

Be a Wise Financial
Consumer

Safety Projects
at DABC

Swing Into Spring
Was a Huge Hit

transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC (formerly BC Coalition of People with Disabilities)

A photograph of three people climbing a wooden wall. They are wearing blue helmets, harnesses, and ropes. The person on the left is a man in a white shirt and shorts. The person in the middle is a woman in a white tank top and red shorts. The person on the right is a man in a dark blue shirt and shorts. They are all reaching up to grab a wooden handle on the wall. The wall is made of horizontal wooden planks. The background shows some green foliage.

Safety

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DABC CHAIR
PAT DANFORTH

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To promote the dignity and independence
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Be part of our Visionaries Circle with monthly giving: the best kind of support you can offer. Even a small amount goes a long way and provides a more stable funding base we can count on to plan and provide our programs and services.

Joining is easy. You choose how.

- You can set up monthly donations in seconds by going to the www.CanadaHelps.org website and searching for "Disability Alliance BC."
- Or, set up a monthly credit card donation by contacting Nancy at 604-875-0188.



we are all
connected

inside

featured articles

Editorial by Karen Martin	4
Be a Wise Financial Consumer by Billie Sinclair	5
Disability-Specific Tip Sheets on Preparedness	7
Understanding the Spectrum of Violence by Jewelles A. Smith	8
When You Don't Feel Safe	11
Safety is in the Eye of the Beholder by Lorraine Copas	15
DABC Emergency Preparedness Training	16
Violence, Mental Illness and Substance Abuse	18
Welcome Aboard by Colin Birnie	20
Do You Know Your Neighbour? by Lorraine Logan	22
Ensuring a Safe Sailing by Chelsea Carlson	24
How to Stay Safe Online	29
Keeping Your Body Safe Guide	30



selected content

Swing Into Spring 2015 Rocked! by Jane Dyson	12
Richmond Centre Marks 30 Years	14
DABC Executive Director Appointed to the Order of BC	22
DABC Employer of the Year: Nominator's Speech	23
Guidelines for Self-Help Groups by Nancy Chamberlayne, M.Ed.	28

regulars and others

Consider Planned Giving	6
Need Help with the RDSP or DTC? Contact Us	26
DABC News	27



editorial

BY KAREN MARTIN

The articles in this **TRANSITION** speak to many of the issues we have heard about from people with disabilities: safety from physical violence, safety on public transportation, financial safety, the range of violence from attitudes to harmful actions, addressing safety in our physical environments and more.

Over the past eight years, I have engaged in work on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities and, over the past two years, I have also been working on issues of violence and abuse. These two different areas are rooted in safety and how we create safer communities for everyone.

Forms of violence and abuse range widely and many people with disabilities told us they have experienced multiple forms of abuse over the course of their lives: physical, emotional, sexual, verbal and financial. We also know the rates of violence and abuse are much higher for people with disabilities than people without disabilities. And, for women, deaf people and people with intellectual disabilities the rates are even higher.

Disability Alliance BC's (DABC) work on violence and abuse has been part of the project *InFocus: Bringing People with Disabilities into the Picture*. This is a national project done in cooperation with the DisAbled Women's Network Canada, the Canadian Association of Community Living and our local partner SPARC BC.

Engaging with men, women and seniors with disabilities through this project has really opened my eyes to the continuum of abuse

that many people with disabilities experience. We heard from people across the country in focus groups and, more recently, workshops about violence and abuse perpetrated by family members and caregivers, about abuse in public by strangers, abusive treatment by landlords, and systemic abuse by social services that are supposed to be there to help us: police, health-care workers, social workers and bus drivers.

The articles in this **TRANSITION** speak to many of the issues we have heard about from people with disabilities: safety from physical violence, safety on public transportation, financial safety, the range of violence from attitudes to harmful actions, addressing safety in our physical environments and more.

Everyday personal safety is on the minds of people with disabilities whether they are at home, at work or in public. It shouldn't have to be this way, but people with disabilities need to be proactive and plan for their personal safety.

That is why the *InFocus* project has developed workshops on personal safety planning for people with disabilities (see page 11). There is also a workshop to educate service providers in the violence prevention and response sector about

abuse and people with disabilities. We provide them with information and tools they can use to make their services more accessible and inclusive.

The work on violence and safety had crossover to my work on emergency preparedness. For example, many of the seniors in our workshop on safety planning also wanted to know how to be safe during events such as an apartment fire. We have included in this edition some disability-specific tips on how to personally prepare for emergencies (see page 7).

Whether it is emergency preparedness, safety planning around violence and abuse, or designing and building public spaces with safety in mind, it is about creating safe communities through collective responsibility. Every person in our communities should be safe to go about their day without fear. For this to happen, social attitudes and systems have to change and the disability community has to be proactive in pushing for those changes.

At DABC, we are continuing our work to engage policy decision-makers and community services because a commitment to access and inclusion makes us all safer.

KAREN MARTIN IS COORDINATOR OF DABC'S EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM. 

Be a Wise Financial Consumer

BY BILLIE SINCLAIR, MONEY SKILLS FACILITATOR, FSGV

Brushing up on the basics of money management, improving your financial habits, and knowing your rights and responsibilities in using financial products and services enables you to be a safer and more confident financial consumer. It's never too late!

Be Skeptical and Use Common Sense

Remember, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!" Focus on what a person or organization says they are going to do. Is that really possible? Are they hesitant to explain the process to you? Are they speaking too quickly or reluctant to answer your questions?

Ask a trusted friend for a second opinion about the offer. A company or individual's claims about themselves or their offer, doesn't tell you what you need to know.

Beware of Email Scams

"Phishing" involves seemingly harmless emails asking you to verify certain things such as passwords, account numbers or credit/social security details. Any email seeking this sort of information should be an immediate red flag for you. The best response is to contact the service provider directly and ask about the email content.

If you receive an email that tells you to check or update your information, such as a password, do not use the link in the email. Be especially wary of emails claiming to be from your bank, even if the email letterhead/background looks real. If you think the email is genuine, log on di-


rectly to the company's website and check your records there. If there are no changes, you just avoided being scammed. You can also call your bank to verify, using the bank's true contact number, not any numbers provided in the email.

Other phishing scams include false lottery wins, requests for money to "help" people and claims from foreigners about their personal safety.

Financial Literacy

Improve your financial future by gaining a better understanding of personal finance topics. These could include making wise spending decisions, creating a budget, choosing the right bank or credit union for your needs, learning savings options for various goals, and understanding the credit and debit system. These tools and resources can help you build strong money management skills that will serve you today and for years to come.

Sign up for DABC's e-newsletter to be notified of upcoming Money Skills workshops (<http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/followus.htm>). Family Services of Greater Vancouver has been a long-term partner with DABC, delivering this very popular program a few times each year.

BILLIE AND THE TEAM OF MONEY SKILLS FACILITATORS AT FAMILY SERVICES OF GREATER VANCOUVER HAVE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY. THEY PROVIDE VALUABLE RESOURCES FOR THOSE WHO SEEK TO MAKE INFORMED FINANCIAL DECISIONS. LEARN MORE AT WWW.FSGV.CA. 



