

**Individual Pursuits**  
**Day Program and Group Home**  
**Consumer Handbook**

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## About Individual Pursuits

Individual Pursuits Program Ltd. is a privately owned and operated organization that is dedicated to supporting adults with developmental disabilities. This support is offered through two programs:

1. A recreation-based day program.
2. A staffed, residential group home.

Our approach to programming and service delivery centers on three key aspects:

1. **Person-centered program planning.** All persons served have a customized program designed to meet their personal needs.
2. **Stakeholder involvement.** Advocates for persons served are involved in program planning, setting goals and activities. Throughout the year, these stakeholders receive reports and updates allowing them to stay informed regarding an individual's progress. Not only are stakeholders asked to speak for the person served, but also for themselves in terms of their satisfaction with the program.
3. **Team-based support.** We believe a sense of comfort and familiarization is a key aspect of opening constructive communication. We have many years of experience in determining the appropriate staff-ratio for each of the individuals we serve, balancing the need for consistency to foster strong, positive relationships vs. staff turnover and 'burnout'. To achieve this balance, we have a unique client-based seniority system, which results in small teams of support workers for each client. A typical team would consist of a key-worker (team lead), and a number of front-line community service workers that receive full training with the individual served, led by a supervising Program Coordinator. The team members are introduced gradually over a time period appropriate to the comfort and needs of the individual served and their stakeholders.

## CARF Accreditation

Both of our programs (the day program and the group home) are fully CARF-accredited under CARF's Employment and Community Services standards. In particular, we are accredited as follows:

Community Services: Community Housing (group home)

Community Services: Community Integration (day program)

For more information about CARF and the Employment and Community Services standards, visit CARF online at [www.carf.org](http://www.carf.org) or contact them toll free at 1-888-281-6351.



## History

Individual Pursuits was created in 1993 to provide a highly personalized recreational-based day program for five individuals. We accepted the challenge to find new and creative ways for individuals to communicate their needs and achieve their goals.

In 1996, at the request of the both the Ministry of Children and Families and an individual served, we created an extremely personalized residence known as Rosco group home. This home currently uses a small group of staff to provide a one-to-one or sometimes two-to-one staff to client ratio to support the two individuals living at the home.

The relatively small size of our organization has led to a close-knit staff that currently serves 13 clients. We are very proud to have helped so many individuals overcome the many challenges life can bring and look forward to continuing both accomplished programs.

## **Mission, Vision and Values**

Individual Pursuits is guided by a mission statement, vision statement and a set of organizational values. While guided and supported by our management team, the creation of our mission, vision and values is a result of a collaborative effort on the part of our employees combined with a focus on meeting the expectations of our stakeholders.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission statement defines the goals for the organization, in essence, what we do:

Our mission is to provide quality support to our client community that will allow them to communicate their needs in a constructive and positive manner, empowering them to minimize their behavioural challenges.

### **Vision Statement**

Our vision statement is designed to show what we are trying to achieve through the execution of our mission. Our vision of the future is:

A community where all people can communicate their hopes and dreams, and treat each other with the respect and dignity they deserve.

### **Organizational Values**

Throughout all of our practices, we are guided by a set of values. These values define the nature of the way we service the individuals in our care as well as the way we interact with each other, the community, and all of our stakeholders.

#### **Human rights**

All individuals share the same basic human rights and freedoms.

#### **Dignity and Respect**

All individuals deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. At Individual Pursuits, we adhere to this philosophy when interacting with the individuals we serve, our staff, members of the community in which we live and all other stakeholders.

#### **Freedom of choice**

In conjunction with their rights and freedoms, all individuals will be supported to make informed choices about their life. At Individual Pursuits, we support individual choice by involving the

individuals we serve in the design of their own individualized program plan. We will help the individuals we serve understand the information they need to make positive choices.

### **A valued place in society**

All individuals benefit from a feeling of belonging in society. By providing programs that support individual's integration into the community where they live we foster individual advocacy, organizational advocacy and community awareness.

### **Opportunity to develop and grow**

We recognize that supporting positive change in individual's lives will allow them to achieve personal growth. We adhere to this philosophy by designing individual program plans for the individuals we serve and providing ongoing training and development opportunities for our staff.

### **Individual recognition**

All individuals have unique goals, strengths, abilities, needs and challenges. We recognize this by providing all the individuals we serve with custom-tailored individual service plans.

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

We believe the best service we can offer to an individual is one that is designed with input from all stakeholders: the individual served, their friends, family, caregivers, and other professionals such as nurses, doctors, communication specialists and behaviour specialists as well as our staff. After the program is designed, we continue to work with all stakeholders to continually improve the service we offer.

### **Continuous improvement**

Positive change is achieved through continually evaluating what we do and seeking ways to improve. This is evidenced by many of our processes that are designed to be cyclical, with continuous quality improvement as a goal. Examples include outcomes management and individualized program planning.

