

Welcome
to
It's My Life
Kamloops Society



Persons Served Handbook

308-444 Victoria St, Kamloops, BC V2C 2A7 PH: 250-377-7661 Open 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday

Welcome to It's My Life Kamloops Society!

We are here to share some of your journey, and to support you and your family members as you grow, learn, struggle, and laugh together.

You will meet many others on your journey - friends, staff, volunteers, other families and their sons and daughters – and we hope you will join and contribute to the community network that is It's My Life Kamloops Society (IMLKS).

This handbook is intended to let you know what we are all about, and what you can expect from us. It has general information that applies across our agency and also includes more specific program details.

It explains who we are, what we do, and what we believe. It outlines our policies in areas such as privacy, rights and responsibilities, advocacy, health and safety and service quality. We believe that by giving you the information you need, you will be better informed to make good decisions and informed choices.

We encourage you to read this handbook and keep a copy on hand to refer to later.

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Who We Are

IMLKS is a non-profit society governed by the *B.C. Society Act*.

We provide community-based supports and services for adults who have a developmental disability, and their families, to assist them to participate and contribute fully and to be recognized and accepted as valued members in our community.

We offer a range of resources and supports designed specifically to address the needs of the person served and their families. We know people are involved in family life and philosophically value adults within the context of their family. We know that if families are well supported, then individual members within those families will also be well supported.

We believe that all people have a right to participate and be accepted in their community. It's our job to help make that a reality.

Our agency is made up of the individuals and families we support and other people who share our vision of an inclusive community. We have a Constitution and By-laws that set out our purpose and the legal rules about how we govern ourselves, including our Board elections, annual general meetings and financial reporting.

We are funded by the provincial government through Community Living BC (CLBC).

In addition to providing funding, the government ministries have their own policies which we adhere to and they are responsible for determining eligibility, and managing waitlists for supports and services we deliver. We will discuss the length of time you may need to wait to receive support during the intake process.

Our Mission and Vision guide our agency activities and decisions. They are the touchstones that remind us every day of why we do what we do.

Our Vision and Mission

IMLKS is committed to providing community based services and supports for adults who have a developmental disability and their families, to assist them to participate and contribute fully and to be recognized and accepted as valued members in the community. As a Society, we are dedicated to:

- Seeing beyond the disability to ability
- Developing and managing services that are
- nurturing, caring, and encourage personal growth, choice and decision making
- Recognizing and valuing the unique abilities that each person brings to the community and creating opportunities for each person to use those abilities
- Informing, educating, involving and motivating others to understand and support the rights of people with disabilities to live, work and belong in our community
- Recognizing that individuals and their families are key
- Fostering and facilitating innovative ideas.

Vision

Our vision is to thrive in a community without barriers where everyone is recognized and valued and equal.

Mission

That the highest quality support is provided to the twelve members who receive services through It's My Life Kamloops Society. By honouring each unique personality, we will create environments that ensure full involvement in all their life choices and decisions.

What We Believe

We are committed to supporting you and your family to live the life you want.

Our philosophical approach includes:

- **Person and Family – Centered Practice**

Our staff and contracted caregivers all understand that we are here to help and offer support, but that it is YOUR life. Everything we do is respectful of the rights of people we support and families to make your own decisions and choices, even when that means taking risks, changing your mind or making mistakes. We see ourselves as partners, facilitators and resource people.
- **Planning**

We develop or help develop individualized personal plans for each adult we support. This could be a care plan to help a respite care provider know how to care for your family member, or a personal plan setting out a person’s life goals. We expect and support the people who use our services and families to participate in the planning process.
- **Supporting Families**

We understand that we support individuals as members of families, and that families usually know them best. Families include an individual’s immediate family, extended family and/or personal support network. Families often need different levels of support through all the ages and stages of the lives of your family members with developmental disabilities. We are committed to helping you connect with other families, and to making sure you have the information, resources and support you need. If we are not able to provide the supports you need, we will refer you to other organizations who will be able to help.
- **Celebrating Diversity**

The Kamloops community and British Columbia are diverse places, where people come from many different cultures, races, religions, ethnic backgrounds and places of origin, reflecting the full range of physical and intellectual abilities, sexual orientation and economic, social and psychological realities. We welcome and value this diversity. Some of the ways we do this are by including the perspectives of many people in our decision-making; hiring staff who reflect the diversity of the community; training staff, caregivers in culturally competent service delivery; creating an organization that is free of discrimination and harassment; and ensuring equitable access to our services for all.