ABOUT TRANSITION

Editorial Statement

The views and opinions expressed within the pages of TRANSITION are not necessarily those held by the total membership or Board of Directors. The material presented is meant to be thought-provoking and to promote dialogue.

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Consider Planned Giving

*You've always been there for others.
You can continue to give beyond your lifetime.*

The DABC has a Planned Giving program. Planned Giving is the opportunity to think ahead about causes or organizations that you may want to financially support beyond your lifetime.

You can take the time now to gather information and leave instructions in your will.

By planning ahead, you can re-search charities, or have someone research charities for you, that fit your values. You won't feel rushed or pressured to make a decision and you can ensure that your money is spent in the way you want.

Benefits

There are many benefits to Planned Giving. By writing down your wishes, you will have increased peace of mind and control over your finances.

Through Planned Giving, you can provide a significant future donation without reducing your income today.

A gift in your will to a registered Canadian charity is tax-deductible.

And, your Planned Gift helps the DABC to be here in the future for those who need us.

Tax Savings

You can realize significant tax savings with Planned Giving.

For example, stocks, bonds and mutual funds that you may have in a trust can be transferred in your will to a charity and a tax receipt will be issued.

A bequest from your estate of cash or RRSPs will reduce the taxes that your estate will be required to pay.

Other ways of donating give twofold value: by naming the DABC as the beneficiary in a life insurance policy, you do not incur any costs now and a tax receipt is issued when the estate is settled.

To Learn More

Our donors are important to us and we'll work with you to be recognized in the way that you'd prefer.

If you would like more information about Planned Giving, please contact Nicole at the DABC at nicole@disabilityalliancebc.org or 604-875-0188.

She will send you DABC Planned Giving information for you to review with your financial planner or lawyer, family and friends.

You can also download our Planned Giving brochure and information sheet from <http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/supportadvertise.htm>. 

unions matter

Workers in child care facilities, community social services, casinos, call centres, aboriginal services and health care are joining the B.C. Government & Service Employees' Union.

Why? Because joining the BCGEU gives you a stronger voice and conditions to make your workplace better.

Join us. To learn more about joining BCGEU, call 604-291-6062 or visit www.bcgau.ca

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Disability-Specific Tip Sheets on Preparedness

In collaboration with Disability Alliance BC, Emergency Management BC developed a series of disability-specific emergency preparedness sheets.

These sheets provide a quick checklist of things to consider and have in place, and you can customize them for your specific situation. Here are some examples of what these sheets cover.

People with Communication and Speech-Related Disabilities

- How will you communicate?
- Store communication aids in all emergency kits.
- Complete emergency health information card with communication information.
- Store batteries or chargers for communication equipment.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- Store and maintain extra batteries.
- Store hearing aids.
- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms.
- Have written communication for emergency personnel.

People with Cognitive Disabilities

- Practice what to do before and after a disaster.

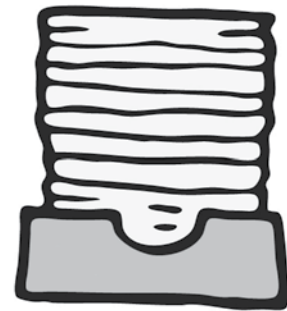
- Keep a written emergency plan with you.
- Provide copies of your emergency plan to family and/or friends.
- Have ways and tools to help you remember.
- Practice how to tell someone about what you need.

People with Visual Disabilities

- Store extra canes.
- Keep alternate mobility cues in each room.
- Label emergency supplies with Braille, large print or fluorescent tape.
- Secure computers and important information.

People with Mobility Disabilities


- Store needed aids in a consistent, convenient and secured location.
- Keep emergency kit extras—e.g. extra batteries, gloves to protect hands when wheeling over debris.
- Arrange and secure furniture and other items to provide multiple barrier-free passages.
- Practice using alternate methods of evacuation.



People with Service Animals

- Ensure ID tags and license are current.
- Have an animal care plan.
- Be prepared to function without assistance from your service animal—identify alternate mobility cues.
- Assemble your service animal's emergency kit.

For More Information

You can see and download the complete tip sheets, and other sheets not covered here, from Emergency Management BC at http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/em/hazard_preparedness/disabilities_information.html. 



Understanding the Spectrum of Violence

BY JEWELLES A. SMITH

Violence against persons with disabilities is pervasive and many of us working in the field regularly encounter examples supporting the worst statistics. With 13-15% of Canadians living with a disability, statistics tell us that one in six women with a disability will experience violence in her lifetime—and we know violence and abuse are underreported. I would also suggest that most of the reported acts of violence fall on the more extreme side of the spectrum of violence.

Many of us in BC have seen the video footage of Const. Taylor Robinson pushing Sandy Davis, a woman living with cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis, to the ground. In the video, Const. Taylor paused for a moment and then continued down the street. It is easy for us to react with outrage at the callous behaviour caught on video that day.

However, what of the many small daily acts of violence, discrimination, and dehumanizing of disabled members of our community? We might want to think about violence and aggression on a spectrum of behaviours. On one extreme side, we would find murder and eugenics.

But where on the spectrum do we place attitudes and behaviours such as disrespect, microaggression, deliberately ignoring accommoda-

But where on the spectrum do we place attitudes and behaviours such as disrespect, microaggression, deliberately ignoring accommodation needs, patronizing behaviour, devaluing of someone, dehumanizing actions and policies, bullying, slapping, and pinching?

tion needs, patronizing behaviour, devaluing of someone, dehumanizing actions and policies, bullying, slapping, and pinching?

Microaggression is a concept drawn from critical race theories. According to Dr. Darald Wing Sue, “microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership¹.”

These are actions that individually are difficult to name, but accumulate over time, leaving a scar on the psyche. Too often these forms of violence become internalized and many people begin to believe they, in fact, deserve to be treated with disrespect. According to the University of New Hampshire online resource, there are three forms that microaggressions can take. These are:

“**microassaults**: such as name calling, avoidance, purposeful discriminatory behaviour (conscious or deliberate acts);

microinsults: subtle snubs that communicate a covert insulting message (convey stereotypes, rudeness, insensitivity that demean a person’s identity; and

microinvalidations: disconfirming messages that exclude, negate or dismiss thoughts, feelings or experiences in certain groups².”

According to Dr. Sue:

The most detrimental forms of microaggressions are usually delivered by well-intentioned individuals who are unaware that they have engaged in harmful conduct toward a socially devalued group. These everyday occurrences may on the surface appear quite harmless, trivial, or be described as “small slights,” but research indicates they have a powerful impact upon the psychological wellbeing of marginalized groups and affect their standard of living by creating inequities in health care, education, and employment³.

My PhD research is focusing on the experiences of disabled mothers in Canada, particularly those that live with episodic and/or chronic illness. Although I have not begun to docu-

ment stories for my dissertation yet, I have been working with disabled women for more than a decade.

I have heard about the daily microaggressions, as well as the outright discrimination so many mothers experience. Sometimes these actions are so subtle, we question whether we are just being over sensitive. Examples include meetings being held where they are inaccessible for the parent or moving a parked stroller so it is inaccessible for the mother.

