



Encouraging Family Leadership through peer-to-peer support

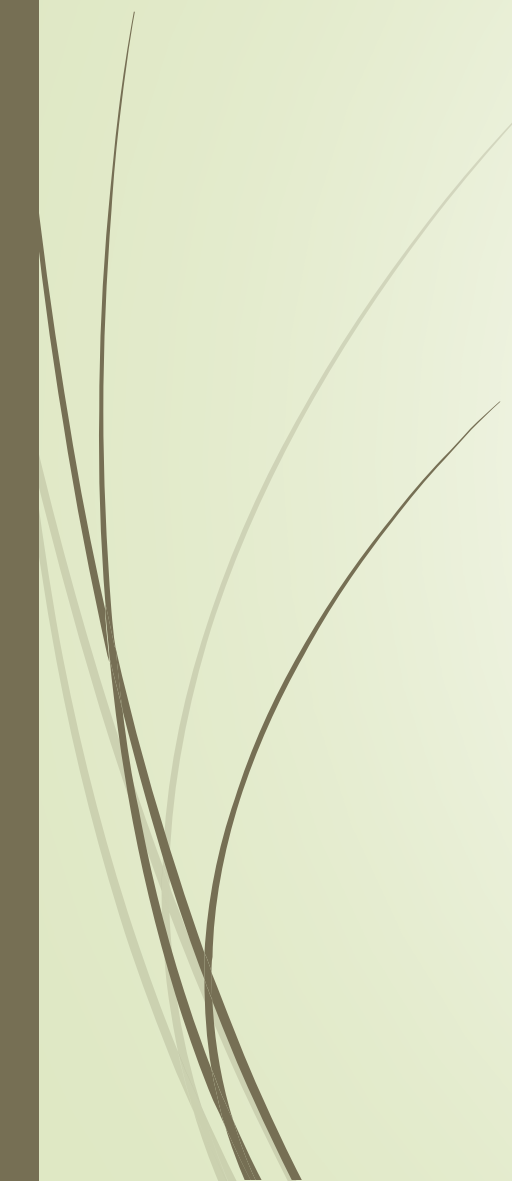
Rachel Cassen, Director, Leap



Our mission



We support families to build a vision of a good life and to focus on inclusion and valued roles



Who we are



- ▶ Family based organisation
- ▶ Made up of family members and professional allies
- ▶ Started in 2009 as voluntary association
- ▶ Now a Social enterprise





Problem definition

- ▶ Resource allocation for people with disabilities is focused almost exclusively on a systems approach that creates separation from other citizens and public venues
- ▶ This programmatic model is not only expensive, it creates barriers to community access and quality of life

Theory of Change



- ▶ Our work with families is designed to support family members to take control in determining what constitutes a good life
- ▶ Specifically, we aim to improve families' ability to:
- ▶ Articulate a meaningful and expansive vision for their family member
- ▶ Establish a stronger sense of belonging within their extended family and their community
- ▶ Access paid supports that complement the support provided directly by the family and community
- ▶ In addition to working directly with families, Leap also advocates for individualised funding and supports for people with disabilities and their families

Our Strategic Areas of Work



- ▶ Peer Support
- ▶ Family Leadership Retreats
- ▶ Leadership development Programmes
- ▶ Family Leadership Events
- ▶ Provision of family friendly Information
- ▶ Seminars on various topics
- ▶ Sharing of powerful ideas and theories especially Social Role Valorisation (SRV)

Our approach with families



- ▶ Promoting the value of our family member in a culture of devaluation
- ▶ There will never be enough money in the system and services will never be 'fixed'
- ▶ The importance of an expansive vision for all the family
- ▶ The value of 'creating not waiting'



So what do we mean by Family Leadership?