Our Board of Directors

Our volunteer Board of Directors is elected by the Society membership at the annual general meeting, usually held in June of each year. The Board has a President, Vice-President, Secretary and three other Directors. The Board’s job is to safeguard the vision, mission and values of

IMLKS and provide strategic direction for our operations and activities.

Our Staff

The Board delegates the day-to-day management of IMLKS to our Executive Director, and provides him/her with the policy direction and resources to do the job. The Executive Director is responsible for hiring the staff, managing the budget, administering the programs, managing relationships with employees, individuals supported by the organization, families, funding agencies and other stakeholders, and developing operational policy, and is accountable to the Board.

The staff report to the Executive Director, and are responsible for the operation of our services. They are the faces you'll see on a regular basis. Supports in some areas are provided by contracted caregivers and support staff.

All of our staff in our agency follow a Code of Ethics. This means that you can expect to be treated with respect, dignity, courtesy and fairness and that our stated policies and expectations will be followed. If at any time you feel that someone is behaving in an unethical way, we ask that you speak with the Support Staff first, and then speak to the Service Coordinator or Executive Director, if it cannot be resolved. Below is a chart that shows how we are organized.

Organizational Chart



What We Do

Community Inclusion/Supported Living

We believe strongly that, through the Supported Living Program, adults with developmental disabilities have a right to belong to, participate in and contribute to their community. At IMLKS, one of our main goals is to help make this happen, and to support individuals and their families or support networks in the process. Promoting and facilitating community inclusion is part of the regular activities in our Supported Living program and is a focus of our individualized person-centered planning process. Our staff and contracted caregivers plan and tailor these activities to individual interests, with the intent of facilitating opportunities for everyone to make contributions, as well as to participate in meaningful community life.

Advocacy

Advocacy means speaking up and defending the rights of people, or a particular cause or policy. IMLKS is committed to working with and on behalf of adults with developmental disabilities and their families to have a good life and participate fully in our community. We will work with you to improve access to quality supports and services and influence change. We believe advocacy is one of the most important things we do.

We provide advocacy on behalf of families and individuals who want help with a particular concern or issue. This can mean anything from accompanying you to meetings with other agencies such as schools, to helping you deal with the medical world, to assisting with access to resources or decision-makers.

There is also an important role for families to play in supporting the development of advocacy skills in your family members. We assist you to develop your own advocacy skills as well as to support your family members to develop these skills for themselves.

At a provincial level, the BC Association for Community Living (BCACL) provides advocacy for individuals and families and on behalf of member agencies and supports networking for self-advocacy groups. This can also include organizing conferences and training, providing information and resources, and coordinating lobbying and public awareness campaigns.

Supporting Self Advocacy

Self-advocacy means speaking up for yourself and your rights. The self-advocacy movement involves people with developmental disabilities from all over the world speaking up and providing leadership on issues that affect their lives. They promote the principle of self-

determination – an individual’s right to control their own life and make their own decisions. Self-advocates have been instrumental in many important changes in BC including: the move from institutions to community living; changing the way we talk about and describe people with disabilities; developing information and resources in plain language; and, having input into the types of supports and services that are available. There are self-advocacy groups that meet all over BC, including here in Kamloops, which has a SUSA Group. The group brings people together to share ideas and support, to organize training and speaking events, to lobby for change and to have fun and make new friends. We encourage youth and adults with developmental disabilities to join the self-advocacy group.

Planning

Every person is unique, developing at his or her own pace, and with his or her own set of strengths and needs. Each family is also unique, with its own culture, background, beliefs, resources and dreams.

IMLKS is committed to developing individualized plans for the children, youth, adults and families we support. The personal planning process helps articulate a vision for the future, clarifies personal interests in areas such as work, recreation/leisure, home, education, relationships, sets goals, and develops a plan to achieve them.

We encourage the participation of families, support network members, and other professionals involved in supporting your family member, and expect the adults we support to be involved in developing their own plans. We provide assistance to facilitate active involvement in planning, and are flexible about how it is done.

We keep a copy of all plans in the individual’s daily binder and provide copies to you and, with the adult’s consent, others involved in developing them.

Planning Supports for Adults and Families

A planning process that enables you and your family to identify the individual’s strengths and to share your hopes and dreams. You choose who is involved, and who you want to facilitate this process. Participants might include other family members or friends, and staff from the individual’s program and other services you are using- whoever is important in supporting the individual.

