



DURHAM ASSOCIATION FOR
**FAMILY RESOURCES
& SUPPORT**



What's at Our Table



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

2020

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 is a Durham-based, family support and resource organization that partners with families to imagine, plan, and implement for good lives in community, one person at a time, for and with their family member with disability. We consider the person in the context of their family (born or chosen) where their relationships most often ensure that this is where the voice of the person might best be heard, supported and augmented.

Durham Family Resources is largely but not solely funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). We also work at times with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing, Regional governments, and federal government departments. 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 everyday 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, both Family Support and Administrative. Selena Blake, Director of Family Support heads up our Family Support department, with two Supervisors, Diana Trotman and Jennifer Singh, to balance support to the team. Family Support provides facilitation and information supports, emerging practices and various resources. On our administrative side we have the innovative services of Central Administrative Department (CAD), ably directed by Sue Talmey, and managed by Kamilah Hudson. CAD provides a range of financial management, accounting, and human resource supports 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 are 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.

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

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.

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.

This means that IF you come to believe what you want is a life where your family member is full heartedly included and has value and worth in the eyes of family, neighbours, friends and community - ...**THEN** SRV is for you.

At Durham Family Resources, 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

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 Durham Family Resources 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 Durham Family Resources 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

Family Support at Durham Family Resources is innovative, practical and anchored in principles and values rooted in Social Role Valorization (SRV). Family Support encompasses all aspects of family life as families are neither one dimensional nor homogenous. Family Support covers all life domains and recognizes and enhances innate family capacity. We walk alongside, one person at a time, together with families, in real neighbourhoods where valued social roles result in rich contributions to communities and mutually rewarding relationships. Over 260 diverse children and adults are on this principled path.

Projects and initiatives continue to be sparked by the voice of families. In partnership with families our reflexive response is to listen, imagine, plan and act on ideas that are cultivated from this partnership. Facilitation, Planning, Exploring Emerging Practice, and Evaluation are welded together to form a solid foundation for Durham Family Resources unique family-led approach which enables access to *the good things in life*. These are the key pillars of Family Support at Durham Family Resources.

The Family Support Team is dedicated to intentionally partnering with families, listening and amplifying the voice of the person in order to build good full lives. Valued roles, relationships, ways of contribution, home, holistic health and tailored family-directed support remain at the forefront of where families want support. We explore interests and concentrate on places of belonging based on authentic valued social roles. Every pathway is unique, and the Family Support Team sees the abundance of community that has opportunities for all to contribute. We fundamentally know that our communities are not whole when some are missing, held on the margins or segregated. Our interdependent nature and need for purpose calls us to ask, who is this person to their family, neighbours and the community at large? Who are they called to be? Together with families we embark on this journey of discovery and establishment. All the while bringing families together for learning, support and inspiration. Thus, family leadership grows and flourishes.

More specifically, resources and supports are available to families in many different ways:

- Several family groups are facilitated here at Durham Family Resources. Family groups are a great and valuable resource to families. The fabric of family groups are the individuals that make it up. Connecting, networking, linking, bridging and bonding are the strong threads that bring families together. Families can learn through conversations with each other; sharing their experiences and stories. Often times, family groups will delve into a relevant article or a particular topic, seeking out information that might be helpful. The strength of families coming together time and time again cultivates a dynamic that has a positive impact on their journey. 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. Now offering virtual learning opportunities, we have been joined by families near and far!
- We are into our fifth 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. After families have completed the learning series they are given the opportunity to join the Making the Most study group. This supports families to continue their journey of discovery. The Coordinator works closely with these families to assist them in taking first steps towards role development and establishing circles of support.
- Several initiatives are happening right now. These Emerging Practices are designed for their ability to further the work of Durham Family Resources to strengthen families and build community. CAD revenue allows 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 values and principles of the organization. These include innovative ventures such as the Bio-medical Approaches Study Group, Bio-medical Coach, Focused Recruitment, Housing, Assistant to Young Families, Mindfulness, Family Managed Care, Out of Region, Recognizing Capacity and more recently, Safe at Hospital and PPE Sourcing and Distribution.

