

## Summary of Questions & Comments, Facebook HTF Group, Jan 10 - Feb 3, 2015.

### 1) Question:

- Who will compel MOHLTC for example, or fed/prove-funded municipal programs such as those that provide incentives to developing affordable housing, to play ball with MCSS?
- Has the HTF any ideas on how that might work?

### Comments:

- The Premier issued mandate letters to MOHLTC and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and they call for cooperation with other ministries, including MCSS, but the letters are also very general and vague in their direction.  
And the HTF is looking for innovative solutions that include mixed public funding...
- Excellent question. Our Municipality decided to use the last round of housing funding for down payments for those under a certain income threshold. When I looked into accessing the program on behalf of my brother, it was a program that he couldn't qualify for, as he doesn't have employment income.
- What I have taken away from all comments since this venue began is that the biggest challenges for families are not only finding appropriate housing but also how to fund the ongoing needed and necessary supports. All the different ministries- MCSs, Housing, Health, Education, etc. have to get their acts together and start working together re these issues and concerns, and come up with reasonable solutions for families a.s.a.p. think looking for proposals for "models" of housing is very limiting. I prefer to see the task force asking for proposals on how families can access the appropriate funding to help their family member have their own home and get on with life just like the rest of society does.
- Finding is the start of another journey. We are still navigating the hurdles and obstacles after the funding. Funding often comes with rules that do not fit the needs. This has to be addressed too.
- If it is truly client centered then it has to develop as the client develops with support for all the steps it takes: leave the family, make new relationships, acquire new skills related to living away from home- cooking, cleaning, transportation, etc.to the extant that each person is able. It may take years and it is parents whom do the lions share of this setting up, monitoring, teaching, coordinating, etc. We need the tools (money, networking) to do this!! It is not within most families means to go out and acquire a second residence and then run it

### 2) Questions:

Are there still plans to call for "expressions of interest" first, then the full proposal?

### Comments:

- I've read the highlights that the HTF will be calling for proposals by the end of February
- MCSS' announcement to come out by the end of Feb 2015 will provide all the details of the proposal call.
- I like that the HTF has indicated an "action" agenda towards innovative approaches to residential supports. Now let's see what the criteria look like for project funding. This is where I hope to see some really interesting things happening.

### **3) Question:**

**Can any of the task force members who are following this board tell me who is summarizing and reporting to the task force the gist of the conversations, how often that will happen and whether a copy of the summary will be made available? Thanks.**

#### **Comments:**

- Yes I am a member of the Task Force and a parent, [Bonnie Heath](#) and [Jo-Anne Demick](#) are also members - 3 of us are also on the Communications Committee. We are summarizing and reporting the different projects and ideas that have been shared on the FB Page, back to the HTF and plan to store a summarized copy, hopefully under "Specific Topics" for future references. The idea of this opportunity is for individuals with developmental disabilities, families, agencies and other community partners to share housing ideas for future, past ideas that have worked and ideas that haven't- what are the challenges/barriers. This is a great place to support each other as well - share solutions that have been found.
- Thank you to the task force members who have volunteered for this task and especially to those who are doing their best to connect in this way. Facebook groups have various challenges but what is happening here is hugely superior to not making the attempt at all.

### **4) Question:**

**Will the other members be including ideas that are NOT those that are popular with everyone?**

#### **Comments:**

- I have had my head chewed off for wanting a "group home" (actually, it would be more of an assisted living type situation) for my daughter, with support available as needed on a 24/7 basis. She is not able to live with only a few hours' help each day, but would do well with "people seeking community beyond the nuclear family" (a great quote I found on a co-housing page).
- No matter what others may think, it's not just what I want for her, it's what she wants. And, like any parent, I want to see her happy and settled BEFORE a crisis situation arises.
- Everyone should have community beyond their nuclear family and paid staff. Thumbs up to that.
- We will be sharing all ideas from the FB Group with the HTF. The HTF's responsibility is to recommend a number of ideas to MCSS that are different than the "traditional group homes and supported living" types. Ideas selected by MCSS for this Innovative Housing Initiative will be considered as "Demonstration Projects" that can be replicated by others. It is not to condemn ideas that have been working for others or solutions that might be developed in the future