One mother shared with me that her daycare stated (on more than one occasion and in front of others) that perhaps she had problems diapering her child, as the tabs were not as tight as they could be. She wondered why the daycare assumed her disability impeded her

disabled person takes longer to do a task than a non-disabled person might; or communicating that you are “put out” by accommodating a special dietary request (for example, a person at my university who always informs me how long it will take her to prepare my food to accommodate my allergies).

Imagine needing to plan every excursion for your own accommodation needs and then needing to anticipate the microaggression factor, whereby all your planning can be negated by the behaviour of another. No amount of preparedness can prevent the harm inflicted by another person’s choice to use microaggression.

We need to understand that microaggressions have an impact on

have tried to deal with it directly, you may want to consider going to the person’s supervisor.

I strongly recommend you document the behaviours in a journal first and, if there are witnesses, ask if they will be able to speak to what has happened.


As for non-disabled allies, take time to think about your own behaviour and, if you recognize microaggression in yourself or in those around you, take the time to speak with co-workers and friends about addressing this. Policies and laws can only do so much to create a welcoming community. It is so important for allies and leaders in our communities to speak up against all forms of discrimination and hostility.

Violence can take many forms and safe inclusion is far more complicated than just letting someone in the door. It is important that we each address our own behaviour and work to engage others in conversations about shifting perceptions to create safe spaces.

JEWELLES SMITH JUGGLES LIFE AS A SINGLE MOTHER OF TWO TEENAGED SONS, WITH THE PURSUIT OF A PHD AT UBC-OKANAGAN, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM, WRITING AND PAINTING.
WWW.JEWELLESMITH.COM.

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race>

² http://www.unh.edu/sites/www.unh.edu/files/departments/affirmative_action_and_equity_office/unh-advance_microaggressions_v3-a.pdf

³ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/microaggressions-more-just-race> 

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ability to diaper her child, rather than assuming the toddler didn’t want to be still. She also felt very uncomfortable this happened in front of the other parents.

Other examples of microaggressions that may or may not be related to childrearing include: moving a mobility device so the person has to ask you to retrieve it (thus taking away her ability to act independently); speaking to a caregiver or interpreter rather than to the person with the disability (even after being told this is not appropriate); only partially meeting accommodation requests; rolling of the eyes when a

our standard of living, physical and psychological health, friendships and social circle, to name a few. Behaviours that belittle or dehumanize us are acts of violence.

Our society currently campaigns very hard to address bullying in schools—microaggressions can be interpreted as a form of bullying.

What can we do? I believe it is important that we first try to educate people around us. Sometimes people truly do not realize their behaviour is aggressive or perceived as bullying. If you are in a situation where you are continuously experiencing microaggression, and you



We couldn't do it without you.

Thank you to these organizations, government departments and companies who support our work on behalf of people with disabilities.

BC Association for Individualized
Technology and Supports for People with
Disabilities

BC Government and Services Employees
Union

BC Housing, HAFI Program

BC Hydro Employees Community Services
Fund

BC Ministry of Justice

Canadian Union of Public Employees of BC

Canadian Union of Public Employees of BC
Local 1936

Canadian Union of Public Employees of BC
Local 1004

City of Vancouver

Community Futures British Columbia

Council of Canadians with Disabilities

Government of Canada's Social
Development Partnership Program-
Disability Component

Health Sciences Association of BC

Home Medical Equipment Dealers
Association of BC

Hospital Employees Union, People with
Disabilities Committee

Klein Lawyers LLP

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Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network

Provincial Health Services Authority

Simpson Thomas and Associates

TELUS Employees Charitable Giving
Program

Trial Lawyers Association of BC

United Way of the Lower Mainland

Vancity

Vancity Credit Union Fairview Community
Branch

Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Foundation

Vancouver Taxi Association

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of BC.

When You Don't Feel Safe

There are many situations where people with a disability may feel vulnerable, including physically vulnerable. To help people who are concerned about their physical safety, Disability Alliance BC has been offering *Our Right to be Safe* workshops over the past year.

Here are some key points from the workshop booklet.

Safety Plan

- Abuse is never right, even when it is from someone you know.
- The abuse is not your fault. You did not cause it.
- It is important to keep safe when there is abuse. You need to create a plan if you are in grave danger and need to leave your home safely.

Information to Help

- Ask your neighbours, friends and family to call the police if they hear sounds of abuse.
- If you are being hurt, protect your face with your arms around each side of your head, with your fingers locked together.

Safety During a Violent Incident

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area that has access to an exit. Avoid the bathroom, kitchen or anywhere near weapons.
- Have a packed bag ready. Keep it in a secret but accessible place, in order to leave quickly. This includes your medications or the medications of your children.

- Make up a code word for "need the police" to use with people you can trust like a family member, friends and/or a neighbour.
- Make sure all weapons are hidden or removed from your home.

Safety When Preparing to Leave

- Identify someone who would let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- If you are worried for the safety of your pets, contact the local women's shelter. They may know of local veterinary clinics that will care for your pet for free or put it in a foster home, until you are able to get your pet.
- Open a savings account in your own name to start to establish or increase your independence. Think of other ways you can increase your independence.
- Keep emergency numbers close at hand.
- If you can't keep things stored in your home because you are afraid your partner will find them, consider making copies and leave them with someone you trust. Your local women's shelter will also keep them for you. See more at: <http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca/how-to-help/safety-planning>
- Review your safety plan with a friend or counsellor, in order to

plan the safest way to leave your abuser.

- If you are injured, go to a doctor or an emergency room and report what happened to you. Ask them to document your visit. Take a support person with you.
- Keep any evidence of physical abuse (such as photos). Keep a journal of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, threats and any witnesses.
- Remember to clear your phone of the last number you called to avoid the abuser redialing the number.
- Know where you can go in your neighbourhood, if you are concerned that you are being followed, e.g. where you can use a phone or have someone call for help, such as a corner store or neighbour's house.

Find Help

Visit the Ministry of Justice website to see a Directory of Victim Services in BC: <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/victimservices/directory/>

You can also contact VictimLink BC at 1-800-563-0808.

From *Our Right to be Safe Resources Booklet*, Workshop Series for People with Disabilities and Deaf People. For more information, contact Karen at karen@disabilityalliancebc.org or 604-875-0188. 



Swing Into Spring 2015 Rocked!

by Jane Dyson

DABC's third annual Swing Into Spring gala was a stunning success; we even exceeded our fundraising target! With the money raised, we'll be able to help more people with disabilities through our programs and services.

This year, we held Swing Into Spring in a larger venue so we could welcome more guests. The Croatian Cultural Centre was the perfect spot. In fact, we've already booked it for Swing Into Spring 2016 (it will be on April 7th).

Our photobooth was really popular. As you can see from the photos on the opposite page, folks really got into the spirit of things and posed up a storm! CBC's On The Coast host Stephen Quinn @CBCStephenQuinn was our excellent and charming host, ably assisted by the very entertaining David C. Jones @iamdavidcjones. Our thanks to them for making our evening such a successful, fun event.

