OADD 2023

www.microboardsontario.com

What Is a Microboard?

A Microboard is a committed group of family and friends who join together with a person who has a disability to create a supportive not-for-profit corporation with one purpose:
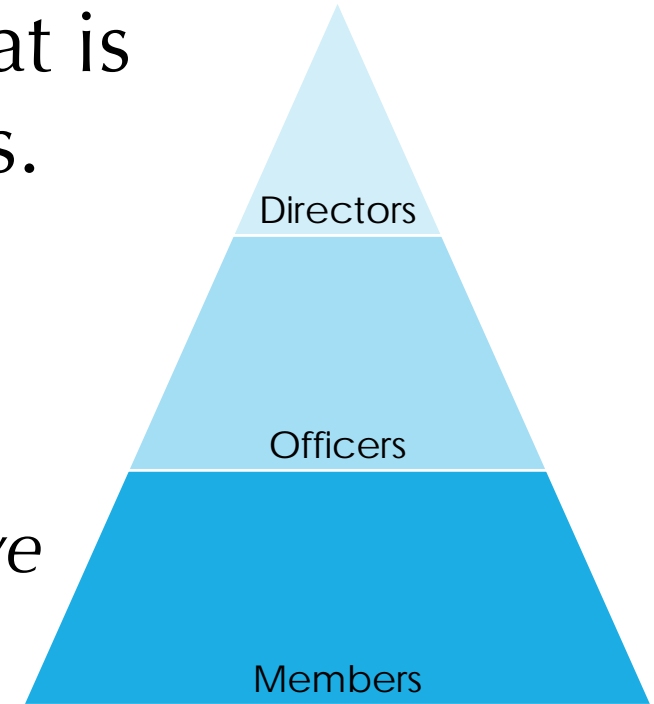
- Assist that person with living their best life by supporting them in making decisions that reflect their goals.

What is an Aroha:

- Derived from the Maori word for 'love'
- Also an incorporated entity helping to ensure one lives a good life, is supported to make decisions through relationships that matter.

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A Microboard is a Non-Profit Corporation

- A corporation is a business structure that is a separate legal entity from its owners.
  - *Two types: Not-for-profit or For-profit.*
  - *Incorporated provincially or federally;*
- Has legal and fiduciary responsibilities
  - *Responsibility and accountability to achieve purpose and protect the corporation;*

Directors

Officers

Members

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Microboards Are Not New

- Have been around since the 1980's
  - *Began in Winnipeg, Manitoba through the work of David and Faye Wetherow.*

- Vela Canada built on Wetherows' work
  - *Expanded Microboard vision and model within Canada.*
  - *Trademarked the Microboard name.*
  - *More than 1,200 Microboards in British Columbia.*

- Microboard Organizations in Australia, Ireland, and US.

- Microboards Ontario formalized in 2018.

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Values & Beliefs Underlying Microboards

"A Microboard based on the spirit of a family and circle of friends has various advantages compared with other models of support for people with disabilities. It is smaller, more intimate, more direct, more responsive, more enduring, and supports relationships and community connections."

- David & Faye Wetherow, 2001

Microboard™

Microboards are built on key values and principles:

- *Relationships are the most important component of a person's life.*

- *Everyone has the capacity for self-determination.*

- *All decisions made by a Microboard are 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.*

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Microboards Support Decision-Making

- Supported Decision Making provides resources and supports enabling a person to participate in decisions that affect their life.

  - *Person-directed supports honour and support a person's right to make decisions that impact their life.*

  - *People have inherent rights, including making decisions Under UN Convention and Canada's Charter.*

  - *Ontario currently has a Substitute Decision-Making model*

    - *a person's rights are removed and assigned to another person.*

  - *BC, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Yukon have Supported Decision-Making frameworks.*

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A Microboard Is Not…

- Guardianship.
  - *It does not make decisions for a person or have any legal authority over the individual.*

- For everyone - part of a continuum of support options:
  - *They take work, time, energy and investment.*
  - *A person may have a large family or solid support circle with succession plan in place.*

- Just for those with a lot of money available.

- A 'quick fix.'