### **5) Question:**

**Could you please define "traditional group homes and supported living"? In simple terms,**

#### **Comments:**

- "Traditional Group Homes: Usually 5/6ive people living in a home supported by MCSS Funded Agency, they comply with guidelines established by the Ministry of Community & Social Services. Adults receiving support pay monthly room & board determined by MCSS There is 24/7 staff working rotational shifts/live-in manager homes. Staff in each home provides support with life skills, recreation, finances, medical needs, and community integration.

- The more traditional " Supported Independent Living" is an option where 1, 2 or 3 adults live more independently, usually fewer hours of support, Staff hours usually spent supporting with daily living activities- cleaning, groceries, medical appointments, etc.
- Thanks. A group home is not what I am looking for - that's what I thought. Now I just have to find a name for what I need for my daughter.

#### **6) Question:**

- **Shouldn't this have something to do with advancing the status of people with developmental disabilities in terms of housing choices like other citizens have and so we have to innovate to make that work?**
- **Hasn't it all been done that there are different ways to have a group of people with disabilities in the same space with staff?**

#### **Comments:**

- Not saying as long as it's legal that someone can't choose that or have someone choose it for them but seems like all the grouped living scenarios have been going on for decades and from what I read we already spend almost all of the budget on that so wouldn't the innovation be pointed heavily towards how to help people have a home of their own? I see all sorts of studies and presentations from places that started doing this on a wing and a prayer years ago because it was the right thing not sure how much the task force can do but sure hope there will be at least some balance because it isn't balanced now.

#### **7) Question:**

- **The task force isn't going to have any annualized dollars (correct??) so it's also got to be sustainable beyond any grant provided or at least a plan for sustainability I would think??**

#### **Comments:**

- That's rather what I thought but when I talked about what I want for my daughter, I was lead to believe that it's not about ALL choices, just the innovative ones
- You are right but hopefully this is an opportunity to encourage and support each other to find new and different ways, to ensure our family members have the "Home that's Right for them" but, not to condemn nor judge every idea that other families are discussing and trying to find solutions.
- If you check the diversity of the HTF Members, and the other ministries that are represented, I'm sure that is one of the objectives, that the innovation includes a reasonable proportion of people with disabilities in such a community as co-housing and other mixed communities of Affordable Housing.
- I haven't seen any condemnation but whether we like it or not there has to be some sort of process to decide what gets recommended or funded etc. so that's judging no matter how we call it so I think it's good that people understand some context I'm new to all of this but I find the way it's been explained is respectful and maybe just listen instead of getting angry if people are feeling negative it only makes sense to me you don't appoint an innovation task force to do old things
- That's great I'd just skip a step and extend that same perspective to HOUSING (period) But given affordability and social connections are frequent baskets for people with these labels what you say makes sense.
- Perhaps it would be more important to provide some \$\$ amount have residential and

support funding, and let people make their own choice, instead of funding specific types of housing.

#### **8) Question:**

- **Is 9:1 the status quo? 9 persons with one caregiver? Is that supposed to be too much, too little? Good? Bad?**

#### **Comments:**

- That part of the context is 9:1 ratio group living to anything else at present. No sorry I mean budget. 90% of MCSS residential spending is on group living (see auditor report posted in group) Part of why you see some strong advocacy for opportunities to support a shift in the balance. It's a shift some individual agencies within Ontario have already made and includes support for more complex needs.
- Having just come in at the tail end of this discussion, I think this is one of the most productive discussions so far. Our son is ready to move, it is just where will he go, and with whom. This forum has given us new ideas we had not come up with before. Hopefully some of these ideas/projects will give hope to other parents too. Remind me please when the Task Force will make recommendations. Perhaps at some point a questionnaire could be put out to find out what people have learned from this forum and what form of housing they would be interested in. This could be helpful to the Task Force. Individualized Residential Funding should be given to those people moving into any new living situation. Knowing that funding would be available would encourage families to make that move. There is no simple answer to housing, everyone's situation is unique but I personally find networking very beneficial. Thank you for this forum.
- Welcome Lindsay, the questionnaire is a good suggestion. The Task Force will make recommendations from the submissions received through a proposal call; an announcement will be coming in the near future.

