

Our Vision

Spectrum Society for Community Living believes that community is enriched by the presence and contributions of its citizens with disabilities. We believe that together we can create a world where all people are valued, their voices heard, their choices respected.

Our Mission

Spectrum Society's mission is to support people with disabilities to experience full citizenship and genuine belonging in community. We are committed to continuous learning and improvement through research into leadership and best practice. As a service providing agency, our focus is on strengthening the capacity of individuals and their personal networks, augmenting rather than replacing natural supports.

Our Values and Beliefs

Our work with individuals, families, volunteers and employees is guided by the following values and beliefs:

- Every person has the right to direct his or her own life
- Every person is entitled to respect and dignity
- Every person has something to contribute
- Mutually rewarding relationships enhance the quality of life
- We encourage innovation and creativity
- Diversity strengthens our communities and our workplaces

2020 Vision

In 2010, we set out to transform the way Spectrum provides services and strengthen our partnerships with individuals, families and the communities we work in.

Building on our learning about personal support networks and over 20 years of providing personalized supports, we envisioned a future where everyone would be leading their own lives and directing their supports, assisted by networks of family, friends, and others of their choosing.

Shifting from an agency directed to a person directed approach was identified as Spectrum's overarching goal for the decade. By 2020, we committed to:

1. Evolving toward a more person centred, person directed model of service
 - individuals, in partnership with their families, friends and allies, will be directing their own services to the best of their ability
2. Growing and developing leadership for the above
 - people to deliver and monitor the services
 - people to provide strategic oversight of Spectrum's services
 - leadership roles for persons served and their networks

The first phase of this plan (2010-2013) focused on five goals:

- Strengthening the capacity of individuals to develop and tap relationships, networks and community partnerships;
- Shifting to a more person-directed approach to service;
- Becoming recognized as a model of excellence in supporting self governance, locally and beyond;
- Nurturing a culture of learning and leadership;
- Developing a self sustaining social enterprise / business arm of Spectrum

We've provided regular updates on these goals through our e-newsletters, open forums, training events, social media and the Annual Report, all of which are posted on our website and Facebook page. Feedback on the implementation of these goals has been overwhelmingly positive – we encourage everyone to check out the stories, photos and graphic recording of the many conversations and events that have taken place.

By all accounts, we not only met but surpassed the goals we set three years ago. Clearly we are onto something that resonates for people!

Commitment to Relational Leadership

We believe the best way to advance our mission is to focus our attention and expertise on building partnerships with individuals, their families, friends and allies, strengthening the support networks that are so vital to people's safety and well-being in community. **Safeguarding these partnerships as we take this vision forward will require a different kind of leadership, a letting go of control, and an authentic commitment to the capacity for self determination that is within each person.**

Relational Leadership is a very new idea, still being defined, but exciting in that it defines leadership as "a relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good," based on an explicit philosophy of inclusion and ethics based dialogue, which "acknowledge the diverse talents of group members and trust the process to bring good thinking to the socially responsible changes group members agree they want to work toward." In short, "Relationships are the key to leadership effectiveness." (Komives & McMahon, 1998).

Spectrum's commitment to relational leadership will inform every aspect of our work, including service priorities, special projects with other agencies and funders, public relations and outreach work, communications, fundraising, policies, leadership development and human resources.

This strategic plan sets out an action agenda for the next three years, from 2014 to 2017.

It addresses not only what Spectrum Society does but how we intend to transform ourselves to increase our impact – supporting the natural authority of individuals and their networks, creating opportunities for shared learning and leadership development and looking critically at the impact our services are having on people’s lives.

Considerable reflection and consultation with persons served, their families, friends and neighbours, our employees, colleagues from other agencies, recognized leaders in our field, funders, and our Board of Directors have contributed to the development of this plan. We met with several focus groups, culminating in a gathering of about 100 people at Oakridge auditorium in January 2014: families, funders, staff, community partners, friends, people served by Spectrum, and others who used to be in our services and have moved on to greater independence. One of the things that this event demonstrated was the success of our previous plan to include new valued partners from outside the traditional silos of the service system. We are walking the talk. Many people were moved and excited about how many neighbours, friends, workplace colleagues and “just plain folks” came out on a Saturday afternoon to help us think through inclusion as a common cause for community (Similarly, Spectrum Consulting has organized community mapping sessions through Spectrum Consulting over the last year in six different cities – see www.101friends.ca for more information).