Thanks also to our fabulous sponsors and silent auction donors, and to everyone who purchased tables and individual tickets. We owe a


huge debt of gratitude to all our wonderful volunteers, staff and Board members who helped. A special thank you to Tory Class who gave so generously of her time and taught us so much, and to Christina Day who did a fabulous job with our video, photographs and powerpoints. Thanks also to UBC interns, Luella Sun, Michael Rauguth and Chelsea Zhang. Our fundraiser Jody Lorenz did a fabulous job as did DABC Board members Pam Horton and Pat Danforth. And a very special thank you to Nicole Kiyooka and Chloe Kraus who worked so hard to ensure that everything went smoothly.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of our Outstanding Employer of the Year Awards. This year's winner was Atira Women's Resource Society @FreeOfViolence and our Honourary Mention went to Stratosphere Hair Salon @StratosphereYVR.

DABC gives this award to recognize employers, nominated by their employees, who have made an outstanding effort to employ

people with disabilities. Adrienne Fitch, who nominated Atira gave an excellent speech, part of which is included in this issue. We were delighted to welcome Atira's Janice Abbott and some of the other great folks from the Society. We were also thrilled to welcome Adam Cameron from Stratosphere Hair and his nominator Lorraine Loker. A big thank you to all the folks from PosAbilities @posAbilitiesCA for joining us and for all the great work they do helping people with disabilities fulfill their employment goals.

We'll be posting nomination forms for our 2016 Outstanding Employer of the Year Award, later this year. And we're already working on Swing Into Spring 2016.

Thank you to these wonderful organizations that bought a table for our fundraiser: The Developmental Disabilities Association, Hospital Employees' Union, The Vancouver Taxi Association, MVT Canadian Bus and BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities. 

Presenting Sponsor



Vancouver
Taxi Association

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Friend Sponsors



Employer of the Year Award Winners



Winner Atria Women's Resource Society



Honourary Mention Stratosphere Hair Salon

Our Amazing Host and Entertainer



CBC's *On the Coast* Stephen Quinn



David C. Jones (left)

Live Auction Winners



Simon Cox \$3,000 travel credit with Via Rail



Dirk Falconer Four tickets to the Commodore Ballroom



Peter W. Y. Chong One night for two at the Fairmont Empress hotel, plus BC Ferries tickets



Pam Horton Six-person wine tasting event at Swirl Wine Store



1



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13



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1 L to R: Nicole Kiyooka, Jim Watson, Jane Dyson 2 Vancity folks 3 Atria Women's Resource Society 4 DABC staff, volunteers 5 Volunteer Florence Corbett, Trial Lawyers Association of BC's Ben Doyle 6 posAbilities folks 7 L to R: Michael Kalmuk, George Lawson, Kelly Monfort, Ghia Aweids 8 Paul and Sarah Gauthier 9 L to R: Tory Class, Christine Gordon 10 Employer of the Year Nominator Adriane Fitch, daughter Julia Fitch 11 Oly Zeuch, handyDART 12 DABC Board Member Lucy Goncalves, Louise Soper 13 Lorraine Logan, President Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations



HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATION
The union delivering modern health care

DABC would like to thank the Health Sciences Association for their donation toward our Disability Benefits Help Sheets series. The series was recently updated in May 2015.

These self-help guides on topics ranging from the Persons with Disabilities Benefit to the Registered Disability Savings Plan are DABC's most requested and downloaded resources.

We're grateful to the HSA for their ongoing and generous support of these Help Sheets.

Richmond Centre Marks 30 Years

Thirty years ago it was hard to imagine a phone that can take photos or a computer that fits in your pocket or people with disabilities participating equally in the community. We have almost forgotten what the digital revolution did for us, or how the disability movement evolved and impacted us. It is no exaggeration to say that the Independent Living Philosophy has been instrumental in these developments, though challenges are still with us.

The history of the Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD) is not just about a disability movement; it is also about people. Thirty years ago, an innovative model created a partnership between United Way of the Lower Mainland, the City of Richmond and a number of people with disabilities from the community.

In 2000, the RCD moved into a physical space and started delivering direct services to people with dis-

abilities. Since then, the organization transformed itself from a small agency to a community stronghold. Thanks to the current and past Board of Directors, the RCD has built a solid foundation to support their work in the community. Every day, RCD staff and volunteers contribute to supporting people with disabilities to attain their dreams and realize their potential.

RCD's story is a testament to the confidence of the Independent Living Philosophy. At a time when many organizations in the social service sector are shifting their missions due to financial pressures, the RCD has built its own high value in serving our target population and upholding our philosophy. Many programs, activities and initiatives are designed, developed and delivered at the RCD to meet community needs.

And RCD has reaped the rewards. In 2012, they were awarded the Excellence in Business Award in the category of Association of the Year, and presently over 28,000 people receive their services and supports annually.

The RCD will be promoting its 30th Anniversary through a series of monthly events from April to December 2015, with a common theme through the celebrations—"Get Involved with the RCD".

It will be an excellent opportunity for people to learn about and support the RCD.

Learn more at <http://www.rcdrichmond.org>. T

RCD United Nations International Day event



Safety is in the Eye of the Beholder

BY LORRAINE COPAS

Safety, and the perception of safety, include many individual factors like past experiences or personal preferences. For example, you may feel safe in a particular area, but your friend may not. For seniors or people with disabilities, their limitations may make them more vulnerable. We all have a role to play in working to ensure our communities are as safe as possible and that everyone feels safe.

Environmental factors can also make someone feel unsafe. For example, areas where there are poor sightlines, poor lighting or poor signage can often feel less safe. Poor sightlines can mean you don't know if there is someone around the next corner. Likewise, if there is not a clear pathway through an area, people could fear becoming trapped. Often, there are simple design changes that can be made to remove some of these problems—better lighting, better signage, the development of a clear path of travel.


As we work to ensure that our communities are as accessible and inclusive as possible, it is important to ensure we take these types of safety factors into consideration when we design our communities, parks and public spaces. When I was with the City of Toronto, I was involved in a project that used the CPTED checklist (CPTED is the acronym for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). I would help organize an audit of community spaces and public places to look at

Could accessibility planners benefit from crime prevention strategies?

small design changes that could be made for a small investment, but would make a big difference in the quality of the space. Sometimes we broke into groups by gender to learn more about how different genders experienced the space.

I think it would be very beneficial to do a similar exercise using the CPTED principles from the perspective of someone with a disability. This would build a better understanding of the challenges and pressures people experience, and help us to make our communities more accessible and inclusive.

As I write this article, I remember a note I received from one of our disabled parking permit holders. She said she would love it if there were signs at the beginning of a street where the sidewalk or pathway did not go all the way through. This would make her life easier, and save time and energy. Let's work together to make sure there is no need for a sign and that instead our communities are as accessible and inclusive as they can be.

LORRAINE COPAS IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE SOCIAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH COUNCIL OF BC (SPARC BC). LORRAINE HAS DEDICATED HER CAREER TO COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING, AND HAS WORKED AT THE PROVINCIAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL/COMMUNITY LEVEL ON INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT POSITIVE POLICY CHANGE. 

