



Volunteer Handbook

Inspire confidence and ensure inclusion

Welcome to our team at Inclusion Clare! We are happy to have you join us and work towards our vision of inspiring confidence and ensuring inclusion for all citizens! As Volunteers, you play an essential role in fostering inclusion throughout our community.

Working with people with disabilities is often described as “rewarding.” Certainly, approaching it with the right mindset and skill set will make it rewarding for you as volunteers and also for the people we support.

The purpose of this handbook is to encourage you to think about, and interact with, people with disabilities in much the same way you do with people who do not have disabilities. People with disabilities have the same wants and needs as anyone else. Their needs are not ‘special.’

Like most of us, people with disabilities want to feel a sense of belonging, they want to make contributions, and feel useful and productive. They want to love and be loved. They want to govern their own lives, including where and with whom they work, live, and spend leisure and recreation time.

In order to be most successful in your role as a volunteer, it is important to read the information in this handbook, participate in all orientation activities and ask questions you may have to the people we support, to staff or a member of the leadership team.

We encourage openness, honesty and curiosity-all questions are welcome as it is our goal to ensure you have all the information you need to provide quality support to those who choose to use the services offered by our organization.

Contents	
Who We Are.....	4
Our Vision, Mission & Values.....	4
Timeline of Agency & Evolution of Support.....	5
Characteristics of Volunteers.....	7
Code of Ethics	7
What We Do.....	8
Philosophy of Support-What is Active Support	8
The Value of Respect	10
Advocacy and Supporting Self-Advocacy.....	11
The Role of Language.....	11
Respect: What’s your role?.....	12
Informed Choices and Decisions.....	12
Rights, Risks and Responsibilities.....	13
Rights.....	13
Balancing Duty of Care & Dignity of Risk	13
Confidentiality.....	14
Community Connections.....	15
Natural Supports	16

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

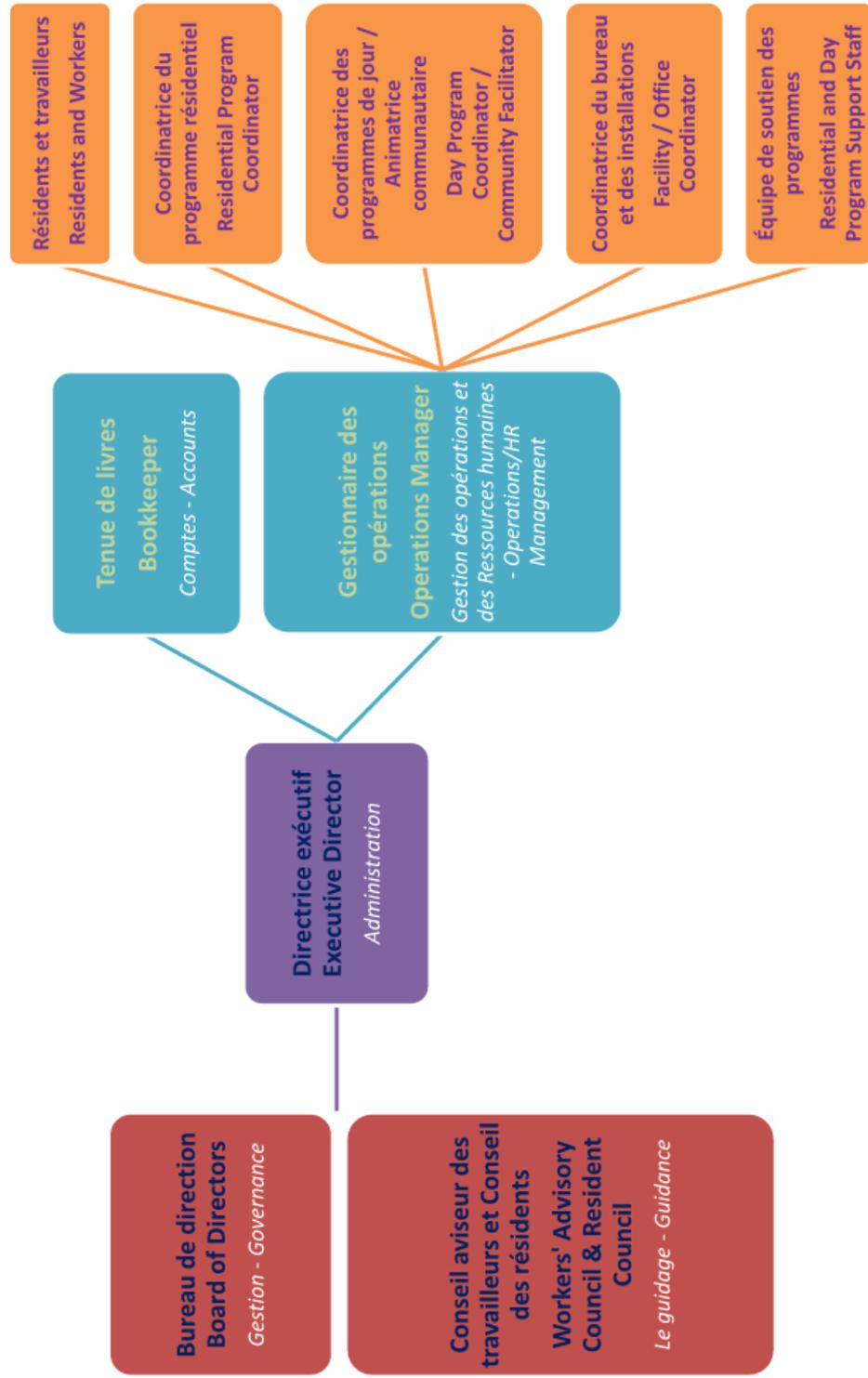
Timeline of Agency & Evolution of Support

