

# Introduction to Microboards OADD 2022



## What is a Microboard?

- A Microboard is a group of committed family and friends who join together with a person who has a developmental disability to create a supportive not-for-profit corporation.
- Supports a person in many ways including:
  - *Planning for their life;*
  - *Advocating for what they need;*
  - *Monitoring services & ensuring they are safe;*
  - *Connecting to their wider community;*
  - *Enjoying quality time together.*

# What is an Aroha?

- First developed in Guelph in early 2000's.
- Is also an incorporated entity helping to ensure one lives a good life and is supported to make decisions.
- Derived from the Maori word for 'love.'



## History of Microboards

- Began in Winnipeg, Manitoba in the 1980's, through the work of David and Faye Wetherow.
- Vela Canada built on their work, implementing and expanding Microboard vision and model within Canada.
  - *Supporting more than 1,200 Microboards in British Columbia.*
  - *Trademarked the Microboard name.*
- Microboards in Australia, Ireland, and US.

# A Bit About Microboards Ontario

Incorporated in 2018, Microboards Ontario is a provincial organization committed to promoting and supporting the development of Microboards across Ontario.

*Our **mission** is to advocate for Microboards in Ontario and provide people in this province with the resources they need, including education and trusted connections, to develop one.*

*Our **vision** is that any person within Ontario who wants a Microboard is supported to have one.*



[www.microboardsontario.com](http://www.microboardsontario.com)

## Microboard™

Microboards are built on common values :

- Relationships are the most important component of a person's life.
- All people have the capacity for self-determination.
- All decisions made by a Microboard must be based on a person's wishes, needs, interests, and support their goals.
- Every person has gifts to contribute to their friends, family and community and deserves an opportunity to do so.



[www.microboardsontario.com](http://www.microboardsontario.com)

# Microboards Support Decision-Making

- Supported Decision Making provides the resources and supports that allow a person to participate in decisions that affect their life.
- Supported Decision Making is **an alternative to Substitute Decision Making** rather than removing a person's rights and assigning them to another person.
  - *Ontario currently has a Substitute Decision-Making model*
  - *BC, Manitoba and Yukon all have Supported Decision-making frameworks.*

## Supporting Decision-Making

### Why It's Important – Values!

- *A good life means honouring people's ability to make choices.*
- *Person-directed supports honour and support a person's right to make decisions that impact their life and goals.*
- *Under UN Convention and Canada's Charter, people have inherent rights, including making decisions.*

# Composition of a Microboard

- Is a legal non-profit entity
  - *Incorporated under Incorporations Act (Federally or Provincially).*
  - *Has by-laws, governance structure.*
- Has a Board of Directors
  - At least 5 unpaid people who have a relationship with the person.
    - *Person supported is often a Director.*
    - *Can be family members.*
  - *Are fiduciaries of the corporation – position of trust.*

# Composition of a Microboard

- Directors might have a range of skill sets (eg., accountant).
  - *There can be members that have no formal role but are involved in the person's life*
- Generally only one Microboard per person.
- Often supported by an Independent Facilitator or other supportive person.

# Role of a Microboard

- Support decision-making.
- Manage the Non-Profit:
  - *Help recruit and supervise support staff.*
  - *Receive and administer funding.*
  - *Manage Home and Residential Supports.*
  - *Interact and liaise with trusts, ODSP, RDSP, etc.*
    - *Cannot manage a Henson Trust but can appoint trust company.*
- Promote succession planning.
- Strengthen applications for support.

# Role Of The Independent Facilitator

- Shares values and philosophy and ensures Microboard members understand them.
- Attends Board Meetings and organizes AGM.
- Leads support team meetings:
  - *Ensures other Support Workers/paid staff understand the philosophy. behind the microboard, relationships and communication style.*
  - *Reinforces 'it is all about the person.'*
- Manages challenges that arise and holds person's voice.

# Benefits of a Microboard

- Is person-directed – person has an equal seat at the table.
  - *Microboards found to increase quality of life and ‘social capital.’ (UBC, 2020)*
- Reduces pressure on families/caregivers.
  - *Provides reassurance as primary caregivers age.*
    - *Microboards are a future planning tool.*
  - *Shares responsibilities typically falling to primary caregivers.*
  - *Reduces the chance of a person going into crisis.*
- Provides support for siblings or next generation.
  - *Helps siblings ease into primary support role.*
  - *Ensures continuity of support and seamless transition.*

## More Benefits...

- Formalizes a ‘Circle of Support/Network’.
  - *Circles/Networks can be vulnerable in times of change.*
  - *Microboards have built in succession-planning offering further protection.*
- Offers purpose - directors know why they are there.
  - *Singular purpose of Microboard – support one person.*
  - *Grounded in values.*

# Impact...



## A Microboard Is Not...

- Guardianship.
  - *It does not make decisions for a person or have any legal authority over the individual.*
- Substitute Decision-Making.
  - *Microboards are a supported decision-making model.*
- A Trustee of a Henson Trust or any other Trust.
  - *A Microboard can appoint a Trustee or Trust Company and a Trustee can be a Microboard member*



# Journey to Belonging

Government's 10-year plan to transform services

- *More individualized, direct funded and community-based.*
- *People will be able to choose how to receive, manage and spend individualized budgets.*
- Microboards align with the values and intention of reform:
  - *Person-directed and ensures those values are upheld.*
  - *Increases the number of people in a person's life.*
  - *Delivers checks and measures required by government.*
  - *Ensures quality assurance, transparency and flexibility.*
    - *High degree of family involvement best form of QA.*

## Agencies & Microboards: Working Together

“A service system for people with disabilities and others in need of support will have to be a system in constant change. It has to be continuously developed if the customers are not left behind and to become hostages of an outdated way of doing things.”

*Alfred Dam  
Denmark*

# Agencies & Microboards: Working Together

We know that generally speaking...

- Our existing system can't offer what everyone wants.
- Trust is critical.
- Partnerships are critical... 'walk with people'.
- Healthy tensions created when people are determining their own lives.

## Agencies & Microboards

Agencies and Microboards are well-aligned:

- *Both support and are grounded in “person-directed” values.*
- *Agencies are already supporting people with personalized budgets, individualized housing arrangements, Passport dollars, insurance funds and “fee-for-service” arrangements.*
- *Share a key focus on future planning and sustainability.*

# Working Together

Working with a Microboard is a 'Win-Win' for an Agency:

- Microboard becomes the consistent point of contact for agency staff:
  - *Ensures supports meet the person's needs;*
  - *Supports decision-making;*
  - *Contributes to the stability and sustainability of a person's network;*
    - *Has a succession plan in place;*
    - *Plans for the future.*

# Working Together

More 'Win-Wins':

- Microboard can manage finances
  - *Provides accountability in direct-funding arrangements.*
  - *Mitigates agency risk if funds flow-through agency to Microboard.*
- Can enter into purchase of services arrangements with agencies.
- Establishes relationship with agency for future planning.

# Supporting Someone Who Has A Microboard

- Communication is key.
- Staff need to know it is OK to participate in discussions ‘outside’ of typical agency support arrangements.
- The Microboard is the vehicle for support:
  - *However, the key point of contact may change over time.*
  - *Communications may be managed by different Microboard members depending on the issue (ie., health, finances, etc.)*



[www.microboardsontario.com](http://www.microboardsontario.com)

# Thank you!

## Questions?



[www.microboardsontario.com](http://www.microboardsontario.com)

[www.pooranlaw.com](http://www.pooranlaw.com)