## **Service Delivery**

Service delivery at Individual Pursuits centers on a person-centered program design system, which we refer to as an *Individual Program Plan* or IPP. Program outcomes are unique to the needs of each person served and the expectations of their stakeholders (such as family members or caregivers).

An individual does not "join the program" at Individual Pursuits. Instead, their own unique, customized program is supported by the team at Individual Pursuits.

## **Individualized Program Planning**

At Individual Pursuits, we design a customized service program for every individual we serve, called an Individual Program Plan (IPP). The IPP is designed through a collaborative process involving all appropriate stakeholders. This team-based approach typically includes input from:

- Individual Pursuits staff:
  - The individual's assigned key-worker.

- The supervisor responsible for the program.
- A manager, responsible for adherence to organizational policies, procedures, values and established program outcomes.
- All other stakeholders:
  - The person served.
  - Family members.
  - Care-givers.
  - Recognized advocates.
  - Facilitators.
  - Other specialists, as required: communication specialist, behavioural specialist, registered nurse, doctor, etc.

After design and implementation, the Individual Program Plan is monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the program is working towards achieving its stated goals. This is accomplished via daily monitoring (daily communication sheets), quarterly analysis (quarterly reports), and a bi-annual review (internal) by the entire team. Annually, we report to all stakeholders the results of the program, measured against the stated goals, and meet with all the stakeholders again to modify/improve the program for the next year.

This process is completed in its entirety for every individual we serve, and records are kept and made available for examination by approved stakeholders.

If, at any time, the stakeholders wish to make suggestions for improvement, discuss program changes, view the data we have collected for an individual's program, or discuss any matter with us relevant to the individual served, their Individual Program Plan or our organization in general we will accommodate their requests in an open, honest and constructive manner. We place a high value on stakeholder input and strive to operate Individual Pursuits with full transparency for our

## **Working with families and self-advocates**

Engaging the individuals we serve and their families is a key component of service delivery at Individual Pursuits. While we work to support the individual in our care, we strive to keep the family "in the loop" by reporting, as needed, on incidents, program changes and anything we feel they should be notified of. We maintain an "open door" policy with regards to family members wishing to provide input to our programs, or seeking information or status reports. Our policy on stakeholder involvement is to provide full transparency whenever possible.

## **Admissions**

### **Overview**

Both programs offered at Individual Pursuits, the day program and the group home, are designed to provide service to adults with developmental disabilities. Individual Pursuits works with, and is contracted by, Community Living BC (CLBC). Thus, we do not at this time accept direct admissions for service. If you are looking for support services in general or service at our program in particular, you should contact CLBC directly. Contact information can be found at [www.communitylivingbc.ca](http://www.communitylivingbc.ca)

While Individual Pursuits has traditionally specialized in supporting persons with high needs and particularly those who can express dissatisfaction through physical or verbal aggression toward themselves and or others, in recent years our day program has begun to support persons with a wide range of needs and functionality.

Individual Pursuits is willing to look at any individual who wants to participate in one of our programs who meets the basic criteria of age (adult, 18+) and disability and will look to developing new programs as necessary on an individual basis.

The admissions process is designed to:

1. Set criteria for admission into the program.
2. Address accessibility concerns and identify barriers to program entry.
3. Ensure a smooth transition into the program for the individual served.
4. Give clear reasons to stakeholders as to why an individual will not be admitted to the program, if such is the case, and offer alternate solutions through referrals where possible.
5. Be as transparent as possible for all stakeholders, working through the process with all concerned parties.

## **Steps of the admissions process**

The basic steps of our admissions process is as follows:

1. Examine initial criteria.
2. Conduct an initial client and stakeholder orientation.
3. Process the individual's intake information.
4. Choose staff team and prepare initial activity plan.
5. Initial transition period (approximately two weeks, longer if needed).
6. Review of initial transition period with stakeholders.
7. Second transition period (typically a two to four week period).
8. If all is going well, invite stakeholders to a formal meeting to help develop an individual program plan.

Full implementation of the finalized Individual Program Plan typically takes from one to three months, although many factors can alter this time-line. This timeline is consistent with our experience in having stakeholders involved in the program design and service delivery processes. Once completed, this key process is cyclical and focuses on continuous quality improvement.

Stakeholder involvement is crucial during the transition period and typically over the first few months there will be much communication between Individual Pursuits and the stakeholders. However, the process is designed with a mind towards efficiency as well as effectiveness; subsequent iterations generally consume far less time than initial implementation.

Moving forward, we ask all the stakeholders to provide input to the Individual Program Plan at least once per year. This annual meeting consists of a look at how we've done the previous year, measured against the program goals, and a look at what needs changing for the next year. Internally, we evaluate the progress of the individuals we serve on a daily basis (through our daily

communication sheets and activity logs), monthly basis (key-workers monthly reports), and bi-annually in a progress report which is reviewed by the entire team.