#### **9) Question:**

- **Do you know if the task force is planning on making recommendations taking into account the needs of complex individuals (e.g. both developmentally and physically challenged), or is the focus about meeting the needs of those with just developmental disabilities?**

#### **Comments:**

- The task force will be looking at "Creative Housing Ideas" that are submitted. I will discuss this question at the next meeting but I would assume that "supports and accessibility" needs to accommodate an individual or individuals will be considered when designing the project. Hope this helps.

#### **10) Question:**

- **When does the HTF anticipate having the forms/template available so those of us who wish to submit, are aware of all the information needed? Perhaps I misunderstood the RFP will go out end of Feb. with a later submission deadline?**
- **Could you please confirm? Is the plan still to create a template into which people can draft their proposals? Please advise. Thank you.**

#### **Comments:**

- During a meeting with the HTF in Ottawa early December, it was mentioned there would likely be a standard format /template of some kind for writing proposals, which would ensure all the relevant/necessary information is included in a proposal.
- I'm not aware that HTF committed to making Forms/templates available before the MCSS announcement but when the proposal call is released the required information and forms for applicants will be made available, including instructions for completion and submissions. My assumption is that contact information will be available to answer questions applicants might have when completing forms.
- I would advise families who might want to submit a proposal to document their ideas; will it include purchase of a home or rental of apartment? Cost of the project? Funds available? Funds that will be needed and from whom? As well it is important to seek a partnership with a legal entity such as an agency, a church group, a community partner such as affordable housing, non-profit or private developer; an entity that supports and believes in your ideas. Hope this helps
- I will ask questions and post any forms /templates that might be helpful ahead of time.
- Thank you, for both comments. They are helpful.

#### **11) Question:**

- **What are some barriers/challenges encountered with a housing project?**

#### **Comments:**

- One of the biggest challenges encountered for Families Matter Coop in the McLean Housing Coop Partnership was conflict between the roommates in the 2-bedroom Apartments. The individuals were quite independent and seemed to be able to manage other areas of their lives with minimal support.
- Not just between the roommates also between family members (who get involved in the conflicts). Everyone and every family have different expectations about how to manage a household. The importance of this tends to get grossly underestimated and more perfunctory concerns tend to get vastly overestimated in importance. Also solving problems being experienced by one person suddenly gets very complicated because it impacts on the other person(s).
- People can end up labeled as incapable of living in their own home when in reality the problem may be shared living. Have seen this many times - all sorts of problems simply vanished when the person had their own space.

#### **12) Question:**

- **So the solution to getting along with others, is to isolate people?**

### **Comments:**

- It would be good to hear from members who might have found solutions and worked out relationship issues when sharing.
- Nope. Other citizens are not isolated just because they have a private space to eat, sleep, have friends and relatives over to visit, and a front door you can close when you want to be alone. That's not isolation. That's decency.
- I was referring to your initial reference where you talk about people not be able to get along with living with others, so they should live alone. Most people - labeled or not- live with others and have to learn to get along with other people. Learning
- How to try to make roommates and group living remains the same - agree to who pays for what, who is responsible for what, who resolves disputes, exit plan when people don't get along...easy on paper. Reality of humans in shared spaces...not easy.
- Have lots of first hand experience where everyone involved was motivated and dedicated to success. In the end it felt like a constant effort at holding things together. Not very sustainable. And finally (like the day program) WHY are we battling to do this?  
1) False assumptions about "lonely" 2) economics 3) started something and scary to say "this is not the right thing"
- Thanks - glad we clarified. I am not sure how to say it right - when I say living alone I mean to include such possibilities as a significant other. I mean NOT labeled people grouped together for artificial reasons. Two people in love who want to share space? Great! We actually support a few members in that situation.