The planning process includes the individual’s goals and strategies to achieve them. We make sure that these are incorporated into activities that enhance the quality of life for the individual and other participants take responsibility for incorporating them into other services or parts of the individual’s life.

The personal plan is a comprehensive, individualized document developed with the active involvement of the individual and, wherever possible, their family and members of their

support network. It ensures that the services and supports we provide reflect the individual's needs, preferences and dreams.

Depending upon the kinds of supports and services requested an individual may have a combination of plans as described below. These plans combine to become the person's personal individualized plan. No two plans are alike.

Personal Plan (Mandatory)

A broad life-planning document that identifies the individual's dreams, goals and preferences to enable him or her to live a fulfilling life. Lifestyle Planning is with the 20 domains set through Michael Kendrick, and follow a guide that is available for individuals and families. A personal plan must be developed within six months of starting residential service at IMLKS, and then reviewed and updated every year. A plan that sets out the assistance and support an individual needs in daily life. The care plan includes emergency contact information, lifestyle and personal preferences, activities of daily living, community access and behavioural supports. It provides guidance for staff in how to meet the individual's needs on a daily basis. A care plan must be developed before residential service starts, and reviewed and updated at least annually, or more often if support and care needs change.

Goals (Mandatory)

An action plan that describes how an individual will be assisted or supported to reach specific goals and realize dreams set out in his or her personal plan. An individual program plan is based on the personal plan and must be developed within six months of starting residential service at IMLKS, and then reviewed and updated every year.

Employment Plan (If applicable)

The Employment Plan identifies the steps that need to be taken regarding the supports needed, education or skill development required, and areas of interest for employment exploration within the community. It requires in-depth knowledge of both the job seeker and their community, gathers and presents relevant information about the individual that will help them find the right type of work. The employment plan may have documented information regarding the job seekers interests, strengths, environments that would foster success, activities and learning styles in which the job seeker is at his best, types and methods of effective supports, assistive technology needs, and accessibility needs.

Health Care Plan (If applicable)

Required by some individuals who have critical health care needs that call for the intervention or involvement of a health professional. It is developed in conjunction with the appropriate health professional(s) and if needed, the individual's physician. It includes procedures and training requirements as well as emergency protocols. If a health care plan is required, it **must**

be in place before residential service begins, and be updated annually, or whenever health issues or status changes.

Safety & Behaviour Plan (If applicable)

Required by some individuals who have challenging behaviours. It is developed in conjunction with a psychologist or behavioural consultant, and includes specific prevention measures, training, strategies and interventions.

Programs, Supports and Services

Supported Living offers a variety of individualized living options for adults. The program focuses on optimizing independence, self-determination, personal choice and growth. Support is provided on a 24- hour basis, it is staff with Live- in- Support Workers who do rotational shifts. You are encouraged and welcome to be a part of the process of interviewing staff to assist with supporting you with your goals, dreams and life desires.

Rights, Risks, and Responsibilities

Rights

People using our supports and services enjoy the same rights and opportunities as all Canadian citizens. These rights are set out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *BC Human Rights Code*, and include:

- The right to be treated fairly, regardless of colour, sex, age and mental or physical disability;
- The right to religious freedom;
- The right to our own thoughts, and to talk about them;
- The right to come together with other people;
- The right to learn; and
- Access to the same services and opportunities as everyone else, including schools, rental accommodation and jobs.

Most recently, in March 2010, Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Canadian concepts about inclusive education, living in the community and supported decision-making infuse the Convention. The Convention also recognizes the valuable role that families play in making rights a reality for their family members with disabilities.

The basic ideas of the convention are that:

- People are free to make their own choices.

- No one will be discriminated against.
- Disabled people have the same rights to be included in society as anybody else.
- Disabled people are to be respected for who they are.
- Everyone should have equal opportunities.
- Everyone should have equal access.
- Men and women should have equal opportunities.
- Disabled children should be respected for who they are as they grow up.

In addition, the people we support have specific rights as consumers of IMLKS services. We have set them out in the following statements. Thanks to the Self-Advocacy Forum who helped develop the statement on adult rights.

Risks and Responsibilities

Along with rights come responsibilities. We expect adults participating in our service to respect the rights of others, follow our policies, participate in their own planning and make choices and decisions that affect their lives. Support and guidance is always available. We know that, as members of their families and/or support networks, you support their decision-making and growing independence.

