

Position Statement from the Council of Community Living Ontario Re: Long-Term Care Institutions

June 6, 2022

Introduction:

We are members of the Council of Community Living Ontario. The 12 elected members are self-advocates, people who have an intellectual disability, representing five regions across the province. The Council is recognized in the constitution of Community Living Ontario. As the voice for self-advocates, Council collaborates with the Board of Directors to find solutions for issues that will improve the lives of people who have an intellectual disability.

People who have an intellectual or developmental disability have been kept on the sidelines of society, abused and neglected for many years. The people who make the decisions have limited our freedom. Labels have been used that make us less valuable, as if we are a different type of person from the main people in society. We have been placed in a variety of settings to live our lives and treated with care that is good for the caregiver or organization, but not for us. Being sent to live in a nursing home is a threat that is used against us and it is one that frightens us very much. The time for change is now, and it starts with a change in the attitude of the people who make decisions about us. We want to be seen as the people that we are and we want to have freedom, power and prosperity in our lives. We want decisions to be made based on the model of inclusive communities for ALL.

Issues and areas of concern:

- We are being told there isn't anywhere for us to live in our communities, so we are sent to live in nursing homes.
- We are frightened about losing our identities and our freedom.
- We are frightened of losing the connections we have to our communities, friends and families.
- We are not being heard; we are not included in decision making about our housing.
- We are frightened for people who are not able to use their own voice to stand up for their needs.
- We are frightened by the rules that help the caregiver but hurt us.
- We are frightened about not having choices in our lives

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What needs to change:

- Get people who identify as having an intellectual disability out of long-term care institutions
- Stop using us to fill up long-term care beds
- Stop suggesting that placements in a long-term care institution is a choice, because they are **NOT** a choice.
- Stop using labels to separate us from our communities.
- Stop treating us as if we do not belong and sending us away because someone thinks we need too much care.
- Stop destroying us as people, and taking away our lives.

Next steps:

- Create diverse communities where ALL people are seen, heard, and included.
- Provide a variety of choices of where we can live, so we can pick out the one that best suits our needs, and allows us freedom to live our lives.
- Include us in decisions and problem solving.
- Provide support for us to live in the home of our own choosing in the community of our choice.
- Provide support for us to live in our own homes in our own communities as we age and our needs change.
- Develop a positive attitude towards ALL people.

Conclusion:

We, people who have lived experience, have been waiting for a long time for positive, inclusive change to happen. We, the Council of Community Living Ontario, know that change can happen if organizations and government supports work with us, our friends, and families. We need to work together and communicate to find solutions. We are confident that it is possible for us to stay living in our home, in our community neighbourhood, as we age. Change can happen and change will benefit everyone...us, our families, friends, and neighbourhoods.

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