- Throughout the year there are many groups, learning events and the ongoing offer of facilitation drop-ins. Interested and intrigued families are welcome to participate regardless of formal registration with the organization. This is our way of providing additional support and introducing families to the Durham Family Resources way.
- Many families take advantage of our increasingly rich Recruitment support. Families across Durham have access to respiteservices.com. Additional recruitment support is available to families connected to facilitation and planning when requiring very specific qualifications or addressing interest-based mentorship.
- Our monthly publication the “Family Focus” is broadly distributed to over 500 subscribers either electronically or in print. This newsletter keeps subscribers informed of events, issues and emerging trends.
- 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
 - Children’s Champion Table
 - Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle
 - Durham Systems Management
 - Durham Coordinated Response Committee
 - Durham Training Committee
 - Durham Special Needs Allocation Committee
 - Kerry’s Place Training Committee
 - Life on Campus
 - Lakeridge Health Advisory Committee
 - 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 partner with families who:

- intend to manage their own supports,
- plan for a full life and roles in real community,
- alongside and supporting the voice of their family member with disability
- while holding as best possible to the stated principles of the organization

Facilitators work in the following ways

Provide Planning Support

- 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 activities, home life, employment and volunteer roles, faith communities, neighbourhood, and country.
- Creating vision of home, the pursuit of passions and interests, gaining more independence, learning, and growing, including how to make the vision a reality.
- Visioning, securing, creating, and maintaining a real home of ones' own, whatever that may be, by focusing on the person planning to move out of the family home
- Transition planning, getting from A to B with the big picture and the details. This could be from home to school, through school, to work and leisure, and contributions, within the whole life continuum.
- Legacy and Succession Planning is about the people, the plans, the transitions, and the information. It is usually but not always with aging families.
- Crisis planning; avoiding it, getting through it, being prepared, learning from experience
- Available, for as long as it takes, and throughout the person's life

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 for adults such as Life on Campus, DSNAP, Passport, Bascule Bursary, Urgent Response Crisis funds, Individualized Funding, Residential and Family Managed Care.
- Assist to design both support budgets and personal 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, and legal.
- *Providing resources and information* about a multitude of things such as RDSP, estate planning, wills, trusts, guardianship, supported and substitute decision making, home renovation bi-laws, and introducing them to the people who have the information and expertise that is needed
- *Gaining information and access to other services* such as, counselling, subsidized housing, child and youth services, community programs and services.

- Moving from activity driven planning to planning in terms of roles
- Moving from segregated and congregated settings to individualized involvements and supports that are non-disability focused environments typical of their age and gender within their chosen communities
- Support to attend Durham Family Resources learning events and other workshops that fit the purview of Durham Family Resources
- Gaining peace of mind for parents and other care givers as their sons and daughters fill their lives with meaningful engagements.
- Other areas of facilitation support could also include but not limited to: employment opportunities, continuing education, high school and elementary school, post-secondary school, and home, community, civic and work life, home and housing, home renovations to accommodate changing family needs and aspirations for independent living.

Facilitation is provided

- From a holistic approach; with the whole family system, while also amplifying the disabled members voice, self-determination
- By looking to typical community involvements and supports as a first resort
- With a perspective of a Family Support team member, because while facilitators may have a very wide range of knowledge and access to a wide range of resources, they are not expected to be experts in everything. The whole family support team is enlisted to find answers, share knowledge and connections from the community at large and the experiences of families, at times inviting families to meet with one another for this purpose.
- By always planning with someone individually, not as a group. It is community based, builds, supports, and nurtures capacity, and empowers the person
- Sharing stories of others and how they have paved the way
- By facilitating long-term, small scale family groups where families support one another over time through minor and major life changes and getting to know about each others' families more personally. Project 8, Next Generation, and Community Explorers are examples of family groups. Within the family group one can share resources, walk with each other through common experiences, challenges and celebrate successes.



Facilitation Support for Young Families

Family Centered and Community Focused

Who seeks us out? Families of all kinds

- Families with Newborn - Children – 18 years old
- Families with 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 Durham Family Resources 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 Durham Family Resources 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, Mindfulness and Bio-medical approaches family learning, meetings through online platforms and monthly webinars, 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

In ordinary times, about 50 families make use of the Adult Respite Home that we fondly call the Bed and Breakfast, referring to users as our “guests”. Guests make use of this 4-bed home for up to 24 days of the year on schedules that fit the families own requirements and requests.