Balancing rights with responsibilities and risks with choices can be difficult. It is a different balance for each person, and each family. Having your own thoughts and opinions is part of becoming an adult and realizing your potential as a person and a citizen. We respect the rights of the adults we support to make mistakes, learn from them, ask for help, change their minds, and try new things – just like the rest of us!

Sometimes the choices and decision we make are different from those our families want us to make, or would make for us. In these situations, we work to hear all opinions and talk with you find solutions and to facilitate a positive outcome. We are committed to keeping individuals safe while using our services, and to honouring family values and customs as much as possible.

We work with individuals and families to anticipate, prevent and respond to situations that may involve risk. IMLKS has processes in place to support adults while address challenging behaviours and risks.

Service Quality

We work hard to do the best job we can. And we are committed to getting feedback, learning more and making changes to improve what we do. We call this continuous quality improvement.

Here are some of the ways we make sure we monitor our performance:

Listening to the People We Support

The people who use our services and their families, are the best judges of what we do and how we do it. We value your feedback and suggestions for improvement. We actively ask for it when we survey you on a regular basis. And we incorporate survey results into improvements we make.

As part of our overall commitment to improving our services, we ask you at least once a year to complete a survey about how satisfied you are with the services you or your family member are accessing. There is a different survey for each program, so you may receive more than one. The questions are about things such as whether your family member has opportunities for personal growth and development, whether his or her choices have been honoured and whether your needs as a family or support network have been met. We also survey the individuals about how they feel about the services.

You may receive a survey after you, or your family member has left IMLKS. We do make an effort to make the surveys available in languages other than English.

We write up the results into a report that helps us make improvements to our programs. It is important that we hear your voice, so please take the time to complete the survey, and add any suggestions or comments. You may also ask us for a copy of the results of these satisfaction surveys.

Surveys are only one way to hear from you about how we are doing. We encourage you to pass along any input or suggestions to your Service Coordinator at any time. We always value your feedback and participation.

Monitoring Ourselves

Through our organizational structure, there are various accountabilities and processes for making sure things are operating well and we continuously work to improve them. Staff are accountable to program Service Coordinators, who in turn report to the Executive Director, who is accountable to the Board of Directors. There are written policies at each level that include ways of collecting information about consumer and family satisfaction, as well as responding to complaints.

Accreditation

Accreditation is a formal process of organizational development and review. Once the process is completed, it identifies that an agency has met organizational and program/service standards of practice in areas including health and safety, input from people who participate in our programs, financial accountability, individualized planning and support, community inclusion

and accessibility. Accreditation focuses on the quality of services delivered, accountability, and overall organizational competence.

As part of the BC Government's Commitment to Social Services, all society's that receive funding from the government, must go through this accreditation process in order to continue to receive funding. IMLKS will go through accreditation in April/May 2018.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Personal Information

We keep this information in a confidential file. Some of the information we hold in our files belongs to the provincial government funding ministries, under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Other than that, we do not share it with anyone outside IMLKS without your permission. You or your family member can ask to review this file, provide updates and correct any information that is not accurate. It is very important that the information you give us is accurate and up-to-date. Please be sure to give us copies of new reports or information. That way, we can adjust our services to meet the changing needs of your son or daughter, and your family.

Consent

In keeping with our commitment to your rights, sharing information is not the only thing we need your consent to do. As part of our intake process, we will ask for your consent to provide service. And, depending on which program you are accessing, we may ask for written consent to take your family member on field trips or to photograph or videotape him or her.

We ask parents or legal guardians to provide consent for their children and youth attending our programs, and we ask adults to provide their own consent.

As part of making decisions for themselves, we support adults to provide their own consent. This includes consent to receive services, consent to share personal information with another agency, and consent to release their photo or name for media purposes. We have plain language forms for these purposes and the consent process is explained to each individual. BC law describes the right of an adult individual to make such decisions for themselves and what happens if he or she needs help doing so. Individuals are presumed capable unless legally proven otherwise, and the way a person communicates is not a factor in determining capability. Some adults may have designated a family member or someone else as their legal 'representative', to make some or all decisions on their behalf. Others may have a legal guardian or 'committee', often a parent, who acts on their behalf.

We make sure that our staff and contracted caregivers understand the legal status of the person they are supporting, and treat the decision-making process, including consent, accordingly.

