



# INSPIRING POSSIBILITIES

*Newsletter*




Welcome to our Summer Edition of the *Inspiring Possibilities* Newsletter. The focus is to keep you up to date and informed regarding sector information from the Ministry.

In addition, we aim to communicate key initiatives, relevant updates and strategies that will support our staff and enable the people we support to live their best lives.

### COVID-19 Resources

- <https://www.phsd.ca/health-topics-programs/diseases-infections/coronavirus/covid-19-resources/>
- <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- <https://www.phsd.ca/health-topics-programs/vaccines-immunizations/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine/upcoming-vaccination-clinics-for-specific-priority-groups/>



**Learn more  
information about  
our Student  
mentoring program:**

[https://communitylivingontario.ca/  
what-we-do/student-links/](https://communitylivingontario.ca/what-we-do/student-links/)

## Bill C-22 Update

An Act to reduce poverty and support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada Disability Benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act.

This is what we know about the Canada Disability Benefit so far: it will be modeled after the [Guaranteed Income Supplement](#) (GIS) for seniors, which is stacked on top of [Old Age Security](#) (OAS).

This means the Canada Disability Benefit will be in addition to the existing benefits people with disabilities receive. The Canada Disability Benefit will add to other provincial, federal, and territorial supports.

For example, the Canada Disability Benefit would be in addition to provincial and territorial income assistance, CPP-D, Veteran's Disability Benefits, Worker's Compensation, private insurance and other disability support programs. In BC, for example, you could receive provincial BC PWD assistance, and still get the Canada Disability Benefit as well.



## Welcome Bruce Drake

We are thrilled to introduce Bruce Drake as our new Director of Corporate Services. Starting April 24, 2023, Bruce will head and oversee our finance, quality assurance, corporate operations, and logistics initiatives.

Bruce's extensive experience and knowledge in finance and accounting, as well as his previous positions as a Manager of Finance and an Accounting and Risk Management Officer, make him a valuable asset to our organization. His expertise in accounting, logistics, risk management, quality assurance, and performance metrics will be of great benefit to CLGS. He holds a green belt in lean management, a CRM risk management designation, and an MBA degree.

Bruce will make a significant contribution to our team and the CLGS family. We are excited to have him join us and advance the mission, vision, and values of CLGS.



- **The Host Family Town Hall will be held Monday June 12, 2023.**
- **The Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday June 22, 2023.**

# New Beginning

by Karen L.

A new beginning is like starting a new chapter in your life  
A caterpillar turning into a new beautiful butterfly  
A child turning into a responsible man or woman  
A graduate entering the workforce

A new beginning is a woman entering the world of motherhood  
A bud turning into a rose  
A sapling turning into a pine tree  
A babbling creek turning into a Great Lake

A new beginning is Jesus being here and raising up to heaven  
A birdie turning into a gracious eagle  
A roe turning into a strong rainbow trout  
A page turning into an awesome book

A new beginning is the season of spring  
A writing turning into a poem  
A musical note turning into a musical piece or a song  
A fawn turning into a strong buck

A new beginning is celebrating Easter, or a baby being born

It also could be a new beginning of getting sick and recovering  
by getting well!

# Setting Boundaries

by Darlene McIntosh

For people with developmental disabilities, learning social boundaries is crucial to establish healthy personal and professional relationships. It's important to approach social boundary education with sensitivity and patience, tailoring the approach to the unique needs and abilities of each individual. With the right techniques and strategies, individuals with developmental disabilities can navigate social situations with confidence.

Here are some tips and best practices to follow when teaching social boundaries:

- Concentrate on manners and personal space.
- Prepare for everyday conversations.
- Practice real-life scenarios.
- Discuss the importance of appropriate touch and healthy relationships.
- Explain the significance of consensual relationships and sexual boundaries.
- Model appropriate behaviour.
- Reinforce comprehension through social stories.

It's important not to impose societal standards, but instead model appropriate behaviour and use videos and role-playing to illustrate the qualities of good and bad friends. Additionally, addressing physical boundaries and creating social stories can reinforce comprehension.

By understanding social boundaries and appropriate behaviour, individuals with developmental disabilities can feel more included in social situations and have an easier time building relationships. They become more independent and confident in their interactions with others, improve their communication skills, and better express their needs and preferences.