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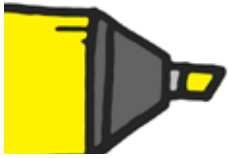
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INFORMATION

For information on advertising with DABC, please contact Ann at 604-875-0188 or transitionads@gmail.com.

DISABILITYALLIANCEBC.ORG/ADVERTISE.HTM



DABC Emergency Preparedness Training

Disability Alliance BC pioneered one of the first disability-specific emergency preparedness programs in Canada. Over the past several years, we've created a wide range of publications for community organizations, businesses, and government. We've also partnered with emergency services providers, training institutions and more, to integrate the needs of people with disabilities and seniors. Here are a few of our most requested resources.



Training Manual for Community Organizations

Through our partnership with Volunteer Canada, this project trained over 200 individuals representing over 120 community organizations from BC, Yukon, Alberta, Ontario and New Brunswick in emergency planning for people with disabilities.

The training manual we created, *Prepare to Survive-Prepare to Help*, is full of exercises and resources for community groups who want to play a role in emergency planning

and response in their communities. We have also produced slideshow files and podcasts to assist with presentations.

Online Training for Businesses

In 2013, DABC launched its first on-line training Workplace Emergency Planning for Workers with Disabilities. Employers and employees learn about emergency planning and the disability-specific needs of workers. This free e-training module allows people to work at their own pace.

Highlights

- Employers and employees will learn about emergency planning and the disability-specific needs of workers.
- Employers will have a tool to educate their workers.
- Learn how to determine staff needs
- Assess worksite hazards for workers with disabilities
- Plan for emergency communications
- Help workers with personal preparedness plans

Learners receive a certificate, as well as downloadable resources.

911 Emergency Services

If you call 911, will emergency personnel understand your needs? DABC has worked with the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) to help you be prepared. Now, people with disabilities and seniors can voluntarily and confidentially provide BCAS with information that will help them respond better to your needs, if you should ever have to make an emergency 911 call from your home. This is how it works:



You fill in and submit a form outlining your "functional needs". For example, if you have difficulty speaking and use a wheelchair, you would check off both the Communication and Independence needs.

BCAS will enter the information for your address into their dispatch computer database.

If you have to call 911 from your home address, your information will appear on the BCAS computer, so they know what functional limitations you have in order to respond to your 911 call better.



Workshops


DABC has two workshops to train businesses, government departments, local governments and community organizations on how to create emergency plans that include people with disabilities and seniors.

Strategic Inclusive Training for Emergencies (SITE)

Teaching businesses, government departments and community organizations how to create inclusive emergency plans

C-MIST and the Duty to Accommodate

Learn what Canadian and BC laws say about local governments' responsibility to provide emergency response programs in a way that is accessible to all citizens.

Learn more about DABC resources, workshops and costs online at <http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/ourwork/emergency.htm> or please contact Karen Martin at 604-875-0188, karen@disabilityalliancebc.org. 



NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE.

A growing number of Canadians suffer from **invisible** disabilities, such as addictions and mental health issues. In fact, one in five Canadians will experience some form of mental illness during their lifetime.

But did you know that:

- People with disabilities have the right to equal employment opportunities?
- People with disabilities have the right to work in an environment free of harassment and discrimination?
- People with disabilities have the right to accommodation and accessibility?

The Hospital Employees' Union advocates for the rights of health care workers with disabilities. And we're proud to support the work of the Disability Alliance BC.



www.disabilityalliancebc.org

www.heu.org



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A magazine for, and by, people who care about mental health and substance use

Produced by the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division, on behalf of the BC Partners



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Violence, Mental Illness and Substance Abuse

It's estimated that 3% of violent crime in Canada is related to mental illnesses. So, it's clear that mental illnesses, on their own, don't have a large impact on violence in our communities.

Many people fear violence, particularly violence that seems random or unpredictable. We often deal with this fear by avoiding people or situations that we believe might lead to violence. We often see mental illness, substance use and violence connected—in the news, on TV shows and in movies. This connection can fuel fear and this fear of violence can be a driving force for negative attitudes toward people with mental illnesses and substance use problems.

But is the fear founded?

The relationship between violence, mental illnesses and substance use is more complex than we see in the media, and it's as reflective of our communities as it's reflective of our individual experiences.

Many different factors increase the risk of violence. These risk factors may be found in our communities, such as exposure to violence (for example, seeing people commit an act of violence or knowing people who have experienced violence). Community factors (like safe and affordable housing), economic factors (like your income), and personal experiences (such as a history of violence and physical abuse) also play a role. Finally, violence may be influenced by individual characteristics like age or gender. These factors are the most important in predicting violence.

Violence and Mental Illnesses

While we often use the umbrella term of "mental illness," it's important to recognize that individual mental illnesses are different. They each have different symptoms and affect people's lives in different ways. Mental illnesses are also on a continuum. Not all mental illnesses are serious or severe.

We do know that mental illnesses on their own are not a good way to predict violence. The relationship between the two is affected by many different factors—in fact, other factors may be more important than mental illnesses. Some studies have found little evidence of a relationship between mental illnesses and violence. In a large US study, the risk of violence among people who experienced a serious mental illness, without a co-existing substance use problem, was about the same as the general population over the next three years.

Other studies do show a small relationship between some features of mental illnesses and violence. There may be an increase in risk of violence related to specific symptoms of schizophrenia or psychosis—symptoms like believing someone is out to harm you (a kind of delusion) or sensing something or someone is telling you to do something harmful (a kind of hallucination). The risk of violence decreases with proper treatment and management.

There are two important points to remember when we talk about this research. First, this increased risk represents only a small percentage of violence in our communities. Schizophrenia affects about 1% of Canadians. Risk of violence is only linked to two of many symptoms—not all people living with schizophrenia will experience these specific symptoms—and is related to poor treatment. So the risk of violence is a smaller portion of that 1%. Second, other factors like past experiences and communities still have a greater impact on risk of violence than mental illness.

It's estimated that 3% of violent crime in Canada is related to mental illnesses. So, it's clear that mental illnesses, on their own, don't have a large impact on violence in our communities.

While we often are most fearful of random violence, most acts of violence are committed by people we know. In a large US study, almost 90% of victims were family members or friends of the person who committed the act of violence.

Violence and Substance Use

Substances include alcohol and other drugs. Evidence shows that the risk of violence may be higher among people who experience co-existing mental health and substance use problems. There may be a link between intoxication or use

and violence. In Canada, it's estimated that 7% of violent crime is related to substance use problems.

However, the substance itself may not always be the problem. Substance use can affect personal relationships, and conflict may lead to an act of violence. But even though the combination of serious mental illness and substance use is a greater risk factor than either on their own, they are still affected by many other social factors, community factors, and past experiences.

Violence and Our Communities

Community factors play a significant role in violence. For example, poor housing and income disparities increase the likelihood of exposure to violence, and increased exposure to violence increases the likelihood of committing violence. People who experience a mental illness or substance use problem are more likely to be affected by inadequate housing and inadequate income, so they may be more likely to be exposed to violence.

