

Appendix 1

2 Capacity Building

2.1 Capacity building for people with disability and families

People with disability, like everyone, want to lead their own lives as they wish. Many have the capacity to do this while others develop capacity over time. When people need assistance to make good decisions, their most valuable asset is a faithful family and enduring friends who will help them.

Most people with disability and their families develop their understanding, knowledge and skills to “build a good life” over time. This capacity can easily be enhanced and comes in many forms. It may be practical advice, timely funding for support, access to regular opportunities, and new skills. A community navigator is one such strategy. (See 2.2 **Community navigator**)

Capacity building for people with disability and their families:

- assists them to envision, plan and build a good life for themselves;
- keeps them positive and strong, particularly at times of transition and adversity and minimises damaging and avoidable crises;
- assists them to identify, build and maintain their informal networks who can support them over time;
- provides them with skills and confidence to imagine and ask for better, when they are not satisfied;
- assists them to develop skills to direct the level, quality and type of service they need.

Those who support the Blue Skies Scenario believe:

- people with disability and their families know best what they need;
- with capacity, people with disability and their families can direct their own service;
- people with disability and their families are best placed to identify, build and maintain their own natural networks;
- With assistance, people with disability and their families can make extraordinary positive changes in their lives;
- The best way for people with disability and their families to develop capacity is to be given opportunities to take charge of their lives.

Blue Skies scenario will be challenged by:

- services that have little understanding or experience in empowering people with disability and their families, or who are unwilling to assist to imagine and ask for better;

- people with disability and their families who hand over their lives and decisions to services.

What it will cost and what it will save:

If started early, building capacity within people with disability and their families is very cost effective. The longer people with disability and their families are left damaged, isolated and disempowered, the harder it is to build trust, and to assist them to imagine better for themselves and to make positive changes.

The best and most cost effective way to build capacity is to allow people with disability and their families to direct the quality, level and type of service they require.

When people with disability and their families build capacity and resilience, they are more likely to manage adversity, and take up opportunities when they come. People with disability, their families and services save wasted time and energy in their pursuit of a good life.

Goals to be achieved in the next ten years:

1. when working with people with disability, services will work respectfully with families and enduring friends in all aspects of service delivery;
2. community navigators will assist people with disability and their families to envision, plan and build a good life as a way of thinking;
3. people with disability who do not have families will have enduring friends in their lives to assist them to make good decisions about their life.

For many years the local family support service ran a small conference for families who had children with disability under five years old. The families enjoyed being together, hearing stories from older parents who had achieved a good life for their children. They learnt something of the harsh realities of asking for more and wanting change—this is not often well received—and how to keep hopeful, resilient and strong. The families also learnt some practical strategies to sustain their vision and energy over time.

As these families became older and stronger they, in turn, contributed to these gatherings. Their adult children with disability shared their story and became role models themselves.

For more information on this element please contact:

Mamre Association Inc mamre@mamre.org.au

2.2 Community Navigator

The community navigator is a local person with a strong personal vision of what is possible for people with disability and knows the community well.

The community navigator assists people with disability and their families to envision, plan and build a good life for themselves and to build capacity and resilience. They are there for the person and the family in the long term, assisting them particularly at key times of transition or adversity. They know of possibilities and opportunities for the person with disability within the community and assist them to negotiate the service system.

Establishing a network of community navigators needs to be a shared aim across a number of initiatives, including an extension of the existing Local Area Co-ordinator program. The key to a successful community navigator will be a good match with the person with disability, based on communicating goals effectively and sharing ideas.

Community navigators will liaise, inform and embolden community builders. (See 2.3 **Building community capacity via community builders.**) Like community builders, community navigators will do best when they are well supported and have focused opportunities to develop their skills.

Those who support the Blue Skies Scenario believe that:

- the needs of a person with disability and their family can be met by what is available in the community as well as through formal services;
- finding opportunities and support within the community and service sector can be complex and requires some tenacity and skill.

Blue Skies scenario will be challenged by:

- the current lack of people who can identify opportunities for people with disability within their communities;
- 'old thinking', which may revert to established congregate responses when the opportunities are hard to find.

What it will cost and what it will save:

The value of providing assistance for people with disability and their families to optimise their community has already been proven by the use of the Local Area Co-ordinators.

Goals to be achieved in the next ten years:

1. community navigators will be present in every urban and rural community throughout Queensland;
2. community navigators will assist people with disability to envision, plan and build a good life and to continue to imagine better;
3. community navigators will have the knowledge, skill and experience to find and match service responses and community opportunities with people with disabilities and families who need them;
4. community navigators will be working effectively with the network of community builders across Queensland.

Ted had lived in Gladstone all his life. His job as a community navigator was just what he wanted. Although he initially knew very little about people with disability what he did well was relating to people, seeing opportunities and making connections. He discovered pretty quickly that people with disability wanted what other people wanted—to belong, to contribute and to have family and friends.

He has found that when people with disability and their families trusted him and worked with him, they made extraordinary things happen together.

His best allies were the local Rotary club. They knew everything that was going on and were more than helpful. His mates at his weekly coffee meetings helped him find jobs for three young men with disability who had recently left school.

For more information on this element please contact:

National Disability Services Queensland ndsqli@nds.org.au

2.3 Building Community Capacity via Community Builders

The building of strong communities is only possible when we as a society promote, welcome, foster and reward the gifts, talents and contributions of all citizens; when we do this, we become a rich and vibrant society. Opportunities arise when we identify the good things around us, both in the people that surround us and the communities we live in, and then connect these together. For this to happen we need the assistance of community builders.

