

# FAMILY INFORMATION HANDBOOK

## INCLUSION CLARE

**Inspire Confidence and Ensure Inclusion**

Welcome to Inclusion Clare! We serve and support adults with disabilities and their families. We are a member of the Nova Scotia Community Living Association and are known as Maison Jerome, Maison d'Amis and Atelier de Clare.

Whether you are attending one of Inclusion Clare's employment programs, living in one of the homes or participating in a special project sponsored by our organization; we welcome you.

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

You will meet others on your journey – friends, staff, volunteers, other families. We hope you will join and contribute to the community network that is Inclusion Clare.

This handbook is intended to let you know what we are all about, what you can expect from us, and provides tips and guidelines for you as family members. The goal is to build a positive, collaborative relationship working in partnership to help your family member succeed!

It outlines our vision and values, philosophy of support and touches on some of our policies around privacy, rights and responsibilities, advocacy, health and safety and service quality. We believe by giving you information you need, you will be better informed to make good decisions and informed choices.

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

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## Who We Are

We provide community-based programs, supports and services for adults with disabilities to assist them to contribute fully and to be recognized and accepted as valued members of our community. The adults we support have a wide range of abilities and circumstances. Living arrangements include living independently, with family, in residential care facilities or within the residential program offered at Inclusion Clare. We believe that regardless of abilities or circumstance, all people have the right to participate and be included in community. It is our job to help make that a reality.

As an agency, we are dedicated to:

- Seeing beyond the disability to ability;
- Developing and managing services and programs 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;
- Recognizing that individuals and their support networks are part of our team; and
- Fostering and facilitating innovative ideas.

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

## Our Vision, Mission & Values

### VISION

To inspire confidence and ensure inclusion.

### MISSION

We foster and promote accessible and responsive living, working and learning opportunities in service of adults with disabilities in the community of Clare; empowering self-advocates in achieving their individual potential for full community living.