HISTORY OF INCLUSION CLARE



INCLUSION CLARE

Organigramme organisationnel – Organizational Chart



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. However, the founding philosophy of providing supports for individuals in their home community continues to be a driving force in the agency today.

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.

Characteristics of Volunteers

When providing supports and services, it is expected that all people providing support will:

- Consider the wants and needs of the people we support first
- Realize everyone has talents
- Ask the people and those who know and love them for input
- Support a people's self-expression, self-worth, self-reliance, and decision making
- Are flexible
- Listen to all people
- Respect all people
- Respond quickly to a person's requests
- Pursue partnerships and teamwork
- Communicate clearly, openly, and honestly
- Strive for win-win solutions
- Work to ensure that people are healthy, safe, and valued by others
- Recognize and celebrate successes
- Develop and maintain a supportive learning environment
- Work continuously to improve services and supports
- Follow a person's plan as decided upon by the team
- Value and take care of oneself

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics is a brief set of affirmative statements and unifying principles for all Employees and Volunteers in providing community-based services to adults who have a disability. Employees and Volunteers will adhere to this Code of Ethics.

As a Volunteer of Inclusion Clare, I will:

1. Aspire to the highest possible standard of conduct and honesty.
2. Strive to be aware of my own belief systems, values, needs and limitations and the effect of these on the people with whom I work and serve.

3. Respect and protect human and civil rights, and not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, ethnic background, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities, socio-economic status, political affiliation, chronic or life-threatening illness.
4. Notify my immediate supervisor should any situation arise which affects my ability to provide competent service, or threatens the health or well-being of a resident or worker, including but not limited to a physical or mental health problem, disability, illness or conflict of interest.
5. State an opinion, judgment or use a clinical diagnosis when referring to residents, only if there is a documented assessment, observation or diagnosis to support the opinion, judgment or diagnosis.
6. Be an appropriate role model for residents at all times, including but not limited to, exercising proper hygiene and dress.
7. Ensure that all communication is effective, professional and consistent with the mission, beliefs and values of Inclusion Clare.
8. Refrain from using a position of trust with a resident/participant to receive special benefits, gain or gratification for myself.
9. Never engage in sexual intimacy with residents/workers.
10. Ensure that the needs of those I serve come first, including the rights of individuals to privacy, respect, confidentiality and self-determination.
11. Adhere to any statutory acts, regulations or by-laws that pertain to the provision of services within Inclusion Clare.
12. Recognize the unique nature of the workplace ensuring professionalism and respect in all of my interactions with the team and residents/workers.
13. Commit to excellence in my standard of performance, and recognize the need for ongoing quality training and supervision in my work.
14. Support my colleagues in their adherence to this Code of Ethics.

What We Do

Philosophy of Support-What is Active 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.