Health, Safety & Well-being

The health, safety and well-being of your family member is our first priority. Everyone using our services has a right to a safe environment that supports their physical health and their mental and emotional well-being. Here are some of the ways in which we make sure this happens:

Emergency Preparedness

Our agency is prepared to respond to unexpected emergencies, such as fire or earthquake, in ways that meet the distinct needs of the people being supported.

Medication

We make sure medications are stored in secure way and the people who administer medications are trained.

Standard Precautions

Staff, volunteers and contracted caregivers are trained and equipped to protect themselves and the people they support from undue risks related to blood and other bodily fluids. They work with individuals and families to minimize such risks.

First Aid

All staff and contracted caregivers are trained in First Aid.

External Monitoring

We are also accountable to the Workers Compensation Board and various provincial government ministries for following provincial health and safety rules. Community Living British Columbia conducts house visits one time a year, or as needed.

Planning

We work with individuals and families to anticipate health or safety risks or concerns, and to figure out ways to address them. We update and revise plans as people's situations and needs change over time. We make sure all staff and contracted caregivers know about changes and can respond in a consistent way.

Listening to You

It's important that you tell us about any health or safety concerns you have about your family member. You know them best. We commit to listen to you and do our best to address them. For more specific policies about health and safety see Part Two.

Your Relationship with IMLKS

Expectations

Relationships usually work better if people know what to expect.

As a family member, you can expect IMLKS staff, contracted caregivers and volunteers to:

- treat you and members of your family with respect, dignity, courtesy, and fairness, always being mindful of your rights;
- follow our mission and values in our actions and decisions;
- follow our Code of Ethics, including respecting the privacy of personal information, avoiding conflict of interest, and not exploiting service relationships to private advantage;
- provide you and your family member with a level of planning support and assistance that works for you;
- communicate openly and regularly with you;
- strive to improve our practice, participating in training and professional development on a regular basis; and
- always meet or exceed standards set by government and our accrediting agency and are continuously reviewing and improving the quality of our services.

We ask that you:

- provide us with the information we need to provide the best possible support or service;
- follow the policies in place for our programs;
- treat us, other families and people who use our services, with respect, dignity, courtesy and fairness;
- participate in orientation activities and assist in training caregivers regarding the needs of your family member, if appropriate;
- communicate openly with us and let us know about any concerns; and
- participate in planning related to your family member.

There may be more specific expectations related to individual programs, such as staff qualifications and parental involvement.

Problem Solving

We use a proactive approach to preventing and dealing with concerns or problems as they arise. We believe that an open-door approach and effective communications are the best ways to address differences and resolve problems. Our staff are trained in positive problem solving and communication techniques, and we put a lot of effort into communicating with the people we support, our staff and contracted caregivers, families and support network members.

We encourage everyone to address their concerns or complaints right away, and not allow them to grow. If a more formal process is required, we have policies on conflict resolution and complaint resolution that provide for fair processes and methods of resolving situations. We try to resolve differences directly with the people involved whenever possible. We will review these policies with you during your orientation meeting, and you may ask for copies at any time.

If you feel your concern has not been resolved by IMLKS, we encourage you to contact the appropriate representative from the government ministry that provides our funding. Most government offices also have a process to receive complaints and we will help put you in touch with the appropriate person.

Resources

Your job as a parent or other member of a support network of an adult with a developmental disability can be overwhelming at times. IMLKS is here to help and support you as you face the challenges of every-day life, and figure out the various programs and options.

If IMLKS is not able to provide the supports and services your family member requires, we will explore other options with you and make suggestions and referrals to other community supports and organizations.

Outside of IMLKS, there are other resources available to you in Kamloops and the province as well. Here's a partial list:

- **Community Living British Columbia (CLBC)** is a provincial authority that provides funding and determines eligibility for some of our adult programs, such as LIFE Services, Respite Services and Residential Programs, including the Supported Living Program. In addition, CLBC staff provide independent planning support to individuals and families through its Kamloops Community Living office. 250-377-4444
- **Enquiry BC** Free government information line that connects you to any government offices throughout BC for free by phone or fax. 1-604-660-2421
- **Human Resources Skills Development Canada** Registered Disability Savings Plan http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/disability_savings/index.shtml
- **Inclusion BC** 1-604-777-9100

