

# A Framework to Promote Innovative Thinking and Practice

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## Introduction

Under the *Community Living Authority Act*, CLBC must try to promote choice and innovation in how it delivers supports and services. Innovation refers to new or significantly improved ideas, goods, services, processes or practices that are meant to be useful. Innovation falls into four [4] broad areas, each of which has a role in CLBC:

- **Product innovation** - a new good or service that is substantially improved
- **Process innovation** - a new or significantly improved production or delivery method
- **Marketing innovation** - new marketing methods with improvement in product design or packaging, product promotion or pricing
- **Organizational innovation** - new organizations, business practices, or ways of running organizations

CLBC's vision is people with developmental disabilities leading "Good Lives in Welcoming Communities." Its mission is to respond to the life-long needs and goals of individuals and families by recognizing their abilities and contributions, sharing leadership with communities, and funding supports that honour individual choice.

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

**Albert Einstein**

A related concept is **sustainability**, which is "Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." By promoting and supporting cost effective innovation within community living, CLBC will lay the groundwork for flexible and financially sustainable supports and services. CLBC's innovation framework<sup>1</sup> is meant to promote innovative thinking and practice at all levels within CLBC, the community living field and the community generally. The goal is sustainable, person-focused approaches to developing, funding and implementing needed supports and services and to expand the capacity of generic services required by the people CLBC serves.

CLBC recognizes that individuals, families, support networks, service providers, professionals, the broader community and its own staff have the potential to be catalysts for change, and that each has a role to play in helping people to enjoy full citizenship. Innovations that improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families are needed and welcomed and reflect CLBC's vision and mission.

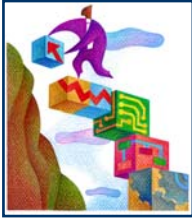
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<sup>1</sup> CLBC acknowledges Dr. Michael Kendrick whose critical thinking and extensive writings on innovation, and consultations with CLBC on this issue, have contributed to this framework.



## The Importance of Values



Values are the foundation for the way people think and act in all organizations. The staff of CLBC is guided by these values in everything they do.

1. Respecting the rights of all people.
2. Supporting people to make their own decisions.
3. Supporting people to achieve their dreams for the future.
4. Respecting the important role of family and friends in people's lives.
5. Promoting people's ability for life-long learning, development, and contribution.
6. Being open, honest and fair in all aspects of our work.
7. Working cooperatively with others.
8. Promoting a culture of responsibility, respect and trust.
9. Supporting our employees to do their best.
10. Inspiring creativity and innovation.
11. Striving for quality in everything we do.
12. Being accountable to the people we serve.

## Some Key Assumptions

- A culture of innovation can be grown and sustained
- Not all innovations will work
- Innovation must be evaluated
- Innovations can come from anywhere
- Innovations are highly dependent on innovation minded and talented people
- Innovations can be seeded and accelerated
- Needed innovations can be named, justified, targeted, prioritized and developed through strategic investments
- Actual and potential innovators can be identified, recruited, supported and linked to other innovators, thus enhancing innovation
- Innovations can be developed in an organized way through coordinated leadership, programs and exploration
- The development of innovations can be supported by organized information sharing

## The Role of Innovative Minded People



Innovation comes from the commitment and action of individuals; not from organizations and systems. Without the ability to imagine differently, innovation is impossible. This means that people who work in organizations or systems must be "innovation-minded". Even where such people are present, these capacities must be properly used and supported to facilitate innovation. Innovation requires ongoing investments in people and their ability to advance practice.

## CLBC's Innovation Priorities in 2006

CLBC is engaged in various activities in 2006 [listed below] to develop innovative support options for individuals and families. For additional information, visit <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/Innovation/>.

### 1 Young Adults Community Options Fund

For 2006, CLBC has set aside \$300,000 to work with community partners to identify new ways to support young adults who have left school within the last three [3] years to obtain employment or take part in meaningful community activities. The emphasis is on supporting different projects in various locations to maximize learning. Budgets and funding arrangements will depend on the nature of the ideas, and the financial requirements to establish and sustain the innovative option over time. Priority will be given to projects that require "seed money" only and can become self-sustaining.