Obviously, during the COVID 19 Pandemic and the general provincial lockdown, things changed quite a bit.

In March 2020 when COVID 19 initially hit the Durham area, the decision was made to close the Adult Respite Home. We made this decision quickly, based on best practices and the families who were immediately affected were in total agreement with our decision.

The team of casual part-time staff were laid off and the Supervisor and Team Leader positions were maintained. The two staff members spent the spring and summer keeping in contact, sporadic or regular, with all of the families and providing much needed support for several families.

With a second pandemic wave in sight, the Team Leader was laid off at the end of September. The ARH supervisor remains in her position.

Our work has included:

- Ongoing contact and check ins with families as they desire
- Many discussions with families on how to enhance their family member’s life during this time – brainstorming ideas, doing porch visits, dropping off supplies for crafts and baking
- Inviting families to “meet” with families and others in Zoom groups and attending events such as AGM and webinars
- Doing smaller Zoom or Skype video calls or phone calls with family members directly
- Going for walks and spending time with people where helpful
- Assisting families with finding support workers who can safely spend time with people in the community and in the home
- Supporting families to seek alternatives to the Respite Home. One young woman was able to get away for several nights with supporters in a local Hotel allowing both her and her mom some much-appreciated time apart in a way that both returned refreshed and renewed. One man went away for an overnight camping trip with his supporter spending time in nature to feel refreshed.

Emerging Practice and Evaluation

Durham Family Resources tries to be timely and responsive to the opportunities that arise from the voice of families. Listening closely and partnering with families culminates in the development new projects. Such projects are an excellent way to way to test innovative ideas and 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 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:

Assistant to Young Families	Mindfulness
Biomedical Approaches Study Group	Out of Region
Biomedical and Holistic Approaches Coach	PPE Distribution
Focused Recruitment	Recognizing Capacity
Imagining Home	Safe at Hospital
Let's Talk Home and Community	Thinking it Through
Making the Most (of time, energy, and resources)	What Does it Take?

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 and summaries. 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 presence 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 Learning Series

The *Making the Most* learning series is a dynamic six-week workshop that welcomes families to reimagine opportunities and explore creative options in using their Passport dollars, other direct funding or personal resources. Guided by foundational principles, the heart of the series is to go beyond the traditional uses for funding and delve into alternatives that are individualized, authentic and purposeful. Led by two mentoring parents and supported by a series facilitator, families engage in rich and thoughtful conversations, hearing about the mentoring parents' experiences from years of planning and creating opportunities for their son or daughter. These conversations highlight the simple choices that families can make to discover ordinary, yet significant ways for their family member to be involved in their local community and have a good and full life.