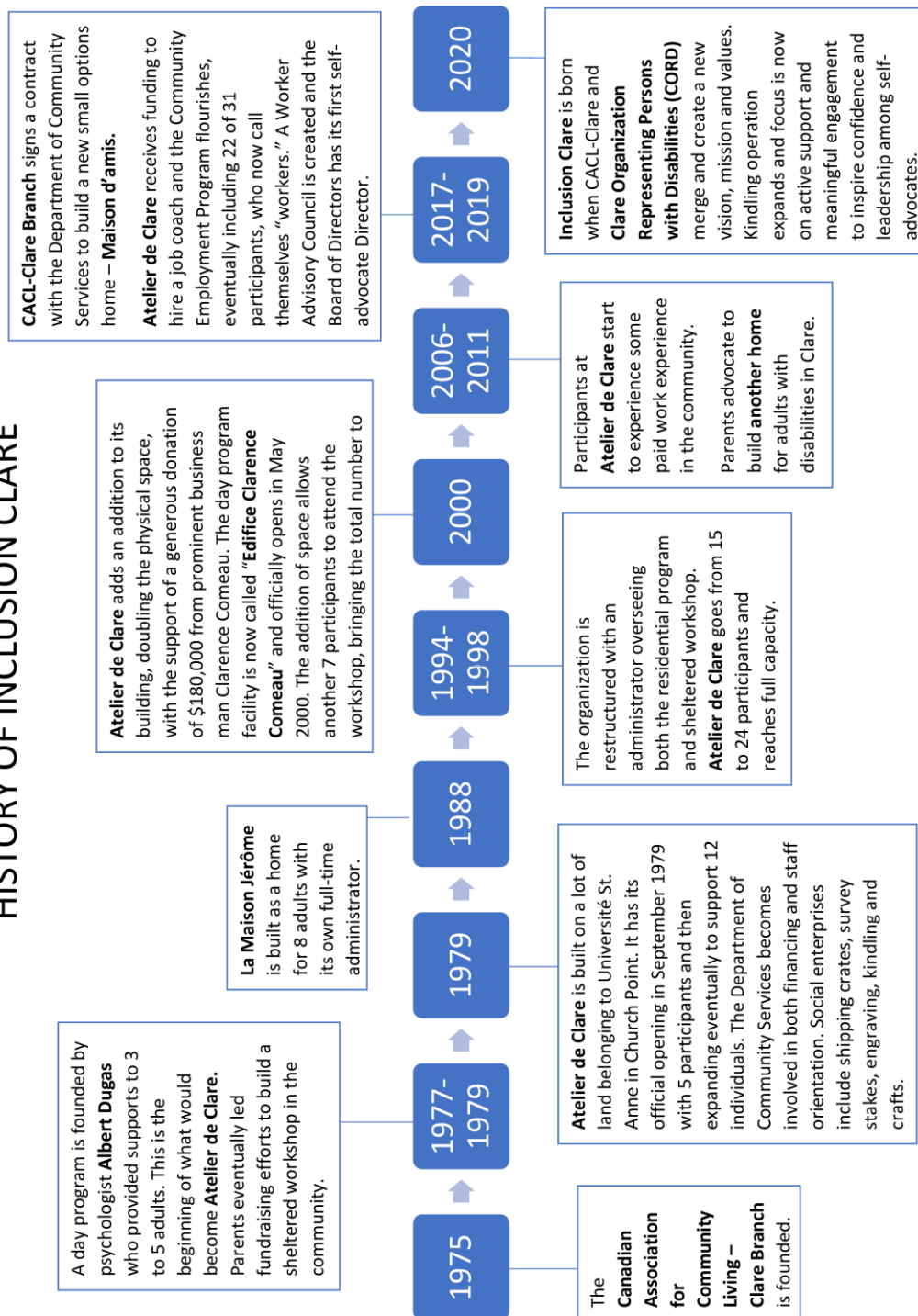
### VALUES

Every action, statement, policy or publication will honour and promote the values and principles of

- Respect
- Culture
- Equity
- Moral Courage
- Self-Direction
- Learning Together
- Community Support
- Creativity

## Timeline of Agency & Evolution of Support

### HISTORY OF INCLUSION CLARE



Inclusion Clare's history is similar to many community living organizations, having grown from the desire of parents to have services for their family members with disabilities provided in their home communities. These supports and services have evolved over the years with programs becoming more individualized and offering greater choice and flexibility than ever before.

We will continue to have a proactive outlook, respond to the needs, desires and voice of individuals we support and work with them to develop supports and services using evidence based best practices.

## Our Staff and Volunteers

The Board delegates the day-to-day management of the agency to an Executive Director, and provides them with the policy direction and resources to do the job. The Executive Director, along with a leadership team, is responsible for hiring staff, managing the budget, overseeing the programs, managing relationships with all stakeholders, developing operational policy, and is accountable to the Board.