- **Police, Fire and Ambulance Services** 911
- The **Ministry of Social Development** 1-888-866-0800
- The **Ministry of Human Resources** provides income assistance, BC Disability Benefits, for people with disabilities who are 18 or over. These benefits can include a monthly financial allowance, medical and dental coverage and bus passes.
- **BC Transit** provides HandyDart service for people using wheelchairs or scooters or requiring assistance to use public transit. 1-866-866-0800 (press 4 then 3)
- **Coast Foundation** Non-profit society that sets up Discretionary and Non-Discretionary Trust Funds for people with disabilities and their families. 1-604-872-3502
- The **Advocate for Service Quality** is available to individuals and families who are dissatisfied with the services and supports they are getting from the provincial government or agencies funded by them.
- The **Office of the Public Trustee** can provide information about guardianship, setting up a representation agreement and/or health care consents for adults who are not able to make their own decisions about all or part of their lives. 1-604-660-4444 email: mail@trustee.bc.ca
- **BC Coalition of People with Disabilities Advocacy Access** 1-604-872-1224 TTY: 1-604-875-8835 website: www.bccpd.bc.ca
- The **Nidus Personal Planning and Resource Centre** is a non-profit charitable organization that provides information to British Columbians about personal planning, including Representation Agreements.
- The **Family Support Institute (FSI)** is a province-wide organization whose purpose is to strengthen and support families faced with the extraordinary circumstances that come with having a family member who has a disability. FSI believes that families are the best resource available to support one another. Directed by families, the Family Support Institute provides information, training and province-wide networking to assist families and their communities to build upon and share their strengths.
- **Provincial Ombudsman** Government officer responsible for receiving and following up on complaints regarding being treated unfairly by any government staff including decisions by CLBC personnel. 1-80-567-3247 www.ombudsman.bc.ca
- **Representation Agreement Resource Centre of BC** Register your Representation Agreement with this alternative to public guardianship. 1-604-408-7414 www.rarc.ca Email: info@nidus.ca

Supported Living

Supported living supports you with your desires, goals, strengths, abilities, needs, and health and to make sure you are safe. Your support will be based on your needs and you and your family will have input into everything that happens in your life. We will support you with a healthy life style, your person care (if needed) keeping your home clean and inviting to your visitors, helping you to have valued roles in your life. An example of a valued role is, having a job that you are paid for doing, being a tenant, voting, volunteering in your community, and being a part of a club. We will help you make friends, get to know your neighbours, get to all

your medical appointments. Making sure you are supported to have a social life and friendships and large social network. At IMLKS we believe family and friends keeps you safe and prevents you from becoming lonely. Most people who are supported through IMLKS are supported with 24 hour, 7 day a week live in support. This does not mean you cannot see your family or friends without your staff with you, we want to help you to be as independent as possible with still being safe. When you first come into our service you may need us to hire staff for you, you and your family (if you want your family involved) are included in the interview and you have the right to help pick who is going to support you. Sometimes staff change and we may have to hire someone new for you, don't worry we have a great team of people who will put ads out to look for a new staff and we then only bring people that are qualified and have the same interests as you for you and your family to meet.

Our Staff

We have a Service Coordinator who is responsible for all homes, and who hires and supervises the staff who work in the homes. Live-In Support Workers, Contractors and Community Support Workers receive additional and ongoing training in person-centred planning and goal setting, IMLKS values and ethics, and behaviour management. Individual staff members have specific responsibilities and may have additional training specific to the support needs of the individual(s) they work with. We work to match the skills and personalities of staff with the support needs and preferences of each individual, and are open to making changes if situations are not working out.

We believe that our service offers excellent learning environments for people wishing to enter this field of work. We also believe that the adults who are supported in the homes are excellent teachers and guides.

Entering Supported Living

The provincial government determines if someone is eligible for Support Living support, decides the priority of the service need, and provides the funding. An individual needs a referral from CLBC in order to access IMLKS Supported Living.

Once a referral has been made, we arrange to start what we call the **intake process**.

This includes:

- Meeting with you and your family member to explain IMLKS philosophy, services, policies and entrance criteria;
- Gathering information about the individual's physical and support needs;
- Discussing our supported living supports

After this, we determine whether we can provide what the individual needs and wants, and whether the support we have to offer is suitable. The individual and their families will also decide to accept the services. This is a joint decision making process involving the individual and IMLKS. As family and other support network members, you are a part of that decision-making process.