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. This means:

- Residents/workers doing things for themselves and/or with support from staff
- Residents/workers participating in activities and taking leadership roles if possible
- Residents/workers spending time with others as they so choose

- Residents/workers making their own decisions with support as needed and making choices in the small everyday things as well as the larger choices that have impact their lives

Actively means at every part of the day and every activity and ensuring involvement from the people you support.

Consistently means providing approaches with enough structure and predictability that people experience comfort, continuity, and have a better ability to be engaged.

Meaningfully means:

- We provide support in ways that increase competence and opportunity
- We help people be and stay connected to others (socially)
- We provide enhanced esteem
- We are focused on needs, preferences, and goals of the person supported

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.

People with disabilities are valuable and contributing members of the community. Everyone can experience a good life in the community. People **using** supports should control how they live their lives. People who **provide** supports should focus on promoting rich and fulfilling lives in the community.

At the base of all person-centered thinking skills is the ability to discover what is **important to** a person while balancing what is **important for** them. This is true about all people, not just those with a disability. All of us have things in our lives that are important to us and important for us. We all struggle to strike a balance between doing things that are good for our health and having things in our lives we cherish.



Person-centered planning promotes the value that the wishes of a person are to be honored, based on what they consider **important to** them. These wishes might be stated verbally, communicated in non-traditional ways (such as through a person’s behavior), or identified by other people who know them well.

It is important that people know their wishes are not just written in a plan, but are “heard” and honored through positive acceptance, regular encouragement and daily actions. Support Staff must be creative to ensure that people are “heard” by those who support them, and that their choices are respected and followed.

Person-centered planning puts into practice ensuring that wishes (**important to**) are respectfully balanced with need for support to stay healthy, safe, and a valued member of the community (**important for**).

IMPORTANT TO	IMPORTANT FOR
<p>Are those things in life which help us to be satisfied, content, comforted, fulfilled, and happy.</p> <p>They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People to be with/relationships ▪ Status and control ▪ Things to do ▪ Places to go ▪ Rituals or routines ▪ Rhythm or pace of life ▪ Things to have 	<p>Are those things that keep a person healthy and safe. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prevention of illness ▪ Treatment of illness/medical conditions ▪ Promotion of wellness (diet, exercise) ▪ Issues of safety: in the environment, physical and emotional well-being, including freedom from fear <p>They also include what others see as necessary for a person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be valued ▪ Be a contributing member of their community

The Value of Respect

The term “**respect**” has many meanings. It includes a positive feeling towards another person or the person’s skills, opinions or other characteristics and the honoring of a person’s beliefs, ideas or culture. Respect requires seeing the individual as a person first.

All people, including those with disabilities, are thought of more positively when in a position to contribute to the community. People with disabilities can get the respect of others by being supported to perform useful and meaningful activities. As a Volunteer, respect for individuals you support can be achieved by first listening and developing an understanding of their culture,

background, hopes and dreams, and then supporting each person to follow through on things that are important to them.

There is a tendency to have lowered expectations of persons with disabilities. Low expectations limit opportunities to try new things and interfere with achievements. It is your responsibility to move away from a focus on the limitations and turn towards a focus on talents and abilities. This enables the focus to shift to respect and empowerment.

It is important to remember that people with disabilities want and need the same things others do – love, security, the satisfaction of personal accomplishment, the opportunity to exercise control over their days, environment, and experiences, and to laugh and communicate with others. The way a person experiences these things is different for each, but the desire to have them is the same for everyone. Have high expectations for people with disabilities.

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, learn to speak for themselves and to take leadership roles on issues that affect their lives is the foundation of everything we do. We believe in promoting the principle of self-determination which is an individual's right to control their own lives and make their own decisions.

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

The 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.

The Role of Language

Your choice of words in speaking and your attitude (conveyed through the tone of your voice) are very important. Language can act as a separator when you use “special” language or

professional jargon when talking about people with disabilities such as “client,” or “consumer.” Special language says people with disabilities are different. Instead, use everyday language, words, and phrases you would use when talking about co-workers, friends, and family members. As a Volunteer, how you talk will influence the attitudes and interactions of others.

“Person First” language emphasizes the person and not the disability. The first choice is always to call someone by their name. If you have to refer to someone and mention disability, always put the person first. The phrase, “a disabled person,” can be disrespectful and emphasizes the disability rather than the person. You should say, “a person with a disability.” Instead of saying “a Down syndrome person,” say, “a person has Down syndrome.” Referring to the person first lets others know they are, first and foremost, a person who deserves respect.