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Composition of a Microboard

- At least 5 **unpaid** people who have a relationship with the person.
  - *There can be members that are not directors but are involved in the person's life.*
- Person supported is often a director.
- Directors can have a range of skill sets (ie., accountant).
- Generally only one Microboard per person.
- Often supported by an Independent Facilitator or other supportive person.

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Role of a Microboard

- Support decision-making and person-centred approaches.

- Expand connections and deepen relationships.

- Manage the Non-Profit:
  - *Help recruit and supervise support staff.*
  - *Receive and administer funding.*
  - *Enter into contracts with Service Providers.*
  - *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 and support transition.

- Strengthen applications for support.

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Benefits of a Microboard in a Person's Life

- Is all about them; supports their goals by helping them make decisions.

- Greater sense of independence and autonomy.

- Empowered to make decisions and express goals.

- Supports are culturally and age appropriate, adjust as person ages and based on their interests.

- People feel more connected to their community.

- Expands number of people in a person's life.
  - *Relationships deepen and people feel more connected.*

Microboards Social Capital and Quality of Life (UBC, 2020)

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Benefits for Family/Caregivers

- Reduces pressure and eases stress.
  - *Members can share responsibilities.*
  - *Multiple board members allows for a variety of values, connections, experiences, expertise, and perspectives.*

- Provides reassurance as primary caregivers age.
  - *Shares responsibilities typically falling to primary caregivers.*

- Reduces the chance of a person going into crisis.
  - *Circles can be vulnerable in times of change.*

- Security knowing there is a plan in place
  - *Microboard will support loved one into the future when parents are no longer able.*

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Benefits for Siblings/Next Generation

- Eases the transition into the primary support role.
    - *Siblings can be a Microboard member before assuming primary support role.*
    - *Microboard shares responsibility, siblings do not have anxiety of 'filling parents shoes'.*

- Can be involved in their sibling's life as a peer.
    - *Reduces tension some people feel of having their sibling 'take care of them'.*
    - *Provides balance in their own life.*

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Role Of Independent Facilitation

- Does not provide direct support. Supports the Microboard:
  - *Helps build and expand network/circle.*
  - *Supports planning and administration.*
  - *Ensures person is heard and goals supported.*
  - *Helps Microboard members understand their role.*
  - *Can help identify community and government resources.*
  - *Facilitates any challenges that arise.*

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Down The Lane With David

Down The Lane With David

- Journey with Microboards has been a long one:
  - *Working as a Support Worker, became knowledgeable about Microboards.*

- In 1999, 3 year-old David joins the family:
  - *Non-verbal*
  - *Self-injurious behavior when not feeling well, afraid or not able to communicate his needs*
  - *Ignited renewed interest and learning in Microboards, this time as David's mother.*
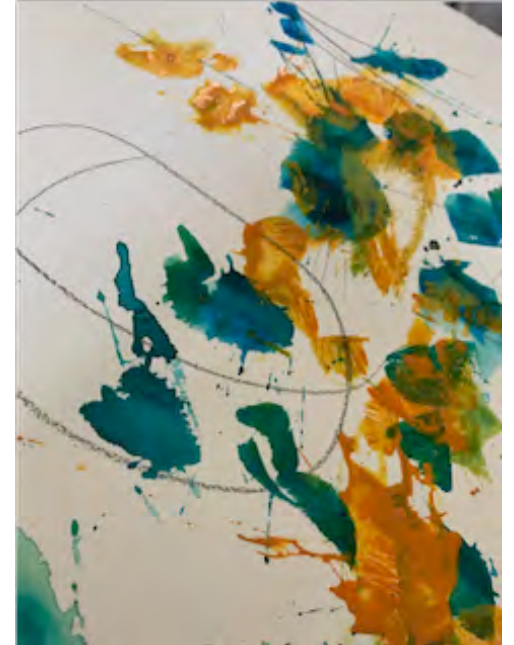
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School Years & Transition To Adulthood

- School years were challenging; behaviours made his world very small:
  - *Thought he couldn't learn and believed his behaviours were a result of his disability.*

- David was excelling with family and support workers, but school and life outside of his family remained difficult:
  - *Family new David best and how he communicated and learned*
    - *To purchase items in stores*
    - *How to use his ATM pin*
    - *How to take photographs*
    - *To communicate using his iPad*

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School Years & Transition To Adulthood

- Individualized funding enabled them to hire two Support Workers.