Selected applicants will be required to comply with CLBC's service standards and most policies. Applications must:

- Clearly identify project goals and how they will be achieved, as well as expected benefits of the project
- Demonstrate how they will partner or work with other community groups
- Identify funding that the applicant will commit to the project and other funding sources that will complement CLBC's contribution
- Demonstrate how the project will
  - be consumer and/or family driven and person-centred in its approach
  - provide participants with opportunities to meet their disability related needs
  - enable participants to be included in regular community activities
  - have measurable outcomes for participants
  - be based on individual plans for each participant, consistent with CLBC policy
- Identify how the applicant will share what they learn with others, report outcomes and mentor other groups who are interested in starting similar initiatives
- Outline how the process will be documented so that learning is maximized

Where appropriate projects must show how they build upon, or link to, related innovations. Implementation guidelines will be negotiated on a project-by-project basis. Ongoing project funding will depend on achieving individual and project outcomes and the availability of funding.

## **2 Innovation Support Network**

The Innovation Support Network is a group of service providers whose objective is to help CLBC and its partners establish new and creative ways to support individuals and their families. Additional goals are to provide mentorship, leadership and technical support to anyone interested in implementing innovative options. Priorities this year include:

- Exploring what innovation is and what factors determine when an innovation is present
- Organizing a public event that highlights existing or possible innovations
- Investigating options for “seed money” to assist in developing innovation projects



## **3 Additional Actions CLBC Can Take to Promote Innovation**

Below are examples of actions that CLBC can take over time to promote innovative thinking and practice. Some are already underway.

### **1 Strategic Innovation Fund**

A yearly Strategic Innovation Fund that sets aside a portion of CLBC's yearly operating budget would enable CLBC to fund projects that provide more choice and flexibility for individuals and their families to meet their needs. This Fund would demonstrate CLBC's ongoing commitment to work with community partners to develop person-centred and sustainable supports and services.

### **2 Supporting the Establishment of Service User and Family Governed Projects**

Consumer/family governed projects are developed by small groups of service users or families to arrange and oversee their supports as a group. The service contract remains with the involved provider but those who use it govern the project. Individuals and families can take on as much, or little, responsibility as they want to create and oversee unique support arrangements tailored to their needs.

The provider acts as a “host” agency; not as the direct project manager. A host agency often permits projects to operate in ways that are distinct from its more standard ways of operating. For example, projects can hire and supervise their own staff, have separate budgets and management committees, and a different philosophy, name, phone number and location.

This mechanism would legitimize these “management sharing” arrangements, as part of the regular way to administer services. This “in-between” option of a service user/family governed project offers many of the advantages of incorporation, but without the many responsibilities involved.



### **3 Establishing innovative personalized support arrangements as a priority with new funding**

A way to encourage system revitalization is to establish innovative personalized support arrangements as a meaningful option with new funding. This does not prevent modest growth or innovation in current services; it means service expansion will be concentrated on more pioneering initiatives rather than expanding conventional service models and practices. Investing scarce funding in innovation will encourage the very changes the system needs to renew itself. Increasing the rate of innovation is a visible reassurance that the system has turned a corner and is moving forward. The introduction of individualized funding in the fall of 2006 will assist with this process.

### **4 More effectively using funds that are already in the system**

Another source of funding for renewal is re-utilizing funds already in the system by converting existing services to other models. This strategy is more difficult because it requires existing programs to be re-designed, or re-modeled, and this will make some people uncomfortable. However, if support arrangements for individuals are not meeting their needs, there is value in opening up existing services for redesign.

### **5 Supporting community workshops and training events to raise awareness about what is possible**

Many individuals, families and service providers want to increase their understanding and experience with innovation. A program of regular workshops and training events will raise awareness about what is possible and provide examples of how to implement innovative alternatives. This process began in June 2006 with the *Exploration in Innovation Workshop Series*. The first two events featured innovators from the USA and Australia who shared their experiences in developing unique supports one person at a time. Service providers have also begun to discuss developing an integrated approach to providing needed training at the provincial level.

