



Interior Association of Family Councils

Newsletter – June 2026

Highlights of May 2026 Family Councils Forum

So much energy and enthusiasm filled the room on May 22 - as family and resident council members, Interior Health staff, and other guests from across the BC Interior gathered for the first-ever Family Councils Forum, co-hosted by Interior Health (IH-Regional Resident & Family Council Network) and Interior Association of Family Councils (IAFC). A total of 36 participants took part; 25 in-person and 11 joining virtually via Microsoft Teams.



The morning session was opened by Heather Stuckey, President, IAFC. Heather welcomed two of BC's most renowned advocates in Family Council circles, Kim Slater and Lisa Dawson.

Heather on behalf of IAFC, was honoured to introduce Kim Slater as the keynote speaker.

Kim's experience as an advocate for Family Council in long-term care goes back to 2001.

After moving his mother into long-term care, and experiencing the huge learning curve residents and families encounter as they navigate long-term care, Kim started a Family Council in the home.



IAFC President welcoming participants to morning session



Kim Slater (on Right) generously shares his wealth of knowledge.

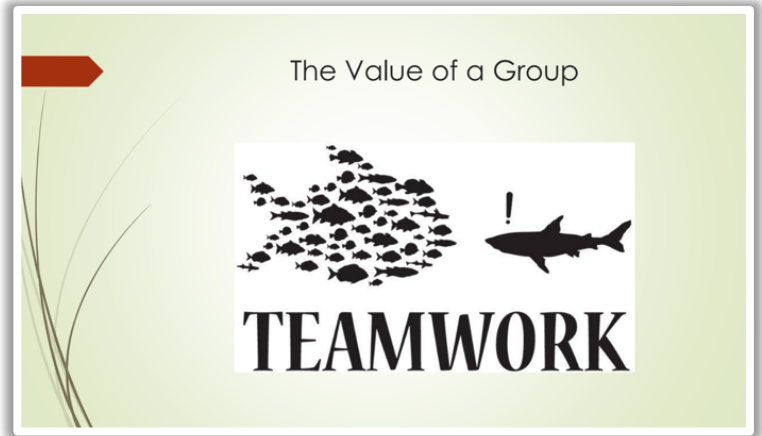
Kim went on to become the founding member of the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils, the first Regional Association of Family Councils in BC, and then to found Family Councils of BC (which later transitioned to become the Independent Long-Term Care Councils of BC). Kim was honoured by BC Care Providers in 2023 as the Family Champion of the Year.

Kim spoke of the many reasons Family Councils are so important in long-term care, and why family and friends who are involved in Family Councils also need to participate at the community and regional level, touching on the results of the BC Seniors Advocate survey “Every Voice Counts: Long-Term Care Resident and Visitor Survey Results” 2023 and 2018 which show that there has been little improvement towards addressing some of the key systemic issues.

Kim’s presentation concluded with a great visual of the value of teamwork copied opposite.

Lisa Dawson, up next, continuing with the theme of Family Councils/team building. Lisa wears many hats in the LTC community.

Lisa is family caregiver to her 94-year-old father, a Family Council Co-Chair at the care home he resides, a founding member of Vancouver Coastal Association of Family Councils, and a co-founder and President of the independent Long-term Care Councils Association of BC.



Visual – The Value of a Group - Courtesy of Kim Slater

Lisa’s topic **Win/Win-Understanding and Adopting a Relational Approach to Advocacy** focussed on how care homes and families can move from tension to trust, to build collaborative relationships that truly support resident well-being.



Lisa Dawson, President of Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC

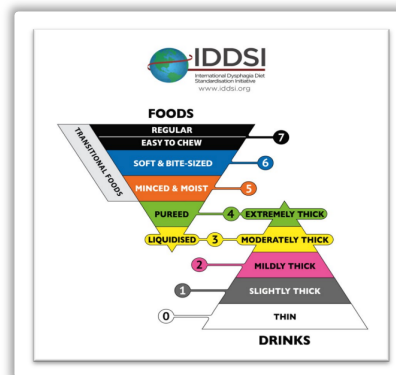
After a lunchbreak, Interior Health opened the afternoon agenda.



The first presentation was made by Rachel Deschenes, Registered Dietician Nutrition Systems Specialist and Kim Norman, Clinical Specialist, Long-Term Care, on the International Dysphasia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI).

IDDSI brings globally recognized terminology and standardized criteria for texture-modified foods to long-term care, improving patient safety and quality of care.

In-person attendees were treated to a demonstration and taste-testing of a new thickening product.



(On Left): A demonstration of a new thickening product.
(On Right): Diagram Illustrating the eight thickness categories.