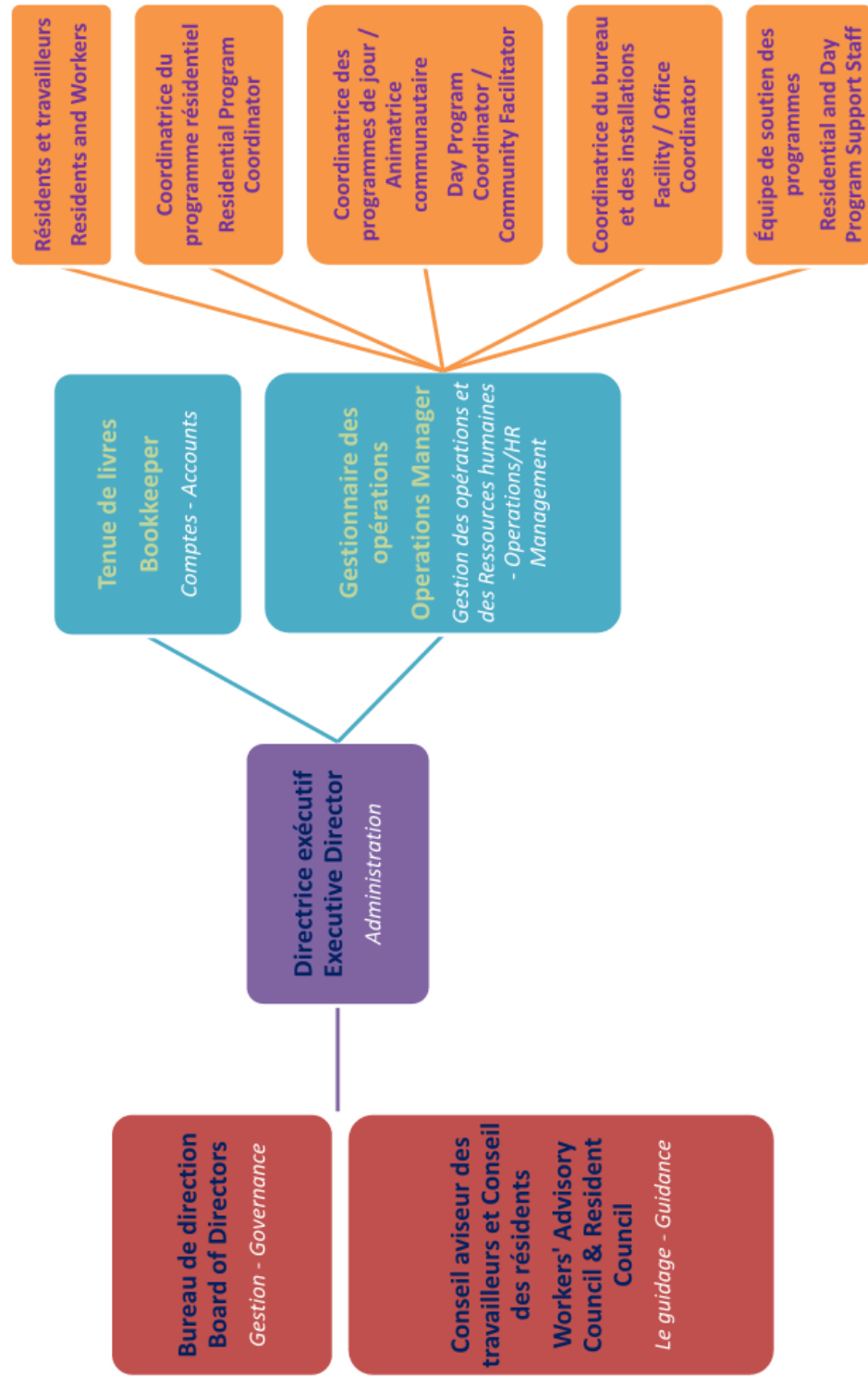
The staff report to the leadership team and are responsible for the daily operations of the programs and services. They are the faces you will see on a regular basis. At times, they are assisted by volunteers and other contracted support providers.

All staff and volunteers in our programs follow a Code of Ethics. This means 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 Program Coordinator first, and then speak to the Operations Manager, if it cannot be resolved.

Below is a chart that shows how we are organized.

## INCLUSION CLARE

### Organigramme organisationnel – Organizational Chart





## What We Do

### Philosophy of Support

Support and the way we help people live the lives they want has changed over the years. Inclusion Clare believes that actively supporting people is the best way to help them succeed, to experience growth and to reach their personal and work goals.

What is Active Support?

- Active Support is helping people to be actively, consistently, and meaningfully engaged in their own lives regardless of their support needs. The focus is on engagement, preferences, and opportunities. Success is not defined as “completion of task.”
- Be Engaged: Doing things; Participating; Spending time with others; Making decisions; Making choices
- Actively: Each day; Through-out the day whenever there is an opportunity;
- Consistently: With approaches that provide enough structure and predictability that people experience comfort, continuity, and have a better ability to be engaged;
- Meaningfully: In ways that increase competence and opportunity; in ways that help people be and stay connected to others (socially); in ways that provide enhanced esteem; in ways that are focused on needs, preferences, and goals of the person.

Active Support changes the style of support from ‘caring for’ to ‘working with’. It promotes independence and supports people to take an active part in all aspects of home and work. The belief is that everyone benefits when people learn to do for themselves, build on existing skills and learn from mistakes. The support given to the person is also active; it enables people with disabilities to live ordinary lives. Active Support enables people with disabilities to develop new skills, access a wider range of opportunities and engage in activities alongside other people, building important relationships and social networks that are part of an ordinary life. These skills give people more control over their own lives.

Inclusion Clare is committed to providing training opportunities to all staff in Active Support and this approach of support will be promoted and encouraged from all members of the person’s family and social support network.

### Community Inclusion

We believe strongly that adults with disabilities have a right to belong to, participate in and contribute to their community. At Inclusion Clare, one of our main goals is to help make this happen, and to support individuals and their support networks in the process. Promoting and facilitating community inclusion is part of the regular activities in all of our programs and is a focus of our person centred planning process. Our staff and those supported in our programs

work together to plan activities tailored to individual interests, with the intent of facilitating opportunities for everyone to make contributions and to participate in meaningful community life.

