

SPECTRUM SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY LIVING
Personal Support Networks Demonstration Project

March 2007

What is the Personal Support Networks Demonstration Project?

It's a 6-month project that will assist 8 people to explore ways of enriching their networks of friends, family, and significant others. It's called a "demonstration project" because it will document the barriers people face, and the strategies we discover together for beginning to overcome some of these barriers. This information will be shared with agencies across B.C. so that others can benefit from our collective experiences.

How is the project funded?

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) is funding four demonstration projects in different regions across the province. Spectrum submitted a proposal for funding and was selected as one of four agencies out of the 17 that applied. This is the first time CLBC has funded a project like this and we're very excited to have been selected as one of the participating agencies.

What is the purpose of these demonstration projects?

The Personal Support Networks demonstration projects are part of CLBC's "Safeguards" strategy, which is aimed at ensuring that people with developmental disabilities are able to live, work and play in safe and caring communities.

Organizations selected for these demonstration projects are expected to:

- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of the significance and value of intentionally developing relationship with both family members and other unpaid community members.
- ◆ Address how they will involve everyday citizens in the lives of people with disabilities, for example, the neighbour down the street, the shopkeeper, the friend of a friend, etc.
- ◆ Report out on the approaches utilized and evaluate their effectiveness through feedback from the individuals receiving support and from those in the personal support network.
- ◆ Demonstrate how partnership with other entities – e.g. Civic groups, local business, philanthropic groups and other non-profit organizations can be utilized to help build personal support networks.

What are the intended outcomes of Spectrum's demonstration project?

1. Identified potential support network for each individual:
 - a) names and contact information for existing supports documented;
 - b) existing schedule and neighbourhood inventory documented;
 - c) current and potential contacts mapped out, using "Circles" format
2. Participating team members will develop solution-oriented problem solving and planning skills to bring back to their teams and sustain the momentum;
3. Participating team members will learn to document progress using data collection and problem-solving with agency supports and other interested parties;

4. Development of a distributable monthly format to keep participants excited about their progress and share successes;
5. Development of a manual outlining methodologies and techniques used for the above. The manual will be intended to facilitate network-building, share stories of the participants, and examine problem-solving techniques used to meet challenges that arose during the project.

How will the participants be selected?

Participation in this project is voluntary. Participants must have a desire to enhance their personal support network, and be willing to share their story in a written document that will be distributed to CLBC and other service providers. Half of the participants must have limited or no existing networks of unpaid people in their lives – in other words, no involved family or friends.

What will participants be expected to do?

Each participant will be assigned a facilitator who will meet with the person regularly throughout the project. The facilitator will work with the person (and the staff team, if the person has staff) to look at his or her existing network and determine what changes the person wishes to make. Specific strategies and activities will vary, depending on individual circumstances. At all times, the individual's wishes and personal comfort level will be paramount. No-one will be forced to make any changes.

How long will the project run?

The project will run for six months, from April 1, 2007 until September 30, 2007.

Will there be any follow-up?

A summary report will be written at the end of the project, documenting each person's story, their challenges and successes. Funding for this project is time-limited, and therefore no formal follow-up will be provided by the facilitators. Any changes must be sustainable beyond the timeframe of the project. The expectation is not that people will have a whole new support network by the end of the project, but rather some clarity around who is in their current network, who they might like to bring into their network, and some identified ways of building on what currently exists with the ongoing support of their team.

How can I find out more about this project?

We will be creating a website for the Personal Support Networks project, to be linked to the main Spectrum website. The website will have more information on the project and regular updates on our progress.

Project facilitators can be reached by calling the Spectrum office (604) 323-1433, or by email. The four facilitators are:

Aaron Johannes (Project Leader)	aaron@spectrumsociety.org
Mishel Rooper	mishel.rooper@spectrumsociety.org
Jay Townsend	jay.townsend@spectrumsociety.org
Joanne Collier	joanne.collier@spectrumsociety.org