If the individual decides not to accept our services, IMLKS will provide information and potential alternate resources. IMLKS is committed to supporting all eligible individuals; however, at times it may not be due to funding limitations or other circumstances. The individual may also ask to be put on a waitlist pending the availability of appropriate services and/or funding. (More information is available in the IMLKS intake and assessment policy)

If the individual does decide to accept our services, we begin what we call the **assessment period**. It is a time for us to learn more about his or her specific support needs. During this, we also discuss and plan how and when the move will happen, and complete the care plan.

Moving into a new home is a big change. It can be an exciting time, but can also cause anxiety and concern – both for the adult making the move, and for your family and others who care about him or her.

Family Involvement

Families and other support network members can play a vital role in the life of an adult with developmental disabilities. Ideally, you participate actively in planning, and in major decisions such as moving to a new home, or beginning a new program or job. You likely visit your family member, include him or her in some of your family activities, get to know his or her friends, roommates and staff, monitor his or her services, and act as an advocate.

It is equally important that you support the independence of the individual, so that he or she can expand his or her own capacity to make decisions and choices, and develop self-advocacy skills. This can be difficult sometimes, as it means adjusting to growing independence in someone you have always protected. It also means setting some boundaries in your relationship, and allowing your family member to take some chances and maybe make some mistakes on their own. It becomes a balance between the love and caring you will always show and feel, and the process of letting them become their own person, independent to the fullest extent possible. We are here to help you through this process. Our Service Coordinator can provide resources and put you in touch with other families going through the same process.

As well as playing an important role in the life of your family member, we encourage you to get involved in IMLKS activities. It is a great way to find out more about what is happening in community living, advocacy and self-advocacy, and to meet others sharing your journey.

Health and Safety

The health, safety and well-being of the people we support are always our first considerations. The individuals have the right to a safe residential environment that supports their physical, mental and emotional well-being. We are committed to monitoring and ensuring this through multiple safeguards:

- Staff are trained in First Aid, CPR, abuse recognition, and responding to emergencies or critical incidents.
- There are fully stocked First Aid kits in all homes and in IMLKS vehicles used to transport residents.
- All staff have cleared a criminal record search.
- There is no smoking, alcohol or illicit drug use allowed in our homes.
- All staff follow standard precautions when providing personal care.
- We have policies and procedures and regular staff training in areas such as violence prevention, accident prevention, emergency response, and workplace health and safety.
- We have an emergency preparedness program that includes regular fire and earthquake drills.
- We document medication administration, and arrange for medical, dental and specialist appointments for residents.
- Casual staff are available to cover times when regular staff are sick or on holidays.
- Individual care plans for each person served address any safety concerns related to their individual needs, including response to missing persons, and acting-out behaviour in vehicles.
- Staff-owned vehicles used to transport residents carry business-class insurance – 3 million liability.
- In the case of an emergency, accident or a 911 call, IMLKS has a manager on call 24 hours a day. We respond appropriately, write a report and notify the family immediately.

Finances

Most individuals in the IMLKS Supported Living Program receive Disability Benefits from the provincial government. They are expected to use these funds to cover their personal needs such as clothing, food and personal care items, as well as the costs of recreational and community activities. Depending on their financial situation, some individuals may also pay rent.

Learning to manage money is part of skill development for many residents. The goals and strategies for supporting this are included in their personal and individual program plans. Depending on the individual's interests and abilities, staff will assist the individual to do their

own banking and make their own purchases.

Each person will have a Cash on Hand booklet , with a financial information sheet and documentation of all cash and banking transactions done with or on behalf of him or her.

Keeping in Touch

Good communications with family and support network members is very important. It can enrich the individual's life, and support his or her increased independence. Some families want a lot of contact, others not so much, so the frequency and type of communications varies. Here are some of the ways we support and encourage good two-way communications. Please let us know which ones you want to take advantage of:

- We share important changes with you as they happen.
- We invite you to participate in all planning meetings.
- We call you in the event of an emergency or other critical incident.
- We ask for your feedback as part of our annual satisfaction survey.
- We have an 'open-door' policy, and encourage you to let us know about any concern or issue you have.
- We provide conflict resolution support if issues arise involving the individual, staff and/or family.

Leaving IMLKS

Sometimes life changes and a resident leaves our Services. This may happen because it has not worked well and they are moving to a different home, or because they want to try another option such as Supported Living. No matter what the reason, we are there to help plan for and support the transition to a new living arrangement. We prepare a detailed exit summary about your family member, documenting their experience and progress. We will share this with the new service provider(s) and work with you and other agencies or programs to plan for the transition.