## Advocacy and Supporting Self-Advocacy

Advocacy means speaking up and defending the rights of people, policy or cause. Inclusion Clare is committed to working with, and on behalf of adults with disabilities to have a good life and participate fully in our community. We will work to improve access to quality supports and services and to influence change.

While we believe in the importance and power of advocacy, we feel supporting people to be self-advocates is even more powerful. Helping people with disabilities learn skills, gain confidence and learn to speak for themselves and to take leadership roles on issues that affect their lives. We believe in promoting the principle of self-determination-an individual's right to control their own lives and make their own decisions.

Inclusion Clare provides support to self-advocates in skill development in communication, leadership and facilitation skills. They are an integral part of decision making on programs and policies that affect their lives both in the homes and at Atelier de Clare through consultation with the Resident Council and the Worker Advisory Council.

Both Councils bring together people supported in either the residential or employment programs to share ideas and support, to organize and participate in training, to lobby for change, to provide input and guidance to the leadership team/Board of Directors and to have fun and make friends.

## Planning

Every person is unique, developing at their own pace and with their own set of strengths and needs. Each person brings their own beliefs, culture, life experiences and dreams.

Inclusion Clare is committed to developing a personal planning process that helps articulate a vision for the future, clarifies personal interests and goals in areas such as work, recreation/leisure, home, education, and relationships.

With the consent of the person being supported, the participation of families and support networks in the development of the plans is welcome.

## Informed Choices and Decisions

All people have the right to make decisions and choices. We know that sometimes people might need help to make choices.

Following are some different ways we assist people supported in our programs to do that:

- We give information:

Before a choice is made, we give as much information as needed to make what is called an “informed choice.”

- We provide support to try out options:

We know that people need to know about options before they can make an informed choice. As much as we can, we will support people to try out different options.

- It’s okay if people change their mind:

We know that people may change their minds when they are exploring options. We also know it is all a part of learning to make choices and decisions. If choices are made and the outcome is not favorable, support will be given to explore available options.

- Support to ask for help

Some people may want someone who knows them well to help them make choices.

All people have the right to make informed decisions and choices.

## Rights, Risks & Responsibilities

### Rights

People using our supports and programs enjoy the same rights and opportunities as all Canadian citizens. These rights are set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and include the right to:

- be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy
- privacy
- self-determination and the right to accept risk
- participate in decisions, indicate preferences and make choices regarding lifestyles
- individuality and acknowledgement of their uniqueness

- meaningful and intimate relationships
- interact with other members of the community
- adequate support in their day to day life
- vote

It is the responsibility of the staff, leadership team and Board of Directors to safeguard these rights.

## Responsibilities

Along with rights come responsibilities. We expect adults participating in our programs 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 personal development.

## Balancing Duty of Care & Dignity of Risk

Supporting someone to become autonomous means that they have to take some risks - both small and large. Keeping them “safe” may limit their opportunities to learn and enjoy a satisfying life. 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 being an adult and realizing your own 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!

### What is duty of care?

Duty of care is the legal responsibility which was set up to ensure people are not harmed by the services an organization and its staff provides. The main misconception is that services have a duty of care to protect the person from themselves and their own choices, but this is not necessarily true.

Duty of care means we have a duty to step in on situations if there is a risk of:

- death (including suicide)
- permanent and serious disability
- lack of capacity – and this is deemed by a legal process

And while these points are vital to be mindful of, we need to ensure we are not ‘over protecting’ the person unnecessarily. Each person has the right to make decisions for themselves.

### **What is their dignity of risk?**

Every person, including those living with a disability, has the right to make their own choices. What this means is we have the dignity to make our own choices and so do other people. This means everyone can take certain risks, to learn from mistakes and to grow and choose how they want to live their life.

Sometimes the choices and decisions 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 to find solutions and to facilitate a positive outcome for the person supported.

## **Service & Support 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 monitor our performance:

### **Listening to the people we support**

As mentioned, we meet regularly with the people supported in our programs through collaboration with the Resident and Worker Advisory Councils as they are the best judges of what we do and how we do it. In addition, we meet with individuals living at Maison Jerome and Maison d’Amis as part of their PATH (Planning for Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) and ask for their feedback and suggestions as to how staff can improve any support given in order for them to be successful reaching their goals and dreams.

