



Canadian Association
for Community Living
Association canadienne pour
l'intégration communautaire

**PEOPLE
FIRST
OF CANADA**



**PERSONNES
D'ABORD
DU CANADA**

Declaration of Support for Community Living

In Canada today, many thousands of Canadians with intellectual disabilities remain trapped in large segregated institutions - inappropriately and unjustifiably segregated from society. They remain, for the most part, hidden and removed from the mainstream of society despite a collective knowledge, based on research and practice over the past 30 years, that with proper community based supports all persons with intellectual disabilities thrive in the community. They remain in these institutions as a result of inaction by governments and communities.

Therefore...

...GIVEN that Canadians with intellectual disabilities are citizens and as such have equal rights to full inclusion and life in the community; are valued contributing members of our society; and are entitled, regardless of the severity of their disability, to community living;

...AFFIRMING that disability is a natural part of human diversity and that persons with intellectual disabilities, as other human beings, are entitled to basic human rights and fundamental freedoms as embedded in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and other national and international laws, conventions and standards;

...DEFINING an institution as any place in which people with an intellectual disability are isolated, segregated and/or congregated; any place in which people do not have, or are not allowed to exercise, control over their lives and their day to day decisions;

...RECOGNIZING that institutions deny citizenship and life in the community;

...KNOWING that institutions do not and cannot contribute to the health and well being of persons with intellectual disabilities;

...ACKNOWLEDGING the abuses that have been (and continue to be) committed against persons with intellectual disabilities within these institutions;

...CONCERNED that persons with intellectual disabilities are still being admitted to institutions rather than being supported to live dignified lives in the community;

...SADDENED by the stories told by persons who have spent years in these institutions;

...OUTRAGED by the fact that these institutions still exist despite the availability of other more appropriate community based alternatives;

...UNITED in a vision of a truly inclusive Canada, based on the values of Freedom, Choice and Equality;