Victimization or exposure to violence may also be important risk factors in committing an act of violence. People who experience a mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence than the general population. Research shows that risk of victimization may actually increase the risk of committing an act of violence. Also, exposure to violence and trauma increases the risk of developing mental health or substance use problems in the first place, which increases the risk of more exposure to violence, creating a vicious cycle.

Health and community conditions are strongly linked. You can't take

one away from the other. If you want to understand why a health condition may affect risk of violence, you also have to understand how community factors affect risk of violence and how these different health and community factors might interact with each other.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Work towards healthy communities. The well-being of our communities influences violence. When we address factors like unequal access to income and housing, inclusion, discrimination, and violence in our communities, we're reducing the risk factors associated with violence. This may be more effective in the long-term than trying to identify and prevent violence after people experience multiple risk factors.

Improve treatments for concurrent disorders. When we look at the risk of violence as an issue of treatment, we can see that it's really a health problem. People who experience co-existing mental illnesses and substance use problems often find gaps between the mental health system and the addictions system. For example, mental health programs may require sobriety, even though substance use may be tied to a mental health problem. It's difficult to think about recovery when the system may not consider your needs holistically.

Look at the role of the media. The media influences the way we understand the world. Some do challenge stereotypes, but news reports, TV shows and movies still use violent or "psycho" stereotypes far too often. Media reports also tend to sensationalize any psychiatric history when they report on a crime.




People who experience a mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence than the general population.

They also depict the uncommon case more often than the common case of violence.

Any violence, for any reason, can be difficult to deal with. However, we have to consider the evidence. Avoiding or discriminating against people based on assumptions or stereotypes doesn't protect us from violence. It may actually perpetuate violence—a community that excludes is an unhealthy community, and an unhealthy community may have a greater influence on violence than any diagnosis.

The good news is that healthy communities do much more than address violence. They improve every community member's well-being. Healthy communities come down to respect, inclusion, and equality. They give everyone a voice.

Excerpted from the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division resource, "Violence, Mental Illness and Substance Abuse." For full details on the Here to Help series, visit <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca>. 



Welcome Aboard | BY COLIN BIRNIE

In many ways, public transit has been leading the way in accessibility for years—from low-floor buses with ramps for scooters and strollers to lift-equipped community shuttles.

As most TRANSITION readers will know, there are two different types of public transit. Fixed Route Service offers scheduled service to your community via low-floor or lift-equipped buses and is available to everyone. handyDART offers shared, door-to-door service for people with permanent or temporary disabilities. The latter is open only to registered users and must be booked in advance. Not registered? No problem, call your local handyDART service provider to register.

For some, the idea of taking public transit can be daunting. There is a lot to consider. However, if you are prepared, your experience is much more likely to be enjoyable. Here are some tips for a smooth ride.

Be Prepared!

If you are using a scooter or wheelchair, be sure it meets the mobility aid guidelines of your local transit provider. Generally, the standard maximums are 120 cm (48") long by 60 cm (24") wide and the total weight of you and the scooter cannot exceed 275 kg (600 lbs). There may be resources in your community to help you and your mobility aid get acquainted with public transit. Often known as Travel Training, this is a great way to get some tips and improve your skill with your own private instructor. Contact your lo-

cal transit system to find out if this service is available.

Take time to plan your route. There are many services available to help, often with interactive maps to make planning easy. Make sure the stops you plan to use have the accessibility you need. Not all stops provide the same access. The local transit authority should have information on which stops will work for you.

Get Set!

It helps to check the fare ahead of time. Some systems have different fares at different times of the day and others are fixed. Pre-paid fares are almost always a cheaper option and are available at many stores. And no fumbling with change!

Go!

Whenever possible, arrive at your stop a few minutes early to avoid the rush. If you are using a mobility aid, place yourself at the front of the line so the driver can deploy the ramp first. Once inside, take advantage of the courtesy seating toward the front of the bus to make your exit easier. Don't worry about the securement of your mobility aid, the driver will make sure it is properly secured.

If you are travelling with an attendant, let the driver know. Attendants travel free as long as you and your attendant board and exit at the same stop. If you are travelling with a different kind of companion, certified assistance animals are permitted on all systems. Check with



your transit provider to see if there are requirements for harnesses or leashes.

Public transit is for everyone and opens up a world of opportunities. When all else fails, ask for assistance. Transit personnel are trained and are always there to help. Just ask.

More Information

Transit Service Info (Fixed Route)

- Vancouver 604-953-3333
- Victoria 250-382-6161
- For other locations, check with your local transit provider.

handyDART

- Vancouver sign-up 778-452-2860
- Victoria sign-up 250-727-7811
- Book or cancel a trip 604-575-6600
- Email handydartregistration@farwestvic.com.
- For other locations, check with your local transit provider.

Travel Training

- Vancouver 604-264-5420
- Victoria 250-384-7723
- For other locations, check with your local transit provider.

COLIN BIRNIE IS THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER FOR BC TRANSIT AND LIVES IN VICTORIA, BC WITH HIS WIFE AND TWO INJURY-PRONE BOYS.

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DABC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTED TO THE ORDER OF BC



DABC's Board of Directors is delighted to announce that **Jane Dyson**, our Executive Director, has been appointed to the Order of BC for her community leadership. We will post photos from the awards ceremony in our next TRANSITION.

The order of BC is the highest form of recognition that BC can extend to its citizens.

In announcing Jane's appointment, the Province said, "Jane Dyson is a trusted and influential leader who has devoted her life to advocating on behalf of people with disabilities in BC. Jane's sustained commitment to accessibility and inclusion includes 17 years with Disability Alliance BC, the past six years as executive director. She has worked proactively with groups and organizations on policy initiatives that have led to positive changes for thousands of people with disabilities."

Congratulations Jane on this much-deserved recognition.

See full details on all recipients at:
<http://tinyurl.com/lrz3nc6>.

Do You Know Your Neighbour?

BY LORRAINE LOGAN

I'd like to address this question in relation to our seniors and elders who may be living in isolation or loneliness. This kind of concern comes up in my work with the Council of Senior Citizens Organizations (COSCO).

How often, have we passed people in our hallways without looking at them or talking with them? When you are in your apartment or condo elevator, do you make eye contact and say hello? If you live in a house, do you notice or speak to the neighbours next door or notice who may live across the street from you?

Over time, I think we have lost the community spirit or enthusiasm for being part of a society that embraces taking care of our more vulnerable citizens and keeping them safe. Many articles have been written about seniors and isolation, but few tell us how to locate and engage with them or find out if they want to be engaged.

Perhaps we can start with some common courtesies and acknowledge the people who live beside us and across the street? Once we engage someone in conversation or make eye contact, we open the possibility of a relationship. When we learn someone's name, we make a personal connection. We improve the safety of our communities when we know each other.

I wonder if we've stopped making these simple human gestures because of fear. Maybe the other person seems a little scary or speaks another language. Of course, I'm


not suggesting you try to make friends with someone you might find threatening. However, if we ignore older adults, that's not usually the reason.



