

Living In
Friendship
Everyday Inc.

Connections Newsletter

Spring Issue
April 2010

SUCCESSION PLANNING... What is it??

Last newsletter we focused on building and strengthening Support Networks. We are going to continue talking about Support Networks, focusing this time on succession planning. You might be wondering what we mean by **“succession planning”**.

Succession planning is about creating a strong, committed Support Network to ensure that when main Network members are no longer able to, want to, or here to play an active role on the Support Network, other people are in place allowing continuity for the individual at the center. For various reasons, this can be a difficult topic to discuss for some people.

For individuals being supported, it can be hard to imagine life without those important people close by offering assistance and support.

For a Network member, it may be hard to imagine someone else caring about their family member or friend the way they do and trusting their commitment to be a Support Network person.

It can bring feelings of worry, fear and insecurity for everyone.

Thinking about and planning early for the future can help alleviate some of these feelings. When everyone is involved in creating a strong trustworthy circle of support, it will bring comfort to all.

How each network does this will look different. We encourage you to start asking yourself and other people on the Network some important questions.

If I was away for a month would things carry on smoothly?

What information and knowledge do I have that others would need?

What role do current members want to have or not have?

Does someone else know how to call in payroll?

Are important names and contact info written down somewhere?

Would bank accounts be accessible if needed?

Who would staff contact for questions?

Have I asked “Anne” who she could trust if we were away for awhile?

Succession planning won't be easy. Looking at a short period of time that main Network members would be away will help determine areas where planning can start.

This newsletter provides an introduction to succession planning, why it's important and some tips on how to get started.

LIFE encourages all Support Networks to take some time to ensure the person you care about will always have a strong and committed circle of support around them.



LIFE's 10th
Annual General Meeting
is coming up!
May 29th, 2010
Brandon, MB
See insert for details!

A New
Resource Staff
in the Westman
and Parklands
regions!

Hello to everyone!! My name is Shannon Walowetz and I have recently started as a Resource Staff with LIFE. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for welcoming Pat and I into your homes during our first road trip! We had a lot of fun!

The last few years I have been working with an ICOF employer, the Westman Coalition for Employment Opportunities, and with Family Services and Consumer Affairs; all of which have provided me with a tremendous opportunity for personal and professional growth. I am excited to begin this adventure with everyone and look forward to all of our experiences together!

Holding on Differently... it's not easy!

Holding on differently is one of the major starting points to succession planning. It is hard to imagine that anyone could love your family member or friend as much as you do, that anyone could be as concerned, or be there in a time of need - as you always have been. However, there will be a time when someone else will be doing these things as natural life changes occur.

This is why we encourage groups to regularly check in on how the Network is doing, and whether network development is needed.

It is essential to identify and understand possible barriers in order for them to be overcome.



Challenges that make holding on differently hard...

Shifting Responsibility

This is allowing others to play a more significant role or responsibility on the Network. It's not easy and can be tricky to see the point now, but is a very important first step to holding on differently.

Fear and Insecurity

This is about feeling the need to approve of new members as they will play a significant role in the future. Are they the right person? Best influence? Will they do things right? Sometimes we can become an obstacle to a new relationship forming.

Dueling Visions

Family members often have a well established understanding of their loved one and a vision of how the Network should function. New people will have a new perspective and fresh ideas. This can often result in dueling visions: one represents comfort of the familiar, and the other represents the risk of the unknown.

It's Hard for Everyone

Individuals who are used to relying on family members for support, can struggle to imagine life without these supports. This can result in a resistance to engage with others.

This newsletter offers tips and suggestions for you and your Support Network to talk about.

The benefits of holding on differently...

Over the years we have seen individuals who have:
developed new abilities,
tackled challenges,
increased their confidence,
fulfilled goals,
overcome fears,
developed new relationships,
taken chances, and
made mistakes.

The experiences and triumphs were possible because of the support from a caring Network of relationships. Letting go can be included on a list of triumphs that people might experience.

Of course, we never really let go of each other, what we need to let go of is the beliefs and actions which prevent people from engaging with others.

We are not letting go, but rather holding on differently.

Tips on How to Start Succession Planning

Clear Discussion of the Vision:

Regularly revisit the dreams of the person at the center, concerns for the future, and the building process of the Network. Use tools to record and remind everyone of plans that were discussed. Everyone having a clear understanding of the vision, will help from holding the process back.

Start Early:

Don't wait for a crisis to happen. Start building a Network of committed people early. Strong trusting relationships take time to develop. Ease into letting go early. Allow yourself to step back and be inspired by others, their vision and commitment. It will bring peace to you and offer the individual time to adjust.

Help People Understand Life Changes:

When possible, take time to talk about what things may look like when you are no longer able to or here to do all the things you have been doing for so many years.

Say Yes to the Offers:

Receive and accept offers from Network members. Talk through and negotiate topics that feel difficult for you and work towards accepting offers.



Deal with Notions of Risk:

Risk is a part of growing and learning in everyone's life. Take time share your experiences, and concerns with those who will be supporting the person you care about in situations where risks are involved.

Give Ownership to the Network:

Provide opportunities for others to contribute and play a role on the Network. Ask a person to help the individual do something you normally would. Take down barriers that are keeping people away from forming a bond with the person. Meaningful involvement by others ensures the sustainability of the Network.

Share Stories and Wisdom:

Connect with other families. Share stories of successes and challenges - help one another to move forward.

Consider Whose Network It Is:

It is a good idea for family members to explore the best way for them to participate on the Network as it develops and to decide when and how to step back.

Most of the material used in this newsletter was taken from a great booklet called "Reaching Out" by the PLAN Institute of Vancouver. For more information about this booklet, please ask your Resource Staff!



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**Living In Friendship
Everyday Inc.**

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2000

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LIFE



A Message from Clare...

Ten years ago LIFE formed as an organization to support the bold and unique program "In The Company of Friends" (ICOF). ICOF is a Supported Living option in Manitoba funded by the Province. The participants and their Support Networks have been supported by a wonderful team of resource staff employed by LIFE. Our funding has been managed by the LIFE Board of Directors, together with the Executive Director. ICOF continues to be a valuable option for people wanting to live as independently as Possible. It continues to demonstrate that a volunteer Support Network can support a person with an intellectual disability to live in communities throughout Manitoba and that they able to make large and small decisions of daily living. There are many, many stories to tell of the challenges and successes of LIFE. I invite you to join together with the Board of Directors of LIFE to celebrate 10 years at our Annual General Meeting on May 29th in Brandon. See you there!!

Clare Simpson, President

A Hidden Message For You!

Do the word search and fill the
blanks with the remaining letters
to get the hidden message.
The answer is on the A.G.M. flyer.

Relationships	Family	Holistic
Holding Differently	Circle	Network
Interdependence	Trust	Involved
Safety Net	Future	Possibility
Comforting	Friends	Continuity
Opportunity	Scary	Difficult

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