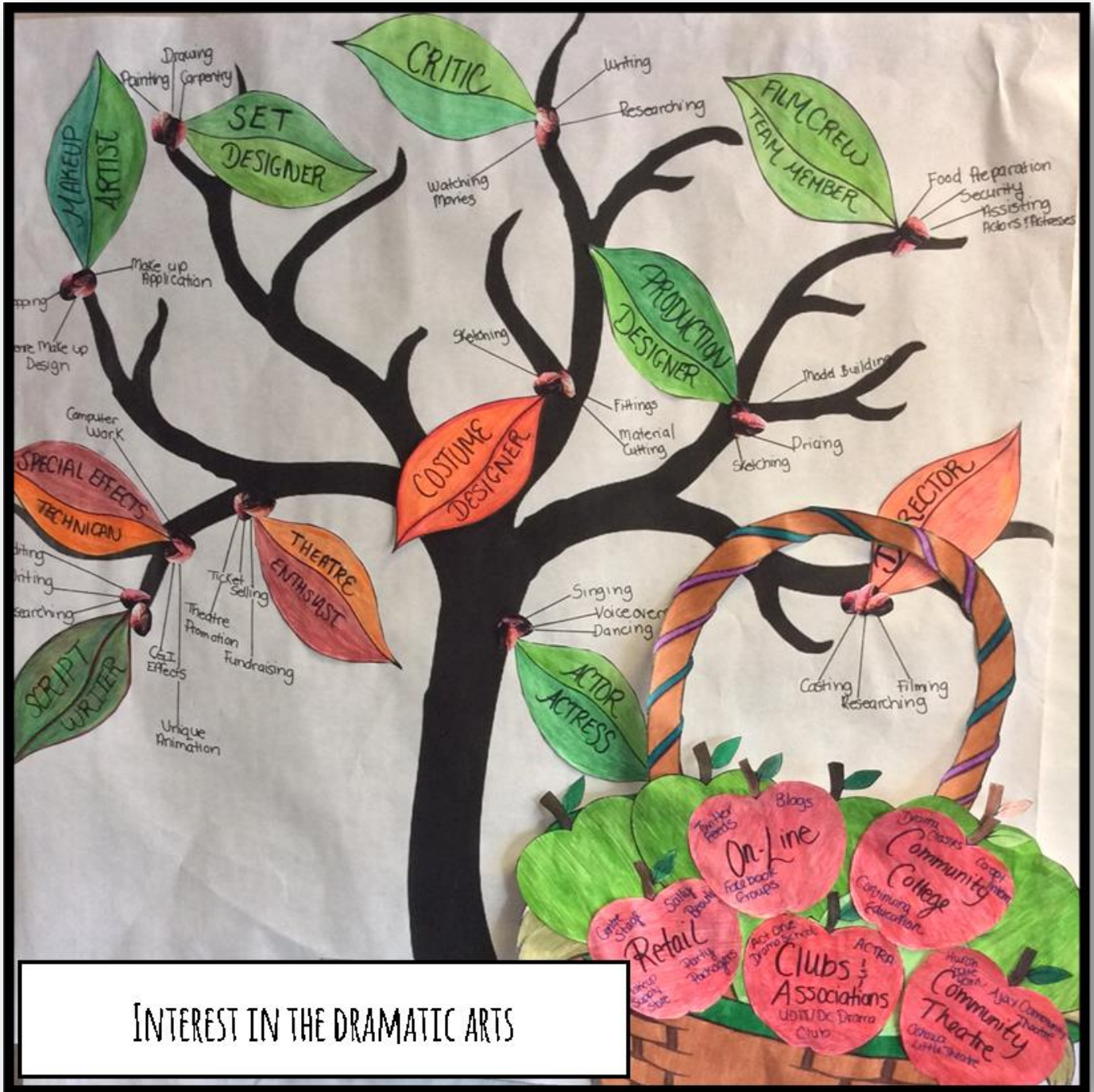
Many families that have participated in the series have listened to their son or daughter deeply and have developed a greater understanding of their interests. This has provided a springboard for implementing ideas, leading to more meaningful and fulfilling lives.

Making the Most draws out the abundance of community as a place of welcome and belonging and supports families to think through and cultivate endless possibilities!

Making the Most Study Group

Those who have completed any one of the *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. 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, we partner with families to help them imagine home and housing possibilities that are much more ordinary, typical and familiar. It is in diverse and vibrant communities where we find places of belonging, mutual relationships and natural safeguards. Together, we also uncover the contributions of their family member and focus on their inherent value and how this contributes to creating and sustaining resilient neighbourhoods together with others. 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 40 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 knowledge through collaborative discussions - allowing for exchange of dreams, hopes, planning and natural support. 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. Families have designed a group of action and are continuously moving towards the next step. 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 formed with serious intent and readiness to engage with developers, develop partnerships to advance sustainable and affordable housing options, and apply for grants such as seed funding or renovation dollars. Family members of IBC have many years of involvement in the group and are committed advocating for and mentoring newer Imagining Home families, helping to build strength and clarity of vision around home, housing and community.

Families are leaders along the journey to uncovering affordable housing options in their community. 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. Families are regular members of Municipal and Regional housing committees and task forces, engage with all levels of government around housing and policy planning, and advocate for community-wide affordable housing options for all citizens. Families have also been instrumental in building awareness around the need for more portable housing benefits, the results of which are evident in the recent increase in available PHBs. While great strides have been made, we see many more untapped possibilities.