If there is a language barrier with a senior in your neighbourhood, remember that hand and body language is universal and needs no interpretation. Most of us who have travelled know you can say a lot using non-verbal language.

Take a risk and engage a person you may not have talked to before. Isolation and loneliness are problems we can address through small actions every day. Get to know your community and its resources as well.

You can make a huge difference to someone's day by extending a hand, a kind word or a warm welcoming smile.

LORRAINE LOGAN IS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF SENIOR CITIZENS' ORGANIZATIONS OF BC (COSCO) WHICH REPRESENTS OVER 110,000 SENIORS IN BC. 

DABC EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nominator Adrienne Fitch's Speech

I'm honoured to have nominated Atira Women's Resource Society as DABC's Outstanding Employer of the Year, and I'm thrilled they won!

I probably don't fit the typical image of a deaf person. My speech is just fine. That's because I was born with a mild-to-moderate hearing loss which progressed to severe-to-profound. It's also because I hear the high frequencies better than low ones, and it's the high frequencies you need to develop speech.

Because I am not fluent enough to understand a sign-language interpreter, and never went to deaf school, I'm not part of the Deaf community or Deaf culture. I'm in this grey area: someone who cannot hear, but still tries to function in a hearing world; in the mainstream.

To make that possible, I rely on a number of devices and services. I wear powerful hearing aids in both ears. I use lip-reading, texting and email to communicate, and various other technology.

This all helps, but it doesn't completely eliminate communication barriers. I miss things constantly, especially in group situations, where a lot of the conversation might go right over my head.

I often need to remind people to slow down or repeat what they've said because they tend to forget I can't hear.

I think employers need to understand that isolation is a very common barrier for people with disabilities. In addition to physical limitations, we may also be dealing

with long-term stigma, discrimination and social exclusion, all of which increase our sense of isolation and heighten our need for acceptance and belonging.

That's why I believe that employers who hire people with disabilities should also consider how we fit into the office culture, and find ways to ensure that we aren't isolated or excluded. My co-workers at Atira have gone above and beyond the call of duty to do just that which is why I nominated them for this award. Here's why Atira deserves to be Employer of the Year.

My co-workers are awesome! At meetings and social gatherings, when I miss a lot of the conversation, they make an effort to include me. They speak into the FM system microphone without making a big deal of it. If I miss something, someone usually gives me a brief summary. If they are forwarding an email linking to something on YouTube, they take the time to try and find a transcript for me which I really appreciate.

My co-workers help me feel like a valued member of the team. It would be wonderful if accommodating a disability could always be as simple and immediate as constructing a ramp or buying a piece of equipment. But in many cases, it also requires managers and co-workers to show patience and sensitivity, not just once but continuously, even if it's sometimes awkward or inconvenient. I'm not coddled. I take responsibility for speaking up if I'm missing too much

or feeling excluded. But it's such a relief to work with people who get it; who take my hearing disability in stride and treat me normally.


Atira staff make every effort to make sure I have the accommodations I need to do my job.

I appreciate knowing that Atira staff will do their sincere best to make sure I have equal access or as close to it as possible.

On an organizational level, Atira commits to treating employees with dignity and respect, and to providing the support, direction and tools we need to be successful in our jobs.

My manager has always been willing to answer my questions and offer suggestions, while still allowing me freedom to manage my own tasks and work independently. I'm proud to work for Atira and to be a member of Disability Alliance BC which has championed people with disabilities for over 35 years.

I can't speak for others, but I think I have a few things in common with other people with disabilities. I don't want to be pitied or seen as a hero. I don't want to be defined by my disability, but I also don't want it to be invisible. What I really want is to be understood as myself, to be truly heard. That is why I'm so grateful for the chance to speak to you tonight. Thank you.

ADRIANNE FITCH IS A COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST WITH ATIRA WOMEN'S RESOURCE SOCIETY. 



Ensuring a Safe Sailing: A Message from BC Ferries

BY CHELSEA CARLSON

“Noticing that our vehicle included a disabled passenger requiring a wheelchair, the Horseshoe Bay control tower told us to move from our initially assigned line to another line that gave our vehicle early access and put us close to the elevator. A crew member inquired again to our needs and directed us to an appropriate parking row, and a deckhand met us at the assigned spot, and ensured there was adequate room for our wheelchair passenger to move to the elevator. This helpful service was much appreciated.” **BC Ferries customer**



Taking some time to plan your trip with BC Ferries can make for a safer and more relaxing journey. BC Ferries provides a variety of services for passengers with disabilities to ensure a comfortable sailing on board our ships. We can best accommodate requests for assistance, if we receive advance notice prior to the scheduled sailing.

If you are a person with a disability who may require special assistance in the event of an emergency, please advise the ticket agent when you arrive at the terminal. Once aboard the vessel, please speak to the Chief Steward who will ensure your needs are communicated to the ship's crew.

If you are planning a trip on BC Ferries, we recommend using the C-MIST system to organize and communicate your needs. Disability Alliance BC worked with BC Ferries to implement this system. C-MIST stands for Communication, Medical, Independence, Supervision and Transportation. Filling out the C-MIST form gives our employees

the information they need in the rare occurrence of an emergency.

BC Ferries' terminal buildings at Swartz Bay (Victoria), Tsawwassen (Vancouver), Duke Point (Nanaimo) and Departure Bay (Nanaimo) are equipped with an elevator, and many ships have elevators from the vehicle decks to the passenger decks. Passengers who require an elevator on board, or require parking close to an elevator are asked to notify the ticket agent on arrival, at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled sailing. The Customer Service Centre (1-800-BC FERRY) can help identify sailings on ships that have an elevator and wheelchair accessible amenities. We also have wheelchairs available at the Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast terminals and aboard the larger vessels, so these can be made available to customers travelling without a vehicle, if reserved in advance.

BC Ferries is part of a joint committee with representatives from organizations who can help us review accessibility issues at BC Ferries, and institute procedural

and structural changes to improve accessibility. For example, the committee recently discussed an area at one terminal that has priority seating with visible signage and glyphs for customers with disabilities and other mobility restrictions. The signage has proved effective in keeping this area reserved for those with mobility issues and designating a similar area at other terminals is now under consideration.

BC Ferries also offers a discount passenger fare for BC residents who have a permanent disability. To receive the discounted fare, customers must apply for a BC Ferries Disabled Status Information (DSI) Card which is presented on arrival.

For more information for planning your trip, including links to the C-MIST form and the Disabled Status Information Form, please visit http://www.bcferries.com/travel_planning/disabilities.html. Any questions or comments can be directed to the knowledgeable staff at any of the terminals or by calling 1-800-BC FERRY.

CHELSEA CARLSON IS BC FERRIES' COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER. 



SUPPORT DABC

BECOME A DABC MEMBER

Numbers matter. The more members we have, the stronger our voice in the community.

Please become a Disability Alliance BC (DABC) member today. You can be a voting member or a non-voting member, and we welcome both individuals and groups.

I accept your invitation to join the DABC and enclose my membership fee of \$15 (individuals) and \$25 (groups).