- ▶ Leading from within the heart of the family not the head of the table
- ▶ Keeping faithful to a vision of a good life for your family member – not falling prey to culturally held low expectations
- ▶ The need to recognise, name and safeguard what we value
- ▶ That what you create yourself is probably of most value to you (Self-Determination)
- ▶ Encompasses Family legacy - all that a family holds dear and wants to preserve for the future: their history, values, faith, knowledge and experience
- ▶ Building right relationships
- ▶ Finding allies





People and their families have better life chances when:

- ▶ They have experienced a variety of valued roles
- ▶ A sense of personal agency
- ▶ They have a hopeful and positive vision for themselves
- ▶ They can describe what good support looks like for them
- ▶ They have a diverse network of relationships



Challenging mind-sets of families



- ▶ Shifting from a problem focus to a solution focus
- ▶ We are the people we have been waiting for
- ▶ How can we use what we have to create what we need?
- ▶ Much of what is good in life is not in the currency of money
- ▶ How can we increase our personal networks?
- ▶ How can we focus on inclusion and valued roles?



Creating not Waiting



"When you decide to go after a new dream,
you need to give less to your current reality
and more to your desired reality..."

Take your energy out of what you don't want to be doing anymore
so you can put it in what you really want to be doing."

- Danielle La Porte



Some of the key questions we ask:

- ▶ What are we educating our children for?
- ▶ Is it for a life in a day centre?
- ▶ A life on benefits?
- ▶ How do we equip our sons and daughters for meaningful lives as adults?
- ▶ What does a meaningful life mean?

-Pippa Murray

The goal of an ordinary life




- ▶ Families are their child's greatest resource and most important advocates
- ▶ A resilient family connected to community who has clarity of vision and understanding of their unique strengths and gifts, as well as their child's strengths and gifts will be the most effective lifelong advocate for their child
- ▶ We know that when families feel supported they are less likely to seek out of home placements (including respite) for their children
- ▶ Resilient families are more likely to be imbued with the belief and hope for a brighter, better future for their family member

Resourcing Families



- ▶ Families are essential for securing equality of opportunity for their family members with disability
- ▶ Launching them toward employment, community living, and full participation in society
- ▶ Family is typically the primary source of care and support for their family member
- ▶ The value of family led work with families to support a good life for their family member
- ▶ This work is best begun in the early years



Linking Families



“Families need families - the most reliable, honest and helpful support and guidance, families of young children with disabilities reported, was that which they received from other parents and families. The importance of creating opportunities to bring families together should never be underestimated.”

-Partners In Policymaking





From dependency to mutuality

- ▶ Families have become very skilled at problem definition but are not used to coming up with solutions
- ▶ Families learn that they have to hype up the negative to get even the most basic support



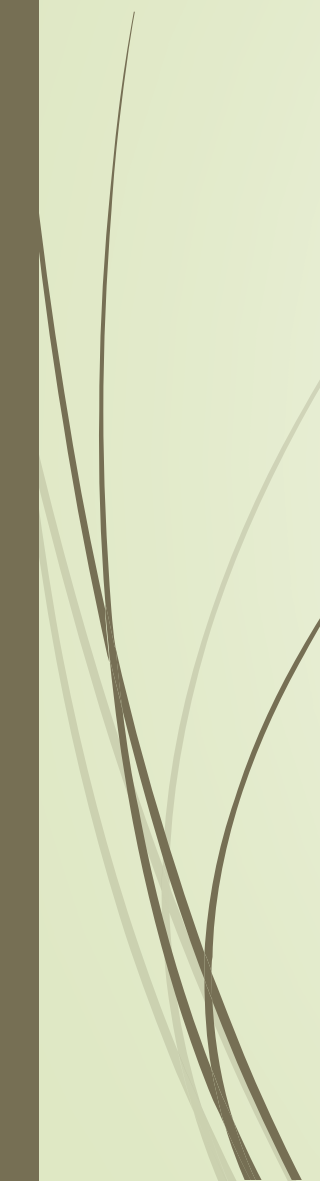
- ▶ These 'invitations to failure' are very damaging and characterise a type of helping that does not help
- ▶ Services frequently sabotage family well-being by creating dependency and safety nets



From dependency to mutuality



- ▶ We use stories of success to inspire and motivate
- ▶ We encourage families to start in the home and then broaden their focus
- ▶ We ask 'what valued roles does your family member have at home?'
- ▶ We respect families to lead their own change and give them access to resources
- ▶ This allows people to develop their ideas and to look for opportunities in their own communities
- ▶ Mutuality: Family is expected and encouraged to share resources and assist others in community





Thank you

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