Through an individualized *one person at a time approach*, families have uncovered new possibilities and resources that best support their son or daughter's growing good full life – where the person's voice and choices are truly acknowledged and lead the direction of planning for moving into their own space or home. Typical options available to all often prove the best: renting an apartment in a building of any shape or size within an ordinary neighbourhood; Siblings choosing to rent together and being supportive of each other in natural, common ways;

exploring other typical roommate connections through a friend of a friend or available online search sites, which may or may not include a degree of pre-arranged support; or renovation options for families to customize spaces or create fully separate apartments, resulting in multi-generational homes that last long into the future.

With the availability of more **portable housing benefits**, individuals and their families have been able to take big steps towards their sustainable long-term plans, with some comfort in knowing that the modest funds will be there indefinitely to support them wherever they choose to live.

'Next steps' come in many different shapes and timelines - since the conclusion of the Housing Task Force project, there have been twenty-six families who have taken significant steps in their housing plans plus the many varied smaller choices by families that are laying foundations for future action towards longer-term goals.

In 2020, Durham Family Resources is initiating a year-long collaborative funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)'s Solutions Lab program. **Let's Talk...Home and Community** is a series of 4-6 facilitated community conversations. At the heart of it, our aim is to bring together two groups of people who rarely have opportunity to meet, who are often seen or talked about in terms of their housing challenges and deficits instead of what they have to offer, and for whom housing is vitally important. Families that include an adult family member with a disability and newcomers to Canada within Durham Region have many resources and assets to contribute to creative housing solutions that will benefit whole neighbourhoods and communities.

In this project co-designed with families, we will come together to imagine and build together - we'll open our hearts and minds to listen deeply to one another, share and explore our collective understanding of the housing issues within Durham Region, uncover the assets, resources and contributions of each group, and together create a positive and inclusive vision for how we would like our communities to be. When and as ideas unfold, participants may choose to create opportunities to share housing and build stronger communities. Our collective goal will be to deepen all of our perspectives of what we have in common and to imagine, build upon and even bring about opportunities for immediate or short-term action in housing.

What does this all mean for families' hopes for the future and what are they asking for?

- 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 or institutionalized 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.
- Community partnerships will be integral to this – finding committed and thoughtful contractors to work with; building strong connections with financial institutions to offer low interest/forgivable loans; and offering homeownership for people with disabilities that is not questioned or undermined.

Recognizing Capacity 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.

This gathering of families was later shocked and surprised to hear 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.

Last year, together with CLO, IRIS, and five other provincial regions, Durham Family Resources 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 is also collaborating with a range of sectors within our community, particularly in places where people with cognitive impairments can face barriers to having their capacity recognized. 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.

This pilot is also giving Durham Family Resources the opportunity to consider how recognizing capacity threads through so much of our work with families and community allies. While we will 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 public shared learning events, open to both families and other interested parties, and to develop a website of useful resources on supports for decision-making.

Safe at Hospital

The **Safe at Hospital Working Group** first came together in April 2020 in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic out of our shared concern to keep people safe during this time and work toward their very best health outcomes. Our focus is on members of our families and community with disabilities. We understand that perceptions of their worthiness due to disability, different modes of communication, related medical conditions or simply how they are viewed by the rest of society places them at greater risk in such times.

We have built on earlier work within *Durham Family Resources* (the Legacy Planning Project, work of individual facilitators and families, and our own planning documents) to deepen and strengthen those documents so that they might be used in critical hospital admission times.

At the same time, it became clear that our thinking and actions through our current **Recognizing Capacity** project were highly relevant to this conversation. We began to have discussions about many hospitals not allowing accompaniment in hospital even to those who had no way of communicating otherwise, and about how these actions could leave people with disabilities without a voice.

In a context of safeguarding the lives and good health of vulnerable members of our community, many of whom have a disability, the Working Group are focused on helping families and allies to:

- **Be prepared:** Understand and organize the ways that families and their allies can be best prepared for all health emergencies at such times
- **Support the voice of the person:** Better understand and share how people communicate their will and preferences in many different ways so that they remain at the centre and involved in all health decisions
- **Collaborate for best health outcomes:** Collaborate where possible with our local health care partners so that medical care and support challenges are resolved one person at a time and so that the culmination of many individual strategies gives way to better sector-wide responses to people with disabilities who need to access health care.
- **Provide helpful document samples:** Compile, edit, and share a range of helpful, practical documents that can and should be used at various stages of the health care journey – when preparing well in advance, at the doorway to a hospital admission, during hospital stays and decision making moments.
- **Share with others:** Continue to learn and share in various formats with other family and community members through written documents, a website, access to staff and families who are comfortable with this material and through group learning events.