It is important to note that aside from the general time-line given above, the Individual Program Plan is a dynamic process. If it is clear that changes need to be made to the program plan at any time, we will work with the individual served and other stakeholders as necessary to implement these changes as quickly as possible.

## **Transition planning**

Our approach to managing the transition is to view each transition as a project, with defined goals and clearly defined responsibilities for each step of the transition. Apart from any goals specific to an individual's transition to our program, we have the following general goals for every transition project:

- Maintain service levels to the individual served at all times.
- Protect the individual served from undue stress resulting from the change.
- Ensure that the individual served is aware of changes taking place, including them in the process and encouraging them to help us learn about them, their needs and wishes.
- Ensure all stakeholders (family members, friends, facilitators and community connections) are kept informed and are included in the process throughout the transition.

## **Community Links**

Community integration and citizenship is a key component for both of our programs, the day program and the group home. Each of the individuals we serve take part in a variety of community based activities, although this is balanced with the personal goals of the individual and their advocates when designing their IPP.

Community integration at the day program is promoted through client activities such as using public facilities (swimming pools, bowling), using public transit and general exercise programs such as walking down the block to the coffee shop or the corner store.

At the group home, activities which support daily community living are promoted, both in the home as well as in the community, for example grocery shopping. Many of our staff and clients are on a first-name basis with the many great people we meet in our outings.

## **Activities**

Ultimately, the activities participated in by the individuals we serve are their choices, after all, it's their program plan. Some typical activities we support the individuals we serve in include (but are not limited to!):

1. Activities out in the community such as:
  - Swimming
  - Hiking
  - Picnics
  - Beach and lake outings

- Restaurants (there's a great coffee shop only a few doors down that's a real favourite for many individuals)
- Bowling
- Music programs
- Newspaper delivery
- Library visits
- Using public recreational facilities
- The many tourist attractions of Victoria
- Utilizing public transit for day trips

2. Activities in the day program or group home such as:

- Cooking
- Individual exercise programs
- Group discussions
- Serenity space and time if needed
- The morning circle meet and greet
- Personal development activities
- Language development
- Communication and social skills development
- Arts and crafts
- Music programs (we have some great musicians on staff!)

At the organizational level, we strive to foster both client advocacy and organizational advocacy to support our goal of community integration. We achieve this in a number of ways such as:

- Encouraging staff members and persons served to be open and engaging with persons they meet when out in the community.
- Each staff member carries Individual Pursuits information pamphlets when participating in a community-based activity. They are encouraged to share information about our organization whenever appropriate.
- Individual Pursuits day program has an open-house once per year so members of the community can come in and learn about what we do and how we do it.
- Individual Pursuits offers use of the day program facility free of charge (in the off hours) to various support groups.
- Individual Pursuits is also a key member of our community's disaster preparedness team and the day program facility is a key disaster relief centre for our community.

As stated in our program goals, Individual Pursuits is always seeking ways to further community integration for the individuals we serve and for ourselves as an organization.

## **Our Team**

### **Recruitment Strategy**

Recruitment of prospective employees is accomplished through a combination of classified advertisements, referrals from other agencies, referrals from employees and advertisements targeted at educational institutions which offer programs related to our field (e.g. Camosun College).

Individual Pursuits also participates in practicum placements for students working towards CSW or RCA diplomas.

Currently, Individual Pursuits maintains a waiting list of prospective employees.

### **Hiring Practices**

Individual Pursuits has recruited and maintained a highly experienced group of staff. Most of our staff has been with us supporting the individuals we serve for five years or more, many have been with us from the beginning. Individual Pursuits currently employs approximately 30 staff member. We also have a pool of relief, or casual, workers.

All prospective employees of Individual Pursuits must meet the following basic eligibility requirements:

- Criminal Records Check
- Valid BC Driver's license and Driver's Abstract
- First-Aid/CPR
- TB test
- Food Safe
- CPI training
- Diploma in Human Services or related field or equivalent combination of education and experience
- Resume with references

Individual Pursuits' hiring process conforms to and is guided by the Community Social Services Employers Association best practices guidelines.

### **Training Process**

Once an employee is hired, an in-depth training process ensues which consists of:

1. Receipt of staff training package.
2. Guided general orientation.
3. Training in Individual Pursuits' policies and procedures as well as learning our mission statement, vision statement and organizational values.
4. Guided client orientation and training:
  - i. Read and familiarize themselves with the client's Individual Program Plan.

- ii. Observe senior staff as they work with the individual.
- iii. Begin working with the individual under the guidance of senior staff, usually the individual's key-worker.

The employee works through a probationary period after which time they become a regular employee if it is deemed they have met the performance requirements expected of them.