At our day program, workers participate in performance reviews and the staff and program coordinator ask for their input on a regular basis to ensure supports meet their needs and are helping them achieve their employment goals.

### **Following Standards**

There are provincial departments including the Department of Community Services that have standards and service principles applicable to both our residential and employment programs

and we must follow these in order to receive funding. Our funding and licensing agencies regularly review what we are doing, require written reporting from us, and provide us with information about our compliance with regulations.

## 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 coordinators, who in turn report to the Operations Manager, who is accountable to the Executive Director. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors. There are written policies at each level that outline performance expectations, communication processes, etc.

## Privacy & Confidentiality

Under the direction of provincial law, we protect the privacy of confidential information about the people we support and their families. Confidential information is any information about someone that is of a sensitive or personal nature such as medical, educational, financial or psychological information. It can be in any form including names, meeting notes, e-mails, reports, videos or photographs. The information we gather is kept up to date and in a secure place.

## Personal Information

When your family member applies for one or more of our programs, we ask for basic information about the individual and family. Once the application has been accepted and we start working together to plan for the supports they need, we may ask you for more detailed information. This information might include medical, psychological and educational information and reports or assessments from other programs. We need these in order to understand the strengths and needs of your family member, and to provide the best possible supports.

We keep this information in a confidential file. Some of the information we hold in our files belongs to the Department of Community Services or other agencies. We do not share this information with anyone outside of Inclusion Clare without the permission of the individuals supported and/or their substitute decision maker if applicable.

## Consent

In keeping with our commitment to rights, sharing information is not the only thing we need your consent to do. 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 (or employer), and consent to release their photo or name for media purposes.

Nova Scotia law describes the right of an adult individual to make such decisions for themselves and what happens if they need 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 a substitute decision maker assigned to make some or all decisions on their behalf.

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

## Visiting Guidelines for Maison Jerome and Maison d'Amis

Visiting family members is essential for your well-being as well as theirs. Supporting individuals in our organization is a partnership and we recognize that first and foremost it is their home and you are their family. Given that the homes are shared with others, and it is also a workplace for staff, we have some general guidelines for you to keep in mind for visiting.

### **Do's for Visiting:**

- Respect the privacy of your family member as well as the privacy of their housemates. This means knocking at the door when entering, respecting the confidentiality of information shared, asking them if it's okay to take pictures, etc.
- Be warm in interacting with all members of the household and allow housemates to work out any conflicts they may have with each other. Refrain from getting involved in matters of their household unless your family member asks for advice or information from you.
- Keep the conversation positive and refrain from gossiping or speaking of others in a negative way.
- Call ahead to arrange your visit around your family member's plans and routines, respecting the fact that planned activities can be disrupted with an unplanned visit.
- Attend the regularly scheduled planning sessions (PATHs) to which you are invited by your family member. This is a good time to provide input and get updates on how they are doing.
- If for some reason there is a time that is not convenient to visit, respect this and don't take it personally.

**Don'ts for Visiting:**

- Don't take pets to visit until you check with those who live at the house to see if it's okay, if there are any allergies, fears, etc.
- Don't stay too late, remembering that the house is shared and night routines are different for everyone and bearing in mind that most residents work the next day.
- Don't feel the need to bring sweets and treats each time you come. Your good company is enough.
- Don't stay too long as it may interfere with the staff's provision of needed support to your family member or others in the household. How long is too long? That depends. Feel free to review this with the residents and staff who support them.
- Don't interrupt the residents' activity time. Find out from the staff when activities are scheduled. Offer to assist or be involved if you like while remembering that activity time is a way for the members of the household to develop their relationship.
- Don't visit at mealtime unless you have checked to see if it's okay. This is a time for focus on life skill development and may be a distraction for the residents and their learning of valuable skills.

**Do's for Interacting with Staff:**

- Get to know the staff members involved in supporting your family member and be appreciative of their support.
- Keep the lines of communication open. Should there be a problem, communicate it promptly and directly to the Operations Manager. Never confront a staff or give them direction as to how they should be doing their job.