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 four 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.

Bio Medical and Holistic Approaches Coaching

The Bio Medical & 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 fourth year, is geared to provide Mindfulness training and learning primarily in family home settings with all family members who are experiencing stressful situations. Currently, mindfulness practice is occurring virtually online, over the phone and through webinars. 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 stressful family situations is done in the context of a full plan to ensure that the other issues are being addressed accordingly.

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 may also bridge families with other recruitment resources such as respiteservices.com or extra internal recruitment supports. 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. Going forward for 2020-2021, we are looking at conducting this event online.

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.

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

Internal Support: Focused Recruitment

When Facilitators working in partnership with families 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 usher, for example, while 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, and/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, community groups, educational institutions, networking, and through existing 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 of 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 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. Durham Family Resources brings families together for topic specific learning opportunities that are ongoing and build on one another.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Durham Family Resources has been practicing social distancing and using interactive, virtual platforms like Zoom to continue providing various learning events that are user friendly and relevant to families. Durham Family Resources has been taking advantage of creative ways to use online breakout rooms (chat features and Jamboards) which better reflect the quality and style of learning that we are used to when hosting in-person at the Gathering Place. With this new virtual way of hosting events we have been able to host follow-up conversations to continue the conversation and learning!

To date in 2020, there have been almost 750 attendees for events advertised both through our agency, community networks, and our monthly newsletter.

Topics this year have included:

DURHAM FAMILY RESOURCES HOSTED:

Mindfulness 101 (by Cara Coulson)

Medical Safeguarding Everyday, and In Time of Pandemic (South Ontario Training Group in conjunction with SRV Implementation Project)

Financial House Keeping Day; Taxes, RDSPs, and Trusts (Linda Smith, Sue Talmey, Peter Killam)

DURHAM FAMILY RESOURCES PRESENTED:

Biomedical Study Group (online monthly)

Making the Most Study Group (online monthly)

Imagining Home (online monthly)

Next Generation Meet Up (online monthly)

Kids and Learning at Home - Ideas and Strategies for Success! (online)

Safeguarding Vulnerable People in Hospital – Conversation with other Families (online)

Support with Intention (online)

Meaningful Support in a COVID World (online)

Safe at Hospitals Working Group Learning (online)

Thinking it Through: What is 'School' Going to Look Like for My Child this Year (online)

Building a Context for Relationship (two-part series online)

SHARED VIEWING with FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION:

Empowering Family Caregivers to Improve Health Care Communications Webcast (H-CARDD)

Employment: Empowering Families (Community Living Ontario web cast series followed by conversation with Joe Dale)

Staying Safe in Hospital Webcast (Genia Stephens, along with Community Living Ontario)

Ideas Have Consequences: Reflections from a Human Service Career Webcast (Jo Massarelli)

The Power of Roles Webcast (Darcy Elks)

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 Durham Family Resources 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 Durham Family Resources 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. Increasingly, family opinion is sought from Durham Family Resources families by the Ministry and other levels of government and community who have come to rely on the clarity of their voice. Our small Family Leadership fund allows family leaders to attend learning events locally and further afield.

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

Our ways of working together have long standing roots. Through the Durham Family Resources, 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 Durham Family Resources. 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 650 subscriptions to our monthly *DFR Family Focus*. 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 are able to share and link material we have created and come across through different projects and presentations. This year that has included a staff information page for COVID-19 information, and resources and tools from our Safe at Hospital working group. 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.

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, and this year we have done just that – supporting families and our own team with technology that is current and helpful.

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 Durham Family Resources. 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 MCCSS 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 Durham Association For Family Resources and Support, 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 8 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 Durham Family Resources finance and administration team, and we all work at Durham family Resources 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.

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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

Appendix A

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 –

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