- Was introduced to painting:
  - *Cards and work being sold in local shops*
  - *Changed his 'story' in the town – he is an artist*

- At age 18, everything changed:
  - *Doctors thought dual diagnosis clinic was best solution.*
  - *Parents voice was secondary & approach was questioned.*
  - *Decision to create Microboard cemented at that point.*

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Planning For The Future

- Creation of Microboard coincided with long term planning when David was in early 20's:
  - *As nervous to have one as to not have one!*
  - *David wanted to stay in Ingersoll*
  - *Didn't want his sisters to inherit his care*
  - *David deserved his own life not wrapped in a 'care' envelope.*
  - *Sisters had already planned to be David's primary caregivers and he would live with them.*
  - *Wanted to visit David in his life, just like his sisters.*

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Planning For The Future

- What was important was David's place in the world:
  - *Began attending college*
  - *Learned encaustic painting*
  - *Reconnected with birth parents*
  - *Documented growing family by taking photos of nieces and nephews.*

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Down The Lane With David

- Microboard formed 2017
  - David didn't have a large circle. His board includes (9):
    - *David*
    - *Three former support workers*
    - *David's two sisters, his parents and his aunt*
    - *Provision for membership of David's birth parents*

- Created a long term plan:
  - *Broadened and supported role of his sisters*
  - *Ensures David's place in the world and community*

- Ingersoll Support Services
  - *Strong relationship, support & understanding of Microboards*

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Role Of Our Independent Facilitator

- Ensures the Microboard members understand the values of the MIcroboard.

- Provides admin support related to the Microboard.

- Leads support team meetings:
  - *Ensures David's Support Workers understand the microboard, David's relationships and communication style.*
  - *Reinforces 'it is all about David.'*

- Facilitates challenges and discussions and ensures David's voice is heard.

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David's Role In The Microboard

- Didn't attend meetings for first year:
  - *By-laws created, etc*
- Slowly opened David up to idea of attending:
  - *Scheduled after one of his walks*
  - *Board directors scattered throughout house.*

- David's Role:
  - *Provide a slideshow of his life between meetings*
  - *Adjourns the meeting*
- Zoom meetings during pandemic.

Impact

- David has gained confidence:
  - *Attends support meetings now.*
  - *Feels empowered.*
  - *Board members keep focus on David and engage in his attempts to communicate.*

- Family has learned:
  - *To trust deeper and to trust him.*
  - *A person's voice doesn't just come from speech.*
  - *How to listen to the whispers.*

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Impact

- Board Growth
  - *Recent events left David with a gap in his support.*
  - *Consulted with the Independent Facilitator to discuss options and identify solutions.*
  - *Note sent to the Microboard discussing gaps in his support, stressing importance of David's daily walk which is fundamental to him.*
  - *Surprise when two members, not his sisters, offered to help*
    - *Surprised by what it means to other members to be part of Dave's board and trusting depth of connection is there.*
    - *Highlighted growth of members stepping out of their 'role'.*
      - *Everyone needs to grow into role, not just David.*

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People with Little or No Extended Family

- Microboard is still a possibility.

- Intentionally build a person's network by considering everyone in that their life:
  - *Neighbours*
  - *Community acquaintances – work, school, church, etc.*
  - *Former staff or volunteer support.*

- Agency-supported people can still have a Microboard:
  - *Values and principles of Microboards must be upheld.*
  - *Create opportunities with the person to build relationships based on their goals and interests.*

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Microboards and Journey to Belonging

Government's 10-year plan to transform services.

- Microboards align with the values and intention of reform.
  - *Citizenship; fairness and equity; accessibility & portability; safety & security; accountability; sustainability.*

- Delivers checks and measures required by government.
  - *Microboards provide fiduciary responsibility and accountability.*

- Ensures quality assurance, transparency and flexibility.
  - *High degree of family involvement best form of Quality Assurance.*

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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 ensures supports meet the person's needs and are person-centered/directed
  - *Supports decision-making.*
- Contributes to the stability and sustainability of a person's network:
  - *Supports siblings or next generation of support with transition.*
  - *Has a succession plan in place.*
- Microboard is a consistent point of contact for agency.

Working Together

More'Win-Wins':

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

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