### **6 Recognizing BC innovators and innovations**

Adopting a recognition strategy would encourage people to become more “innovation-minded” and to take reasonable risks. Ways to achieve this include using CLBC’s and BCACL’s websites, newsletters and annual conferences.

### **7 Extending formal invitations to the field to proceed with needed innovations**

The request and mechanisms to establish innovative experiments should be routine, not the exception. This could be achieved by working with service users and families to determine what is presently lacking in the system, and what would be more preferable. This would “anchor” the search for useful, needed innovations in people’s own experiences.

### **8 Leadership development**

Leadership is a key to creating an innovation-minded culture. CLBC can nurture leaders by involving them in CLBC sponsored initiatives and activities, and provide opportunities for emerging leaders to access scholarships to study, if even briefly, in areas of practice where the field is making progress. CLBC can also support a coordinated program of activity for all innovator groups that will help to build leadership capacity.

Other opportunities that will support leaders to emerge include:

- Community Councils whose roles will include helping to identify local needs and priorities, recognizing local innovators, educating people about innovation and assisting in piloting innovations
- Advisory Committee to the Board will, as part of its role, collect and share information on innovative practices and support options in BC

### **9 Ongoing evaluation**

Where innovations are developed and carried out with attention to how they affect service users, there have been many advances. However, innovations can have negative consequences if they are not tested against some standard of what is good for people. CLBC must evaluate all innovations from the basis of their originality and more importantly whether they are consistent with how people should be treated and supported.

Not paying attention to developing beneficial innovations for and with service users can mean that many needs will go un-addressed, and at a cost to people’s life potential and best interests.



## 10 Issuing an annual innovation status report

An annual status report on the progress being made with innovations being implemented, emerging challenges and the program of activities that will be pursued by all innovator groups in the upcoming year can help create needed awareness and momentum.

### The Role of Individual Support Plans in Promoting Innovation

Individual support plans are the primary means to identify, fund and implement innovative supports and services. CLBC Facilitators and others who assist in developing these plans assume responsibility to address:

- Identifying and prioritizing fundamental human needs
- Meeting needs in socially inclusive ways
- Accessing community and generic supports
- Ensuring that proposed supports/services reflect the most effective way to meet identified needs

CLBC's responsibility, through its Quality Service Analysts, is to ensure that the different ways proposed to meet people's disability related needs result in supports and services that are person-centred, flexible and responsive. Such outcomes will be supported by:

- **Negotiating funding and support/service models within organizational priorities** - Working with Community Councils, CLBC will set overall organizational priorities, and may decide to emphasize certain promising approaches, while reducing the use of others that are less beneficial
- **Negotiating funding and support/service models based on what is needed most by the person** - Funding must be linked to what is most needed by the person. This requires "needs" to be reviewed within available funding, as well as the potential to access informal generic resources. The merit of any proposed support or service can be assessed in terms of whether a different type will be more appropriate and cost-beneficial
- **Negotiating funding and support/service models based on the relative advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives** - Funding decisions must reflect a comparative process that evaluates the proposal offered, as well as proposals that might serve as an alternative
- **Evaluating the relevance of individualized support/service models to the actual needs of the person concerned** - Individual supports that are proposed can range from being very relevant to the person's needs to having the potential to actually harm the person if implemented. Proposals need to be critically evaluated to identify and address such difficulties, and to strengthen those that have merit but need further refinement and development
- **Determining quality in justifying and analyzing proposals** - Because proposal quality can vary, proposals should be evaluated on their comparative merit using these two broad quality dimensions:
  - Worth of the proposal relative to the needs of the person[s] concerned
  - Operational soundness of the proposal including financial and management feasibility

### A Call to Action



The creation of CLBC is based on enabling people with developmental disabilities and their families to gain greater control over decisions that affect their lives. To help achieve this broad goal, CLBC is committed to provide sustainable, person-focused supports and services and to expand the capacity of generic services required by the people CLBC serves.

For needed change to occur, individuals, families, support networks, service providers, professionals, the broader community and CLBC's own staff must act as catalysts, and play an active role in helping people to enjoy full citizenship.

CLBC's innovation framework is designed to support each of us to rethink what is possible, and what we can do to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.