health System One Relationship at a Time

Sean Hillman is the lead Clinical Ethicist at Lakeridge Health and a member of Unity Health Toronto's Centre for Clinicals Ethics team which provides ethics services to a number of Ontario hospitals, and support to partner community organizations. He has become a familiar face to a number of Durham Family Resources families who are involved with our Safe at Hospital learning group, and our continuing Recognizing Capacity supported decision making project.

Recently, his work and collaboration with DFR was profiled in an article titled "[Clinical Ethics: Bridging Gaps and Building A Health System One Relationship at a Time](#)" by the Centre for Clinical Ethics. The Centre for Clinical Ethics is the first ethics service of its kind in Canada, and works to enable members of the health care community to identify and resolve ethical issues which arise in the clinical setting.

Within Lakeridge Health, Sean supports staff, clinicians, patients and families in decision making, advanced care planning, conflict resolution and self care. He also guides community organizations on how to navigate the hospital system. Sean's contribution to the learning groups and projects he has been a part of include helping families be aware of their rights in hospital and options available to them. As noted in the article, he has listened to the stories of the families he has met through DFR, and taken the family-voice to his work in ensuring better outcomes for people involved in the hospital system.

The article details the evolving relationship between Sean's role and DFR as well as the importance of hearing family stories and incorporating a family-voice into systems-change. We are appreciative of Sean's involvement with DFR thus far and look forward to continued progress in the future! [Read the full article here!](#)



## Cold-Weather Strategies the Hot Topic for November's Bio Medical Approaches Study Group!

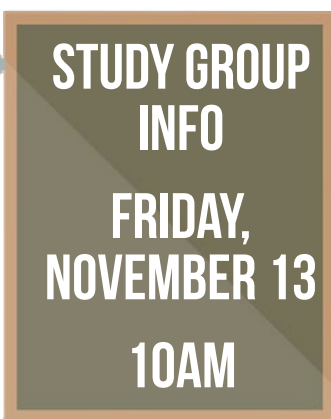
For our November gathering, let's start off with a conversation about how we are each getting movement and exercise as the weather grows colder. What's your gear? What's your plan? How are you getting your family member interested in keeping moving when the going gets cold? And for balance...bring along a favourite Fall recipe!

As usual, our discussion will wind along the pathways that those present find most interesting and relevant at the moment – new COVID news or adaptations or possibilities, questions about medications, approaches and new ideas, books that should be shared or read by all, and much more.

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group when we meet on the second Friday morning of each month. We will be meeting via Zoom video or audio conferencing on **Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, at 10 am**. Your RSVP to Janet below will ensure that you receive the Zoom invite details.

We engage with anything "Bio – Medical" and so families talk about all of the approaches, alternatives, strategies that we have found, are being pushed into, have discovered online and more! We have a wide circle of families who are ready to share their vast experience and together we sometimes are able to help each member make better sense of the options and choices that surround them.

The group meets monthly and is open and welcoming to new and past participants! Please RSVP for this month's meeting to [jklees@dafrrs.com](mailto:jklees@dafrrs.com) to get the online meeting details!



## Thinking it Through: Helping Children Develop New Interests and Hobbies - Join the Learning at November's Meeting!



We are now approaching the 2020 holiday season! It is a lovely time of year to think about how we'd like to spend time during the festive season and work through the practicalities to make those good ideas come to fruition!

In this session of *Thinking it Through*, we will be exploring what is possible when families actively assist their children to discover new interests and hobbies. We invite families to join us to discuss leisure ventures but we will also take some time to reflect on current realities and other things that are top of mind. Throughout these times, we continue to keep in mind children are resilient and learn, grow and thrive in many ways!

Join together with families on **Thursday, November 19th 2020 from 2:30 - 3:30pm** to "think it through TOGETHER"

**Register Here to Receive the Zoom Link Details!**

## Meaningful Support and Safely Inviting Supporters into Home the Topic of November's Imagining Home Group!

At last month's Imagining Home meeting families had an opportunity to share and critically discuss their thoughts around the construction of a new congregated building, designed for people with disabilities. To start the conversation, we first grounded ourselves in the principles of home and what home personally means to each of us, then together uncovered all of the ways in which grouped and segregated models of housing profoundly and consistently fall short of offering that good home and good life for people with disabilities. It was an inspired and engaged discussion and we missed those of you who couldn't join us!

Also, last month we had hoped to have a conversation around meaningful support and ways of inviting supporters into homes safely and engaging them meaningfully in this time of COVID and the changing season. Unfortunately, we ran out of time but we'll be picking this discussion back up at our November meeting. We hope you can join us!

At Imagining Home each month, families explore timely housing topics and issues through an analytical lens and the shared principle of creating home, one person at a time. If you are new to Imagining Home and would like to attend a meeting to see if it's for you, we welcome you to contact Erin prior to attending your first meeting, at (905) 436-2500 ext. 2511 or [eoreilly@dafers.com](mailto:eoreilly@dafers.com). Our next Imagining Home meeting is on **Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>** at 6:30pm via Zoom meeting. Please contact Erin to RSVP or for more information about connecting to the Zoom call. Looking forward to our time together!

**IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2020 • 6:30PM**

**ONLINE, VIA ZOOM!**

**CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS ([EOREILLY@DAFRS.COM](mailto:eoreilly@dafers.com))**



# Real Long Term Care Reform Needed for Safety and Security of All Canadians

The issues we are hearing about Long Term Care (LTC) homes in Ontario are important for us all. With a second wave of COVID-19 upon us, many Canadians are worried about loved ones residing currently in LTC facilities. After the dire result of the first wave of this pandemic on seniors and other vulnerable adults living in LTC, it is clear that a serious overhaul of how we plan for future supports for people is overdue.