Teaching social boundaries promotes safety, respect, inclusivity, and acceptance of individuals with developmental disabilities.





# Growing Together, Stronger

*by Kim Rumley*

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to the world and impacted the Developmental Services Sector in profound ways. Our agency responded with determination and resilience, prioritizing the health of those we serve and the safety of our staff. Through collaboration between CLGS as the employer, union, and staff, we made thoughtful decisions and took decisive action. Our success in navigating these challenging times strengthened our bonds and our resolve to grow together. As we embark on the journey to belonging amidst sector reform, we carry with us the lessons and resilience gained from those difficult months and years. We believe that anything is possible when the individuals we support are at the heart of our decision-making process, and we recognize the value that every person brings to our agency and services.

The journey to belonging goes beyond complying with government directives or adopting a new funding model. It embodies a person-led experience, where we honour, support, and advocate for individuals to live life on their own terms. We walk alongside those who choose our services, respecting and supporting the choices that are rightfully theirs to make. Over the past several years, our approach to supporting individuals has evolved. We have embraced the philosophy of Dr. Jacques Pelletier, who has promoted the approach of walking alongside them as they navigate their care and define how they wish to be supported, long before the talks of sector reform. This approach will continue and flourish as we strive to become a truly person-centered service provider.

In this model of care, we aim to support individuals without relying on labels or assuming their capacity. We are committed to ensuring equal access to housing, activities, and community engagement for everyone we serve. We recognize that individuals accessing our services must have the freedom to choose where and with whom they live. Highly regimented schedules that dictate every aspect of a person's day will no longer be considered the ideal standard of care. We understand the detrimental impact of loneliness on both physical and mental well-being.

While change may sometimes appear daunting, we must remind ourselves that we are constantly **"Growing Together, Stronger."** We have proven our ability to face challenges head-on and make meaningful changes for the betterment of all.



# Self-care for Caregivers

by Judy Hoskins | Adapted from *The Importance of Self-Care for Direct Support Professionals*

Research shows that to be effective caregivers, we must also look after ourselves. This is vital to avoid burnout and maintain the energy needed to care for others. In 2020, the Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) surveyed the mental health of direct support professionals (DSPs) throughout Ontario and found that 69% reported feeling increased stress at work, while 25% reported moderate to severe distress resulting from work demands (CAMH, 2020). By 2022, a follow-up study identified that 35% of DSPs were experiencing moderate to severe distress (CAMH, 2022). Both studies identified self-care among their recommendations to reverse the trend. I would like to offer my thoughts on self-care for DSPs as caregivers. Some of the ideas presented here are based on research and are evidence based, while others come to mind based on my personal experiences.

## **First, make time for physical activity.**

Whether your job role is active or leaves you seated for long periods of time, an important part of looking after yourself is making time for exercise. As they say, twenty minutes, three to four times a week should be sufficient to see the benefits for overall health and to improve sleep. This can be easier said than done when our schedules are busy, and the daylight is scarce, but it can make all the difference. I am not a terribly active person but definitely feel the benefits when I take time to walk the dog, shovel some snow, and go up and down the stairs while completing chores. Try to include some physical activity in your self-care routine for the naturally calming effect of muscle movement.

## **Take a break when you need it.**

There's a popular meme circulating right now that says, "Everything, including you, works better when it's been unplugged briefly." This resonates with me. The demands of our work can be emotionally and mentally taxing, particularly when solutions don't come easily. Make sure to disconnect when you need to, if only for a moment. Particularly in programs that run 24/7, it's easy to feel like you are needed right away, at all hours. This kind of commitment is admirable but not always sustainable and can lead to negative outcomes for you as the caregiver. Know your hours of work and, as much as possible, stick to them.

### **Be mindful.**

While teaching mindfulness practice, I have learned to appreciate its benefits for my work. I can manage stress when I'm able to focus on the task at hand, letting go of my thoughts and feelings related to challenges faced earlier in the day or week. There are many free online resources available to help get started. As an example, "mindful walking" combines the calming benefits of physical activity with the mentally calming effect of being in the moment. While walking, keep your thoughts in the moment by noticing the details of your surroundings with all five of your senses. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel with your skin, face, feet, etc.? In Ontario, there is a provincial initiative to support DSP mental health called the cultivating [community wellness website](#), which provides a variety of resources and podcasts, including 'Mindfulness for all: Accessible Mindfulness video series.'