Sarah Evenshen, Manager, Health-Care Provider Education Delivery with Alzheimer’s Society BC/Yukon was up next, providing a virtual overview of the roll out of the **U-First!®** Dementia Training program that is taking place across the Interior Health region.

U-First!® is a standardized training program designed to help all members of the care team develop a common knowledge base, language and approach to caring for people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The training is currently available to staff working in **publicly funded long-term care homes** through funding provided by the Province of British Columbia. Sarah explained that the training is available to all facilities, but it is not mandatory.

**Family are Encouraged to be Inquisitive:
Is the facility you are associated with embracing the U-First!® training?
A question Family Councils may bring to facility management - If not, why not?**

Sherry Wenzer, Sarah's colleague from the Kelowna office of the Alzheimer's Society was on hand to answer participants' questions and share resources. The Alzheimer's Society has a wealth of information available for families who have with a loved-one living with dementia.

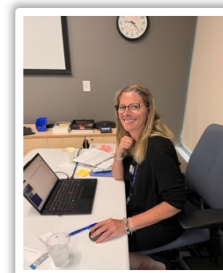
A Family Council representative noted that inviting an Alzheimer's representative to a Family Council meet to speak is a good way to potentially garner new family interest in your Family Councils. Feel free to contact Sherry if you would like to have someone from the Alzheimer's Society attend a Family Council meeting, or need information.

Concluding this great day of education/information sharing was **Vanda Urban, IH Director Long-Term Care and Assisted Living**, who explained what the Long-Term Care Quality Framework is, and how it will be used to inform the measurement and reporting of the quality of publicly funded long-term care services. Included as a measure of quality of life is the number of Active Resident and Family Councils in the Health Authority.

Recognition the positive impact Resident and Family Councils have in the long-term care system in the Long-Term Care Quality Framework will be a catalyst towards greater promotion and support for self-led Resident & Family Councils by the Health Authority and contracted operators.

A Tremendous Effort Co-Hosting this Wonderful Event!

A huge thank you goes to the many who helped to make this day the success that it was. It couldn't have happened without you! The event truly embodied the vision and goals of both co-hosts (Interior Association of Family Councils and Interior Health) and is a testament to the power of collaboration. We look forward to continuing our ongoing collaborations.



L to R: Carol Johnson, Heather Stuckey, Karen Waldie (IAFC Directors), Vanda Urban (IH Director, LTC-AL), Lisa Dawson (ILTCCABC President), Verna Leask and Jackie Harris (IAFC Directors), Kelly Nagel, IH Administrative Support to Vanda Urban

**Link Below to Resources, Slides, Photos Etc.
shared at the Forum**

<https://interiorfamilycouncils.ca/may-2026-forum>

More to Explore!

Independent Long Term-Care Councils Association of BC

Check out Links [Upcoming Events](#) and [Education Portal](#)

Jewish Seniors Alliance of BC:

Senior Line Magazine The magazine was shared at the May 2026 Family Councils Forum resource desk. Read the article by Lisa Dawson. Also, the article: Advocacy in Action: Standing up for Seniors Across British Columbia and What Should Governments Do?

HealthCare Needs Home Care Campaign

<https://www.healthcareneedshomecare.ca/> ILTCCABC is one of the 7 collaborators. This event is June 2 at 411 Seniors Centre in Vancouver if anyone can attend 10-11am.

UBC Okanagan - Storybook Focus Group/Dementia Stories

<https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/livingwelldementiastories/>

UBC-Okanagan is creating a discussion guide to accompany the stories found on the link above, and seek volunteers (between now & end of June) to join one-hour focus group discussions to help inform what a guide might include and explore. If you're interested in participating, please email Heather Neale Furneaux, heatherneale.victoriabc@gmail.com,

We're Here to Help – Let's Connect!

We welcome comments, feedback, and questions from readers of our Newsletter.

The mission of Interior Association of Family Council is to increase awareness of the role of Family Councils in Long-Term Care homes (LTC) and to provide a forum that allows Family Councils to network with one another, to share ideas and information, and collectively advocate to improved quality of life and quality of care for Residents in LTC. Whether you are a family member, a representative of an existing Family Council, someone interested in starting a Family Council or just want to volunteer to help us in our advocacy, please reach out! Add your voice! Add your name to our mail list! We want to hear from you!

If this Newsletter has reached your desk because you are a LTC home manager or Recreation Therapist currently chairing a Resident & Family Council, please share this Newsletter with your Councils and/or share to the e-list of your family members. If your Family Council is staff-led, and you are looking to engage families and friends of Residents towards a self-led Council, we would be happy to join you at an upcoming Council meeting or Townhall.



Contact us: interiorfamilycouncils@gmail.com

Visit Our Website: <http://interiorfamilycouncils.ca>