Community builders (also called community development workers) in government, within local services or within local neighbourhoods, can work with communities and systems to include people with disability. Effective community builders will strengthen communities, and as a consequence:

- individuals with disability will be defined by their unique gifts, talents and contributions rather than their diagnostic condition;
- opportunities will be identified whereby such gifts, talents and contributions can be called upon;
- communities will be invited to “*step forward*” and service systems, when not needed, to “*step back*”;
- major barriers (structural, policy and attitudinal) that block the inclusion of people with disability will be identified and addressed.

Those who support the Blue Skies Scenario believe:

- people and their communities should be defined by their assets, rather than perceived deficiencies;
- all citizens have the capacity to contribute to their community;
- communities can be strengthened, encouraged and made more aware to embrace diversity;
- communities can maximize their full potential to include people with disability with the help of community builders.

Blue Skies scenario will be challenged by:

- people who believe it is the responsibility of government and human services to “*look after*” people with disability;
- communities not committed to the inclusion of people with disability;
- perceived cost in the resourcing of community builders at the local, state and commonwealth levels of government and within the community sector.

What it will cost and what it will save:

Successfully including people with disability builds strong communities. Committing to social justice, equal opportunity, and developing the assets of people and their communities requires new and existing funding into opportunities where successful systemic reform will take place.

There will be a long term saving in:

- building capacity to support people with disability within community, rather than dependency on services;
- Maximizing the assets of all citizens, whereby they contribute socially and economically to the wider community;
- increased ‘*wellness*’ benefits, arising from community inclusion and participation;
- responsibility for the inclusion of people with disability shared by all stakeholders;
- Reduced dependency on traditional and costly care arrangements.

Goals to be achieved in the next ten years:

1. Existing investment in community development workers will be maximised by training Local Government and other allied networks in the inclusion of people with disability.
2. Community builders in all regional and urban communities in Queensland will co-operative with community navigators towards the inclusion and participation of all people with disability.

Thomas has an acquired physical disability arising from a motor vehicle accident. Tom lives in Tasmania. Tasmania is cold; Thomas is cold. The warmth of Queensland awaits and he relocates to North Queensland.

Thomas has become very aware that within this new community of his, new things have evolved. There is a rich sense of valuing diversity. There are systems that have been established, maintained and improved that have directly increased his opportunities.

Much of this has come about because of the deliberate and conscious development of workers known as community builders. They collectively have the task of helping achieve the vision of an inclusive community. Thomas is welcomed and discovers local programs and opportunities are accessible; the community is barrier-free. Thomas is able to make his contribution and as a result the community is better because of it.

For more information on this element please contact:

Inclusion Works inclusionworks@inclusionoz.org

2.4 Capacity building for services

Services need to be both responsive to people with disability and their families and sustainable from a business perspective. A sustainable service runs efficiently as a business, meets all regulatory and other compliance requirements, and has the skilled, committed workforce it needs to deliver high quality support as required. A responsive service is timely, consistent in quality, and flexible—changing as the persons needs or circumstances change.

Capacity building focuses on strengthening governance, infrastructure (systems and processes), service planning and design, and engaging stakeholders. It may also focus on increasing diversity in funding sources, and service review and evaluation processes.

Those who support the Blue Skies Scenario believe:

Services should have:

- strong governance;
- business practice that meets all legislative and regulatory requirements;
- systems and processes that support good practice at all levels of the organisation;
- strong engagement of people with disability in designing, implementing and reviewing services;
- service design and practice frameworks that are contemporary, reflect current research and are regularly reviewed;
- accessible, conveniently located outlets, and promote a positive image of people with disability;
- workforce that is skilled, committed and person-centred.

Blue Skies scenario will be challenged by:

- a focus on funding arrangements rather than people;
- inadequate levels of funding;
- inadequate evidence-based research to inform policy and practice;
- lack of coherence between policy and practice;
- burdensome compliance requirements that shift focus away from direct support;
- lack of access to data for planning and performance management.

What it will cost and what it will save:

The social and financial costs of an inadequate service system that only responds when a person is in crisis, or when all informal networks have collapsed, far outweighs the cost of a system that can provide timely, preventative responses.

A strong service sector is able to provide the right amount of service in the right way at the right time.

Goals to be achieved in the next ten years:

1. Incentives will be available for disability organisations to review current service design and transition to more individualised, person- centred service responses, where required;
2. Government policy and funding agreements will allow for more flexible, responsive provision of support;
3. A geographically diverse mix of sustainable, responsive services, will provide assistance for people with disability and their families, in their community of choice;
4. National Minimum Data Set reports and demand data will be made available to disability organisations in a timely way, to enhance planning and performance management at an organisational level.

Some years ago, a small committee of parents established a respite house in their local town. This was well used and many families were grateful for the service.

The younger families, however, agitated for a more flexible response to their needs. They wanted help to go on holidays and to manage their small children at home after school, and the existing funds could not be released from the commitments of the respite house.

The funding body offered the committee some 'one-off' money to trial some alternative strategies. They allowed the service to use their funds more flexibly and to provide an opportunity for each family to imagine and plan supports that suited them.

As each family planned their lives, the service responded accordingly. Within the year, the respite house was sold.

For more information on this element please contact:

National Disability Services Queensland ndsqli@nds.org.au