This diverse group brought a broad range of perspectives to the conversation and contributed some great ideas for next steps in our journey together. We used a world café model, facilitating discussions around the following eight questions:

- What other ways might we support people to develop and tap relationships and community partnerships?
- How can we best support people to direct their own supports, with their support networks?
- How might we support people to be self determined?
- How might we support leadership to grow and nurture a learning culture at Spectrum?
- How might we improve our social enterprise - Spectrum Consulting?
- How can we ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to different kinds of employment and work opportunities?

- Where else are people having these conversations, and what are the opportunities for shared learning and partnership?
- What are housing options that are working best for people? What have we not tried yet?

Aaron Johannes and Liz Etmanski graphically recorded the conversations:



The question of employment has emerged as a theme throughout our strategic planning. Many of the people we support, and a majority of those coming into adult services from the school system, want to be working. This past year, we completed a review of our current employment practices, to discover who was already working, who wanted to be working, and our organizational capacity to support employment options.

While Spectrum has not operated a traditional employment program, we have been supporting people to work in paid or volunteer positions through our existing residential and community inclusion services for many years. We have built capacity around employment through staff training, leadership development, and participation in various local and provincial employment initiatives, and recently we were approved as a provider of employment services with CLBC. In the fall of 2013, we hired an Employment Project Leader to begin to shift more of our community inclusion supports to an employment first focus.

Strategic Goal for 2014 – 2017

Spectrum Society aspires to see all people leading their own lives, supported by others of their choosing who will promote their autonomy and self determination. We strive to learn, to improve our practice, and develop strong leadership at all levels to sustain and grow this vision into the future.

To realize this strategic goal, Spectrum Society is committed to five inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing change goals:

1. Deepening interdependent relationships, networks and community partnerships

Spectrum Society will work to engage families, friends and significant others in the lives of those we serve. By 2017, 80% of persons served will have identified support networks.



We will continue to focus on deepening and expanding support networks, building on the momentum of the past three years. A particular area of focus will be to articulate the partnership arrangement between Spectrum and each person served, with an eye to empowering networks and strengthening these relationships.

2. Building person-centred practices that support the natural authority of individuals and their networks.

Spectrum Society will continue to shift its focus from agency directed to person directed services, with 60% of persons served directing their own services by 2017 in partnership with their support networks.

Our services, including administrative supports, have become ever more person-centred, taking our lead from individuals and families who want more of a say over how their supports are organized. Since 2010, the number of people at Spectrum with individualized budgets has increased by more than 50%; so has the number of people with host agency agreements. More individuals and families are involved in choosing their own staff. We will embed person-centred practices into all of our organizational systems, to support the natural authority of individuals and their networks.



3. Shifting to an employment first focus in our community inclusion services.

Spectrum Society will support employment as a first option for those who want to work, with 50% of individuals in our community inclusion services having documented employment plans by 2017.



We welcome the opportunity to work with individuals, families and teams who see the positive benefits of paid employment, not only for the economic security it offers but as a means to building strong networks and valued social roles. Spectrum will work to ensure that all people who want to work have this opportunity, and that all our

Express yourself. Build your network. Find your voice.

services recognize and support an employment first focus. We will connect with other leaders, organizations and initiatives that promote employment as a first option for people with disabilities.

