

CITIZENSHIP BASED POLICY REFORM IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

**Presentation by John Lord
to Community Living Ontario
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- ◆ **WHAT DOES HISTORY TEACH US ABOUT POLICY REFORM?**
- ◆ **WHO HAS MOVED IN THIS DIRECTION?**
- ◆ **WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE INITIATIVES?**
- ◆ **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOUGH ISSUES THAT MUST BE FACED TO MAKE THIS PARADIGM CHANGE?**

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WHAT DOES HISTORY TEACH US ABOUT THIS ISSUE?

- ◆ **Shifting away from welfare, compliance approaches to disability is very difficult because the welfare approach is so embedded in social policy and in social attitudes.**
- ◆ **A paradigm shift is required to move to a citizen approach. A paradigm shift identifies anomalies and points in a new direction. As Albert Einstein said, “The significant problems we face can not be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”**
- ◆ **The shift from an institutional based system to a community based system in the 1970’s produced some glimpses of a community / citizenship approach, but the tendency was for the service system to overwhelm such innovation.**

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WHO HAS MOVED IN THIS DIRECTION?

◆ ***In developmental disabilities:***

Provincially, most provinces are beginning to move – the most advanced in thinking and planning are New Brunswick and British Columbia. Ontario is now behind.

Locally, there are some exciting initiatives, within ACL's (e.g. St. Marys) and within Foundations Projects (e.g. Hamilton, K-W, Sarnia) and elsewhere (e.g. Windsor Brokerage for Personal Support, Durham Family Respite, Options in Toronto)

Internationally, selected U.S. states and Western Australia present some constructive examples.

- ◆ *In physical disabilities:*
Ontario has a Direct Funding Project under Long Term Care legislation for anyone who can self-direct who wants to self-manage and self-direct their attendant supports. Great Britain has a similar nation-wide program, administered by local authorities.

- ◆ *In mental health:*
There is a world-wide movement to shift the paradigm toward recovery and significant participation from the person with the mental health issue. Although mental health reform in Ontario struggled, it has also produced some positives, including the allocation of resources directly to consumer self-help initiatives and family groups.

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**WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE
INITIATIVES?**

- ◆ **Initiatives tend to have clear values and principles that reflect a commitment to self-determination, community involvement, and citizenship.**
 - Western Australia
 - British Columbia
 - New Brunswick

- ◆ **Not always explicit, but “community as a first resort” is often implied in these policy initiatives. Community development is often seen as part of this direction.**
 - Western Australia
 - British Columbia

- ◆ **A policy framework (often in legislation) provides coherence, equity, and recognition that citizenship means resources need to go beyond the service sector.**
 - Ontario Direct Funding Project
 - Community Mental Health in Ontario
 - British Columbia
 - Great Britain

- ◆ **Infrastructure supports for individuals and families are usually separate from service providers. This provides the much needed facilitation that families often require for planning, network development, and community participation.**
 - Western Australia
 - British Columbia
 - Windsor Brokerage for Personal Supports
 - Some Ontario Foundations Projects (Hamilton, K-W, Sarnia)
 - Durham Family Respite
 - Community Living St. Marys

◆ **Flexible and individualized mechanisms for support and funding are fundamental to the paradigm shift. Without this flexibility, individual choices that reflect true citizenship are virtually impossible to develop.**

- direct funding is generally effective when it is separate from existing infrastructures
- direct funding in Ontario exists within SSAH, some Foundations projects, and selected other initiatives, including some MCSS Area Offices.

◆ **Innovation is understood as central to transformation of any system and innovation is therefore valued, nurtured and supported, with both programs and focused funding.**

- Excellence in health care project
- British Columbia
- Western Australia

- ◆ **New paradigm approaches tend to be very thoughtful about learning and evaluation. Most innovative initiatives have evaluations, unlike most service agencies. Accountability need not be a problem with citizen based policy reform.**
- ◆ **The institutional closures announced in Ontario would be an excellent opportunity to put some of these mechanisms in place. One great danger in some areas of Ontario is that community agencies will simply not be able to absorb so many people from institutions in any citizenship way.**

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WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOUGH ISSUES THAT MUST BE FACED TO MAKE THIS PARADIGM CHANGE?

- ◆ **Leadership is required from:**
 - *Provincial government* in order to push beyond vested interests.
 - *Families* who know that a different way of organizing supports is needed
 - *Community Living*, who must be willing to risk by moving to leading-edge positions.

- ◆ **Time and good process are required so that people can learn from others, use research effectively, and really listen to self-advocates and families.**

- ◆ **Resistance to change will come in all kinds of forms, including from people with the**

best intentions. Ongoing education and dialogue will be needed.

- ◆ **The development of policies and new infrastructures should be developed with a stakeholder approach, insuring that families and self-advocates are central to the process. This should include working groups that build understanding and recommendations based on research and best practice.**
- ◆ **Shifting resources directly to individuals, families, and communities (such as through IF or by funding family groups) will be very difficult for governments, but there are some constructive examples to draw on, showing that these approaches are cost-effective.**
- ◆ **How to change attitudes and approaches that are consistent with a citizenship paradigm is one of the toughest issues.**

Ongoing practical education and engagement in the change process will be needed.

- ◆ **How to build in multi-level safeguards will be key to any new policy and system that focuses on citizenship and community. The move to self-determination and community creates less dependency and new challenges. Multi-level safeguards include the role of family, their networks, and informal community supports as well as more formal kinds of safeguards.**
- ◆ **How to develop the appropriate mechanisms and approaches to innovation in a way that begins to transform the system. Key areas that are in need of innovation, such as residential services, must be a focus.**

In summary,

What is needed to have a chance to get it right?

**Right values, right structures and strategies,
right leadership and training, right
safeguards, right incentives for innovation,
and right funding.**

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