I am also including a tax-deductible donation of \$_____. (Donations over \$10 are tax deductible).

Please return your payment/donation with this form to:
DABC, 204-456 W. Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1R3.

You can also become a member or donate online at:
<http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/supportadvertise.htm>.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVALUABLE SUPPORT

Please check the applicable boxes:

☐ New membership or ☐ Renewal

☐ Voting Member or ☐ Non-voting Member

Voting members are people with disabilities and self-help groups where at least 50% of members have a disability.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

ABOUT US

Our mission is to support people, with all disabilities, to live with dignity, independence and as equal and full participants in the community. We champion issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities through our direct services, community partnerships, advocacy, research and publications.

FRONT LINE SERVICE

Our Advocacy Access Program provides one-on-one assistance with provincial and federal (Canada Pension Plan Disability) income supports and other benefits.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Our projects respond to community need and increase people's ability to participate and contribute.

MAKING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

We keep connected with a large network of community organizations across BC and regularly provide them with updates about issues of importance to the disability community.

FREE PUBLICATIONS

We publish a range of capacity-building self-help guides and advocate resources, in reader-friendly language. Resources are provided free of charge, either by mail or from our website.

Need Help with the RDSP or DTC?

Contact us for information and assistance.

Thank you to Vancity
and PLAN for their
support of our RDSP
work

Vancity

PLAN



We'd like to remind TRANSITION readers that Disability Alliance BC (DABC) helps people to apply for the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and Disability Tax Credit (DTC).

This assistance can include going with someone to their bank to help them with the RDSP. We also provide workshops on the RDSP and DTC for community organizations and people with disabilities.

The RDSP is a great savings opportunity, even for people living on very low incomes. Here are some of the reasons why:

- ✓ A person opens an RDSP when they're 30 years old and deposits their \$250 GST cheque each year, by the time they're 60 their RDSP could be worth as much as \$75,000.
- ✓ People can open an RDSP with no deposit and individuals living on low income are entitled to receive a \$1,000 bond from the federal government every year for up to 20 years.
- ✓ People who deposit \$500 a year are entitled to a \$1,500 grant every year for up to 20 years.
- ✓ People receiving income assistance who open an RDSP can access \$150 through the Endowment 150 program from the Vancouver Foundation.
- ✓ People receiving disability benefits can put money in or take money out of an RDSP without it impacting their monthly cheque.

**For more information, please contact
Lillian at 604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278.**





DABC News

Free Workshops

We provide workshops across BC on provincial and federal disability (CPP-D) benefits. We also do workshops on the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and the Disability Tax Credit (DTC). We can tailor the workshop to fit your needs and knowledge level. All workshops are provided free of charge. To book your workshop please contact Val at 604-875-0188 or feedback@disabilityalliancebc.org.

Stay in Touch

Between TRANSITION editions, stay informed on DABC projects and events, and important issues like changes to income assistance. You can sign up for our e-newsletter or follow us on social media.

Choose how you want to stay in touch with us at www.disabilityalliancebc.org/followus.htm.    



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Guidelines for Self-Help Groups

BY NANCY CHAMBERLAYNE M.ED.

If you've ever been part of a self-help group, you know that members' behaviours can either discourage people from attending or make the group an inviting place to be. In the twenty years I've facilitated MS self-help groups, I've experienced both situations.

Our Victoria MS self-help group talked about and identified some of the discouraging behaviours we've seen in groups. By doing so, we hoped to reduce these disrespectful behaviours from happening in the MS group. Members realized, when people encounter a group with a depressing atmosphere or unruly discussions, they generally don't come back. Our group's priority was to highlight the respectful behaviours that lead to committed attendance and enthusiastic participation.

Members were adamant they didn't want the group turning into a "pity party" or an environment that encouraged a "poor me" attitude. Everyone also felt a lack of confidentiality made them feel vulnerable and unsafe. No one wanted their personal information repeated at a dinner table or in the hallway of the MS Chapter.


Side conversations, talking over others, the need to control the agenda or dominating the conversation all stifled positive discussion.

Our discussions helped the Victoria group formulate six guidelines so present and new members would know what is expected of them at meetings. The goal was always to be civil, friendly and to have productive conversations. By establishing these guidelines, we hoped to avoid the negative interactions that can sometimes surface within any group. The Group Guidelines:

1. Confidentiality. What is said in the group, stays in the group. Members know their personal information will not be repeated outside the meeting room.
2. Respect differences of opinion. Be open to all ideas, even those different than yours.
3. Don't "hog" the floor. Be an active listener and let others speak.
4. Stay on topic. Focus on the discussion. Avoid going on tangents.
5. Be responsible for your own behaviour. Be aware of how you come across to others, with an aim to help them feel comfortable.
6. Encourage each other. Provide mutual support, so people feel welcome.



The guidelines helped build an atmosphere where members feel valued, understood, protected and included. They enabled people to share their thoughts and concerns in a spirit of acceptance. Members learned they are not alone on this journey with MS, and they are there to listen to each other, whether it is in the group, over coffee or by being a friendly ear on the phone. This safe and respectful group atmosphere where members feel supported helps provide a rewarding and beneficial experience to everyone who attends.

I would like to thank all members of the South and Central Vancouver Island Chapter's Living Well with MS Self-Help Group for their helpful contributions to this article. Our group is affiliated with MS Canada. I would also like to thank the photographer, Gary Neilson. 



How to Stay Safe Online

There are many things you can do to use the web wisely. Here are a few key tips from StaySafeOnline.org

Keep a Clean Machine

- Keep security software
- Automate software updates
- Protect all devices that connect to the Internet
- Plug and scan

Protect Your Personal Information

- Secure your accounts
- Make passwords long and strong
- Unique account, unique password
- Write it down and keep it safe
- Own your online presence

Connect with Care

- When in doubt, throw it out
- Get savvy about Wi-Fi hotspots
- Protect your \$\$

Be Web Wise

- Stay current. Keep pace with new ways to stay safe online
- Think before you act
- Back it up

Be a Good Online Citizen

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Keeping Your Body Safe Guide



This booklet is about sexual safety for people with developmental disabilities



When and how to say “no” are also discussed.

DABC’s AIDS & Disability Action Program (ADAP) and the Wellness & Disability Initiative (WDI) published the plain language guide *Know About...Keeping Your Body Safe* about sexual safety for people with developmental disabilities.

Educators told us that the biggest challenge is communicating what sexual abuse is. The desire for affection can be very strong and attention can be seen as positive or caring—even when that attention can put people in inappropriate or dangerous situations.

The booklet explains different levels of social connection and appropriate touching. When and how to say “no” are also discussed.

The booklet comes with a Caregiver Companion Guide on how to use the booklet with people with developmental disabilities.

Please contact Program Director Shelley Hourston to order your free booklets. Call 604-875-0188, toll free 1-877-232-7400 or email shelley@disabilityalliancebc.org.

Punjabi and Chinese translations of the booklet are available in the DABC library at <http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/health.htm>. Click on the Sexual Health & HIV/AIDS, Know About HIV Booklets list. **T**

Thank You

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