### **13) Question:**

- **Do you know Don Gallant? He might be willing to present to the Task Force?**
- **How can we capitalize on the NLACL report?**  
Link: [http://www.nlacl.ca/docs/better\\_for\\_you\\_better\\_for\\_us\\_July\\_15\\_2013.pdf](http://www.nlacl.ca/docs/better_for_you_better_for_us_July_15_2013.pdf)

### **Comments:**

- Caught in the vacuum... It occurs to me that, after having read NL & Labrador's story that there is more than one lesson to be taken from their work. The stark reality is that when the province decided that institutional living was no longer an appropriate solution, they put exceptional resources into moving people out into the community (sincere congratulations for that accomplishment).
- However, the decision to discontinue building new institutional, and eventually group home spaces, led to a crisis. There was no path forward and no way to revert to the old systems. I think that we in Ontario are in exactly the same boat, and this task force needs to be very careful that, with all best intentions, they don't create a situation where the solution is so big, so grand, so individualized and idealistic, that it can't ever be implemented.
- You've mentioned that "life is messy" in an earlier post. I've thought about a bit. Yes, life is never "finished" until it's truly finished, but we don't throw ourselves into turmoil hoping that something good comes out in 2, 3, 6 or 20 years, like the stories we've heard about the process to stabilize a "good living"
- Yes I am not sharing one-sided information; in Ontario it was recognized worldwide that support for those moving from the big institutions was done well. However we stalled there.

### **14) Question:**

- **Have the task force members modified the original goal and scope of the ODS**



## **Housing Task Force and if so, has that modification been approved by the Minister?**

### **Comments:**

- Thanks for posting the mission of the ODS Housing Task Force. I followed the link you provided for more information about the expected outcomes of the work of the task force and found that all three of the goals are specific to housing. The words include "housing solutions" and "housing projects".
- Yet when I look at your description, the goal of the members seems to reflect a broader goal: "explore and map innovative pathways to richer lives and citizenship opportunities".
- Our province certainly needs Task Force On Delivering Person-Centered Citizenship Outcomes kudos if this task force has opened a door to that. We need both. One won't work well without the other.

## **15) Question: Could you please define person-centered citizen ship outcomes?**

### **Comments:**

- Essentially it comes from the perspective that people with intellectual disabilities have the right to the removal of barriers preventing them from experiencing the community on an equal basis with other citizens. that includes housing.

## **16) Question: What is the experience of other citizens so, with respect to housing,**

### **Comments:**

- Mostly, they live in an apartment, condo, or house with a spouse or family members. Most people choose that because they want the freedoms and privacy that it offers and the type of lifestyle and relationships that is supports (and few people choose to live in grouped settings with unrelated individuals and external controls applied by systemic regulations in a staffed environment).
- We have institutional environments where all citizens could end up going at some point in their lives, but the assumption for citizens who do not have disabilities is that they will live in an apartment, condo, house, etc. and so this means those same assumptions should apply to people with intellectual disabilities, a reversal of current thinking, whereby 90% of investment in housing for people with intellectual disabilities assumes institution outcome.

## **17) Question:**

**Has the Ministry provided information to the Task Force about the Innovative Residential Model Initiative they started a few years ago?**

### **Comments:**

- There were some interesting models that they funded. Some that were kind of predictable, but some that challenged the usual boundaries. It might be interesting for the task force to ask to see the applications for models funded and not funded - if only for ideas.
- The project started by Families Matter Coop in 08 at a building called McLean Coop was one of the MCSS Innovative Residential projects.