Respect: What’s your role?

Always ask the person’s permission before you touch them. For example, if you are assisting a person to stand up from a seated position, ask, “May I help you?” Besides gaining permission to physically touch them, you may find that they are able to complete the action without any physical help from you.

- Avoid talking to others about things that could be embarrassing or personal for a person. If information must be shared, do it in a private, respectful manner.
- Don’t talk about someone you support in their presence; talk to them and encourage community members to do the same.
- When accompanying someone in public, encourage them to speak for themselves. For example, if a server at a restaurant directs questions to you about the needs or wants of a person being supported, defer to the person you support whenever possible.
- Use every day plain language in all communication.

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 it doesn't work out – that is okay. Support will be given to make another choice.

- Support to ask for help

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

Rights, Risks and 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 entire team – Volunteers, Staff, Leadership and Board of Directors – to safeguard these rights.

Balancing Duty of Care & Dignity of Risk

Supporting someone to become independent 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 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?

The concept of dignity of risk is the right of a person to make an informed choice to engage in experiences meaningful to them and which are necessary for personal growth and development. Normal living often includes risks. Dignity of risk allows people to lead normal lives. Overprotecting people with disabilities keeps them from many life situations that they have the right to experience, and it may prevent meaningful connections and fulfillment of their hopes and dreams.

Rather than protecting people with disabilities from disappointments and sorrows, which are natural parts of life, support them to make informed decisions. This enables them to experience the possibility of success and the natural risk of possible failure.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a right each of us has to privacy and respect of information given to and shared among professionals about us. People generally expect that their medical records, financial records, psychological records, criminal records, driving records, and other personal records are going to be kept in a confidential manner. Volunteers must remember to have this same respect for the private information about the organization and the people we support.

Community Connections

Community is a group of people who come together for a common reason. People may belong to several communities, some which are based on a common interest, others that are based on geography such as a neighborhood. People within a community may be very different from one another. Being part of a community brings people together, and people will learn that it is okay to be different. Positive and regular interactions bring a community together.

Just because you live in a community or attend activities in a community does not mean you are a part of the community. Are you part of a community if you never talk to your neighbor or participate in any of the events going in the community?

Sometimes people are afraid of differences or the unfamiliar. Without intentional effort to involve people with disabilities in their communities, they risk being separated from everyday life by living in segregated facilities and attending activities designed only for people with disabilities.

As a Volunteer, you can support individuals in achieving ordinary community lives by helping each one be involved in activities that they want to do. Going out to ordinary places is the first step.

Think of places you like to go, activities you like to participate in, organizations where you have memberships. What would be the potential challenges for people you support to enjoy those same experiences? How could you help the person overcome those barriers?

Community Connections: What's your role?

- Support people individually (rather than in groups) as much as possible when going to a community/neighborhood event.
- Step back and support the person to participate to the best of their ability.
- Do not assume that the person needs your help.
- Help the person locate and attend community events and activities that best reflect their interests and that best match what others of their age group seek out.
- Attend places on a regular basis so relationships have a chance to form.
- Find the gatekeeper of the group – the one who will introduce a person to members of the group.
- Be mindful of the fact that it is important to seek out a wide range of opportunities and activities in the community as people supported will benefit from different experiences and develop new skills.
- Go into the bank or the restaurant instead of using drive-through windows.
- Encourage people to make their own purchases rather than purchasing items for them.

- Model what it looks like to be part of a community by being friendly and introducing yourself to others

Natural Supports

The term **natural supports** refers to the resources that are already present and available to all persons in community environments. This includes family, friends, co-workers and neighbors, members of community clubs or groups, and local merchants.

Imagine for a minute what it would be like to wake up every morning knowing that the only people you will interact with all day will be those paid to be with you.

This is not how most people live. Most people pay for some services and get assistance from others just because they care. Our staff work to find and set up flexible ways of supporting a person in community settings so they can develop natural relationships. The goal is to move away from dependence on paid supports and move towards supports from friends, family, and others who are genuinely interested in the person. This, of course, includes Volunteers like you! Volunteers provide an essential link with community and can broaden individuals' network and resources by sharing their knowledge and connections within the community,