**Don'ts for Interacting With Staff:**

- Don't order the staff around. If you have requests, speak directly with the Operations Manager.
- Don't bring gifts for individual staff. If you wish, tokens of appreciation for the staff team are acceptable.
- Don't be a chronic complainer. It's like crying wolf. Before you lodge a complaint ask yourself if it's really a problem.
- Don't have unrealistic expectations. Understand that staff are trying to do the best they can. Again, before complaining, make sure it's a problem — not just a preference.

## 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.



## Emergency Preparedness

Every program is prepared to respond to unexpected emergencies, such as power outages, fire, or a pandemic, in ways that meet the distinct needs of the people being supported.

## Medication

We make sure medications are stored safely and that all staff who administer medications are trained.

## First Aid

All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR.

## External Monitoring

We are inspected regularly by the office of the fire marshal and by the licensing division of the Department of Community Services. We are also accountable to the Workers Compensation Board and other provincial departments for following health and safety regulations.

## Your Relationship with Inclusion Clare

### On-going Communications

A successful organization depends on everyone communicating with each other.

This way, people feel connected to the whole, everyone knows what is going on, feels listened to, and know what to do if they have a concern. We make an effort to keep you informed by communicating and sharing information in a number of ways including posting information on our website. You can also “Find us on Facebook” and may receive occasional updates by email.

### Strategies to help your family member succeed

As a family member supporting an adult with a disability to transition into work or a new living arrangement, it can be a bit distressing. Up to this point, you have been the primary support, helping them make decisions, advocating for them and managing life’s complications. Because your family member has a disability, you may have exercised a lot of influence in their lives- much longer than most parents. Moving into a new home or work environment with new

people 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 family and others who care about them.

You may worry about their ability to make decisions and wonder how they will manage without you being there beside them on a daily basis. There may be a struggle with your desire to protect them while at the same time desperately wanting them to spread their wings and fly on their own.

It is important that you support the personal growth of the individual, so they can expand their own capacity to make decisions and choices, and develop self-advocacy skills. This can be difficult sometimes, as it means adjusting to growing autonomy 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 confident and competent person.

Here are some strategies to help your family member:

**Strategy #1: Keep the lines of communication open.** Help them understand they can discuss anything with you, and the best way you can make sure they understand this is by demonstrating that you are a good listener. Ask non-leading, non-judgmental questions that help them clarify their decision. Be open to feedback from support staff and view the support to your family member as a partnership where the mutual goal is for your family member to succeed.

**Strategy #2: Declare (and demonstrate) your intent to encourage and respect their independence.** Be available to discuss things with them if they need to, and when you are discussing things, also understand that you may not always be right. Your beliefs may not be their beliefs.

**Strategy #3: Treat them like the adult they are.** Have adult conversations with them, ask their opinion about current events or other topics they are interested in, and engage in activities together as two adults rather than parent and child.

**Strategy #4: Help them make decisions without trying to influence them.** When they come to you for help making decisions, don't step in to make the decision for them. Don't even try to influence their decision. Ask questions that allow them to notice blind spots they may have in their thinking. And unless the object of the decision is illegal, unethical, immoral, support it. If it is a decision where you know the outcome will have a huge impact on their life, ask if you can present your views, and then, with permission, make your case and then support them, regardless of the decision they make.

**Strategy # 5: Be open to new approaches and training.** Work with support staff and your family member and be open to exploring new ways of learning that will empower your family member in gaining new skills and abilities.

**Strategy #6: Help your family member become their own advocate.** Speaking of empowerment, give your adult family member the information they need and encourage them to make their own calls for appointments, make their own requests for accommodations and so on. Recognize that people learn by doing for themselves.

**Strategy #7: Celebrate every success!** Celebrate each step toward independence, each happy result, each effort made toward their goals. Be on the lookout for and notice anything they do well. Helping your family member make it on their own is an important part of your role. When a decision does not provide the desired results, help them see the lessons learned and listen to them.

## Expectations

Relationships usually work better if people know what to expect.

As a family member, you can expect Inclusion Clare staff 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;
- provide you and your family member with a level of support and assistance that works for the person being supported;
- with consent of the person being supported, 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 continuously review and improve 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/transitioning activities and assist in providing information to staff 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.

## 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.

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.

## Summary

In summary, we want to thank you for entrusting us to provide supports and services to your family member and we look forward to learning and working with them. It is our privilege to partner with you and work together toward our vision – to inspire confidence and ensure inclusion.