- It was part of the journey whereby 5 individuals eventually ended up with their own apartment and supports elsewhere in the city, another stayed in that building where they are now affiliated with an agency that hosts a congregated residential grouping within the building, and one individual stayed in the co-op but not under any sort of program just as a tenant like other co-op members.
- I'm not sure it will ever get written up anywhere but it yielded some great information and evidence about how and how not to support the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in non-segregated or partially segregated environments.
- In a nutshell the labeled residents ended up highly stigmatized within the greater co-op community and the DS agency originally hired to support them took the model they were used to (segregated group living, group homes, etc.) and established it within the co-op community with an on site office and a resulting obtrusive presence. To be fair I am sure some family members thought the office and staff would provide "security" and there was no way to know all the downsides - the body of research is thin.
- Also the necessity of roommates created countless problems as it always does and there was only so much switching around to try plus vacancy management pressures etc.
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- Full credit to FMC when things took this turn they made it happen to make a radical change and asked our agency to give it a shot (through an RFP process). After a year or so of working within the structure of the co-op it became clear that it wasn't repairable and really there were not many reasons to stay - the rent wasn't particularly affordable and some of the individuals and families living there were unhappy with the co-op management in various ways.
- One of the individuals I can talk about because his story is public is one of my favorite stories and I don't like to put hero status on people with disabilities as though having a disability is heroic so understand me I don't mean it in a patronizing way but Phil is my hero because he is CONSTANTLY underestimated and undervalued by so many people but he perseveres and in the past couple of years having his own apartment and made some good friends (with and without disabilities).

#### **18) Question:**

- **While I appreciate the story about Phil, I'm hopeful that someone will answer the original question that I asked? Perhaps the task force members wouldn't mind jumping in here?**

#### **Comments:**

- In response to your question the original goals and scope remain the same. The committee is working to create an extensive communications strategy, which includes this group site. The intent was to create a forum for people to come together and share their stories and to learn. To date, I have read some excellent approaches to creating richer lives based on personal choice and the building of natural support networks.
- I find it curious that you omitted mentioning the concerns voiced by various parents/families, particularly in meeting the housing support needs of those with more complex disabilities. This is a housing task force, and, while I'm sure there will be vocal disagreement, I firmly believe that the focus needs to stay on housing. Thank you for responding to my question.



- The Task Force does focus on housing and is doing so in a variety of ways. Very shortly the Task Force will be inviting proposals for review and to make recommendations to MCSS for potential funding. Also, the Ministry of Housing also participates as a resource to the Task Force and I am hopeful that by bringing forward barriers that families are encountering we can advocate for policy change in addition to funding.
- The Task Force is also working to compile a resource library these materials are now available on the ConnectAbility website. This resource is only in the beginning stage of development and will continue to grow.

### **19) Question: Why are they not accessing the housing that exists?**

#### **Comments:**

- So of the tens of thousands of individuals with intellectual disabilities looking for a housing solution, in a lot of cases there is an affordability issue. Not sure the task force can do much about that other than pointing out Canada is the only G20 without a national affordable housing strategy. T
- Then more commonly there are barriers to overcome beyond finance and there are almost no resources available to meet those needs - so much of our systemic capacity is tied up and focused on institutional outcomes - very little support currently available to develop a person-centered plan and more importantly to put it into action.
- Making a plan is one thing but if there are no resources to help execute that's a major issue and that's what we have in Ontario right now. Almost all of the expertise and funding is tied up in how to deliver the congregated segregated models of the 1970s, which are both expensive and ineffective for modern expectations of being included and not warehoused.

### **20) Question:**

- **Are there a percentage of individuals that fit a facility of since type is the only way to meet their needs?**
- **My question in that last point is should we have (new) segregated institutions or is access to institutions an inclusion and capacity issue?**

#### **Comments:**

- Well there are lots of citizens without an intellectual disability label who end up in a facility so we can reasonably conclude some people with this label need access to institutions also.
- Sadly it's all a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy we keep investing 80-90% of resources in segregation and then complain that including people doesn't work.
- But if we look around a bit where either single agencies or entire jurisdictions like Vermont have committed to doing things differently we see that it is possible, but it can't happen simultaneous with a systemic structure that remains committed to congregated segregated solutions.