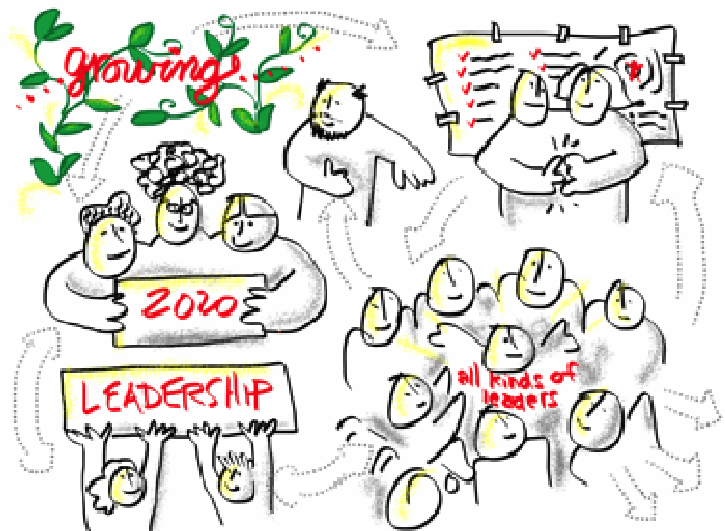
4. Leadership development to sustain, grow, and safeguard our 2020 vision

Spectrum is recognized for its strong leadership and culture of continuous learning and improvement. As we look to the future, we recognize the need to develop the next generation of leaders and continue to support and build the leadership capacity of people we support and their networks.

Leadership development has been a focus for many years. Spectrum is often commended for the insight and depth of its leadership. Over the past three years, we have worked to expand our definition of who can provide leadership, developing roles for families and self-advocates in presentations, on our board, in community, and in staff training.

By focusing on “relational leadership” we continue to build on a theme of “leading together” and challenge old ideas of leadership as the act of a single person by identifying leadership as an action that happens when we work together.

We will continue to grow and expand our leadership vision, and provide training, mentoring and opportunities for personal and professional development that will create strong, cohesive, community based teams.



5. Spectrum Consulting. Collaborative: Learning, Research, Press will continue to expand on effective person centred training, workshops and hosted dialogues and provide an infrastructure for supporting reciprocal relationship and relational leadership strategies that are inclusive.

We will continue to hold a vision of a “triple bottom line” as our standard for our provincial social enterprise:

- *benefiting people with intellectual disabilities as colleagues and assisting them to achieve their goals*
- *continuing to grow an independent revenue stream to support “extra value” projects such as the Next Chapter Book Club*
- *benefiting our communities by leveraging our experience and expertise to grow inclusion beyond our “service systems”; our particular interest will be in designing and implementing a learning loop connecting the organizations with best practices in other places.*



Over the next three years we will continue to publish at least one book a year with a focus on self advocacy and interdependence and make available a range of other books on these areas of interest, and attend conferences and events to build on a new conversation about interdependence and relational leadership.

We will continue to host and support inclusive research projects which can inform service and support provision. We will focus on leadership

development strategies for self advocates, family members and allies who have chosen to work in our field as well as community members concerned to support our vision.

In all these interactions we will demonstrate and share best practice adult education methods.

Working Together

British Columbia is recognized the world over as a place of innovation and leadership in community living. We have been proud to be a recognized leader in this. In 2013 we were the proud recipients of the “Big Picture Award” for our commitment to a vision of community living. This award is made by our peer agencies in greater Vancouver. In 2014 we received the Family Support Institute “Celebration of Families” award for “dedication, commitment and exemplary supports of families in BC.”

Spectrum Society recognizes that it has an opportunity to make an important contribution to fundamental change in other parts of the world where community living remains but a distant dream for many people. Through our publications, training, consulting and online presence we have built a strong reputation that extends beyond our immediate constituency. Almost 65,000 visitors from approximately 150 countries have dropped in to check out conversations about person centredness and interdependence since we began the www.101friends.ca newsletter and blog.

Closer to home, we have a responsibility to support positive change for people with disabilities in Canada. We will continue to support the efforts of our local and national counterparts as they strive to ensure quality lives for all citizens with disabilities.

We believe strongly that for us to focus on such an ambitious agenda we must prioritize that our employees must be treated with respect in all ways, which includes equitable wages and benefits and the recognition that for many of us this work is our mission.

“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people together to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.”

— Antoine de Saint-Exupery