Family visits LTC resident. "Ontario NDP releases plan to end for-profit long-term care" CBC.ca. Oct.9.2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-ndp-plan-changes-to-long-term-care-1.5756280>

This situation has particular relevance to families who have a family member with a disability and their allies who work for good, ordinary lives in real community. Clearly, it is becoming more and more common for people with disabilities to end up living in LTC facilities, whether they are elderly or not. Increasingly, this is seen as an acceptable "plan" for people's support and housing needs.

Let's reflect on the fact that between 1983 and 2009, many people in this province worked hard to close down the remaining institutions for people with developmental disabilities and figure out support, housing and home in their communities. It took 25 years to accomplish this feat for 5,000 people. However, today we discover that an estimated 3,000 – 4,000 people with

developmental disabilities are now living in LTC facilities – an institution by all accounts! It seems that all of the work to return people to community lifestyles has come undone!

Clearly, LTC facilities have the same drawbacks and life-threatening ramifications as those institutions previously housing people with developmental disabilities. Grouping people with disabilities together and then providing grouped care separate from the rest of the community always results in poor care, little individualization, absence of natural and family support, and a community that misses out on the contributions of people with disabilities. The Class Action Lawsuit that won against several institutions<sup>1</sup> pointed this out clearly over the last decade. The failures of the current system became glaringly obvious again this Spring when 1452 long term care residents died due to COVID-19 outbreaks in Ontario alone in just under two months<sup>2</sup>.

[Seniors for Social Action \(Ontario\) \(SSAO\)](#) is a group of citizens who have come together to identify alternatives to institutionalization and encourage government funding and policy to support these alternatives with a goal to end institutionalization. They have identified eight objectives to help reform LTC in Ontario - of significance is ending the systemic discrimination of forcing thousands of elderly citizens into institutions because of a lack of not for profit, community-based choices, and insisting that all parties in the Ontario legislature refrain from approving any more LTC beds and instead call for alternatives to these institutions including fully funded home care that is needs based. This is a great place to start for general advocacy for better options for us all.

[Dr. Patricia Spindel has written a poignant piece](#) reflecting on her experience advocating for LTC reform in the 80's with comparison to situations we are seeing today, almost 40 years later. She notes that MPP involvement was critical to change in her first round of advocacy - but that over time, and changes in political leadership - LTC is back where it started. "The alternatives exist. But the public needs to demand them. And the politicians need to drop their too close associations with this industry, re-locate their consciences, and finally do the right thing" she writes.

The state of our long term care system affects us all. [If you wish to advocate for change, you can visit the SSAO website](#) which lists many ways Ontarians can help advocate and get involved.

## January Workshop Focuses on SRV and Lives of the Elderly

Covid-19 impacts different groups of people in very different ways. For some it has been, for the most part, an inconvenience. For others, it has been nothing short of catastrophic. No group has been harder hit than those living in Long Term Care facilities. Not surprisingly, those who were members of marginalized and devalued groups before Covid-19 are the ones who, by and large, have been hardest hit. Being devalued invariably puts people at greater risk of all kinds of bad things happening to them. This phenomenon is not specific to Covid -19. Given that this is so, what can be done that will make a positive difference to the lives of those who are devalued?

The Southern Ontario Training Group, along with Community Living Ontario, are hosting three sessions in January to discuss this question using a Social Role Valorization lens. For more details, and to register, [see the flyer here!](#)

# Have You Attended Making the Most Family Series? Come Together to Discuss and Continue Learning!

The Making the Most Study Group is a fantastic opportunity for those who have completed the series to continue their learning and take some next steps in developing valued roles and relationships with a loved one.

For the last few meetings families have been keen to talk about Circles of Support and what can result when a group of people are intentionally invited to come together. Some families have shared their experiences and we have thought more deeply about the value and reasons for creating a circle, along with who could be invited and the many varied ways that circles can begin. This month we plan to continue this theme, and welcome anyone who has attended MTM wishing to join the conversation. For the November meeting, we will focus on the kind of questions or topics people might decide to bring to their Support Circle.

This group will meet via Zoom from 6.30-7.30pm on **Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>** and members will be sent a link to join a few days before.

NOVEMBER 23, 2020  
6:30PM TO 7:30PM

Online via Zoom Meetings



**MAKING THE MOST  
STUDY GROUP**

[respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com)

**CHAP**  
COMMUNITY HELPERS  
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

RespiteServices.com is continues connecting families to supporters! Contact Sandy for details!

Respiteservices.com is continuing to operate remotely to connect families and support workers. We know people continue to need good support during this time and are working diligently to continue to provide this service to residents of Durham Region.

To be matched with support workers, you must be registered with [respiteservices.com/durham](http://respiteservices.com/durham). Contact Sandy at (905)436-3404 or [sciarlariello@dafrs.com](mailto:sciarlariello@dafrs.com). New supporters are continuing to be added. Contact Sandy for more information!

Want more information?

Durham Association for Family Resources and Support

For more information on our organization or any of our events, please visit our website at

[www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com)

or contact Heather by phone or email:

(905)436-2500  
ext.2314

[hminors@dafrs.com](mailto:hminors@dafrs.com)

For more information, please visit our website, [www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com), and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

Durham Association For Family Resources and Support  
850 King St. W, Unit 20, Oshawa, Ontario L1J 8N5  
(905)436-2500 [www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com)