### **Avoid sacrificing your own routines.**

Probably the most powerful professional development I ever participated in was an exercise where we were asked to describe our morning routines in minute detail. Most of us were quite rigid in our routines and attached to the minutia. We were then asked to describe the impact of someone messing with that routine. I can assure you there was a very animated discussion, as we all recognized the emotional impact of changes to our preferred routine. The familiarity that starts our workdays can be crucial to setting us up for success. Self-care is often built into the activities that we choose to start and end our day. If your work is getting in the way of the routines and structures that support you emotionally, it will be difficult to perform at your best, particularly in the long term.

### **Share your thoughts openly and respectfully.**

In the consultative role that I currently have, I always appreciate DSPs and supported individuals who will challenge my ideas openly. I much prefer a chance to defend or abandon my position (based on the discussion) rather than leave thinking it was helpful and find that the idea is criticized privately and/or abandoned. When introducing environmental changes to a staff group, the team member who is able to voice their concerns openly always gives me the opportunity to further explain the rationale and improve everyone's comfort level with change. Each program has a unique culture that is fed by daily interactions and, as a DSP, you are an essential part of maintaining that culture. I have found that workplaces where colleagues are comfortable to speak openly experience less negativity and stress. Self-care includes open communication and disengaging from the emotional venting of others whenever possible.

### **Be part of the solution.**

This point perhaps explains itself and naturally follows sharing your thoughts. As DSPs, you probably know the program and the individuals that it supports the best. When something isn't working, you may have insight that can be vital to improving the situation. Openness creates a more honest conversation and can reduce the feelings of isolation and negativity that can result from feeling like you know what would help, but no one else sees it. I still remember many years ago when we planned a milestone birthday celebration, and put a great deal of time and energy into it, without recognizing that the individual who was celebrating was terrified of balloons. Needless to say, some very quick adjustments were needed to save the occasion. Contribute to Individualized Support Plans and other support documents, and keep them alive in your workplace.

### **Respond in moderation to change.**

I've learned that it's best to take a measured approach to new initiatives and directives, as change that happens too quickly can be very difficult for everyone. Changes in structure and direction can come around frequently, and change in our sector is often cyclical. Particularly when supporting older adults, a measured approach to changing routines usually has better outcomes. This is true for all the reasons discussed earlier related to the comfort of routines and is magnified as we get older. Be sure to hang onto the support style that makes you unique and so valuable to your workplace. I've learned to listen to the person and to the direct support professional, as both are acutely aware of the consequences of change for change's sake.

### **Notice your strengths that represent resilience and work on developing them as needed.**

"Resilience is the ability to bounce back, the capacity to thrive and fulfill our potential in spite of our circumstances" (CAMH, 2013). The Family Guide to Dual Diagnosis by CAMH identifies the characteristics of resilient people and encourages caregivers to consider which strengths they already have, and which they might develop. I believe that these characteristics can also be applied to the DSP role, and have listed them below for your consideration:

- a sense of closeness and connectedness to others
- strong, dependable support from at least one significant other
- attention to personal health and well-being
- high self-esteem
- a strong sense of personal identity

- a realistic and balanced awareness of strengths and limitations
- the ability to be assertive and emotionally tough when necessary
- a playful, lighthearted approach to life
- a sense of direction and purpose in life
- the ability to turn difficult experiences into valuable learning opportunities
- the capacity to pick self up, shake self off, and keep moving forward
- the ability to adapt to live comfortably with uncertainty and unpredictability
- the ability to laugh at self. Resilient people do not “sweat the small stuff.”

Noting your areas of strength and attention to areas for development can help to direct your self-care.

In conclusion, I hope I have piqued your interest in expanding self-care opportunities. The DSP role is essential to our support systems, and I believe requires the most creativity and stamina. Parenting, aging parents, and other responsibilities can add to the challenges of achieving work-life balance and make self-care even more important. To develop self-care habits, it can be helpful to start modestly and celebrate small steps forward, as well as drawing on the experiences of colleagues. Focus on activities that interest you, and you'll be more motivated to continue. I recall that the helping role of a DSP can be very rewarding when it is balanced with also making your emotional and physical health a priority.

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Greater Sudbury



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