

Community Transition Guide for Families & Support Networks

A step-by-step walkthrough of
the Community Transition Process



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Transition to Life in the Community.....	2
Who is Involved in the Transition Process	3
Community Transition Journey	5
Transition Stage 1: Getting Started.....	6
Transition Stage 2: Planning for Success	7
Transition Stage 3: Making Decisions	11
Transition Stage 4: Moving to Community.....	12
Transition Stage 5: Ongoing Support	13
Moving Forward.....	14
Frequently Asked Questions	15

Introduction

This document was created to support individuals, families and support networks through the transition from institutional living to life in the community. The guidance provided here is informed by the Key Directions outlined in the Human Rights Review and Remedy for the Findings of Systemic Discrimination Against Nova Scotians with Disabilities.

This document is also aligned with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), specifically Article 19, which champions the right of individuals with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community on equal terms with others.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community

States Parties to the present Convention recognize the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that:

- a) Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;*
- b) Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;*
- c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.*

Transition to Life in the Community

Transitioning from institutional settings to living in a community is an important and personal journey. It requires careful planning, collaboration, and a focus on each person's unique needs, preferences, and goals.

This document will walk people, their support networks, and others involved, through the key stages of the community transition process. This will provide an overview of the transition process, sharing tips on how to support the move to community, while also making sure it is aligned with the goals of the person. By reading this guide, you will learn about each step, who will be involved, and what to expect along the way.



Who is Involved in the Transition Process

Individuals with disabilities	The person at the centre of the transition 0 their preferences, needs, and goals drive the process.
Support networks	Includes family, friends, and other close connections who provide decision-making, emotional, and informal support to a person with disabilities.
Intensive Planning and Support Coordinators (IPSC)	Helps to plan and coordinate the transition, working directly with the person transitioning and their network to plan and implement their vision of a good life in the community. They ensure the person transitioning’s hopes and dreams for a good life are pursued, needs are met, and that their voice is heard.
Local Area Coordinators (LAC)	Works alongside individuals with disabilities, their families, and support networks to plan and implement their vision of a good life in the community. Acts as a connection to local services and supports, with a focus on accessing typical resources and building inclusive opportunities within the community.

Who is Involved in the Transition Process

Support providers

Community organizations hired to provide professional support services, including healthcare, personal care, and community-based services, tailored to the person's specific needs.

Community and natural supports

Friends, neighbours, volunteer organizations, faith-based groups and others in the local community who provide informal help and day-to-day assistance.

Community Transition Journey

The following journey will walk you through the key stages of transitioning to community. You will find more information on each of these steps on the next few pages.

Moving back to community takes time, and there is no rush. The process moves at a pace that feels comfortable for the individual. They must first be confident their hopes and dreams for a good life are understood, there is a support plan in place, and they feel ready.



Getting Started

You and your coordinator will meet and get to know each other. When you are comfortable you can share what is most important to you.



Support Planning

Together, you will explore your options and build a plan with supports that will meet your needs in community.



Discovering Communities

You will visit communities to find the best fit for you.



Finding Supports

Your coordinator will help you find or create services and support in your new community.



Making Decisions

You will be supported to make decisions about your new living arrangements and support.



Moving to Community

You will have support to move into your new home and start settling into your community.



Ongoing Support

Your coordinator will continue to check to check in with you and support you if needed.

Transition Stage: Getting Started

What happens	<p>The individual, their support network and the IPSC will begin by spending time getting to know each other, building trust, and developing a deeper understanding of the person's unique needs, preferences, and goals. The IPSC will work alongside the person moving at a pace that feels comfortable for them to ensure a supportive and person-centered process.</p>
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual and their support network will work with the IPSC to identify key people who will be part of their support network.• Together, the person and their support network will build a plan with the IPSC that reflects the person's interests, values, and goals for the future.• The IPSC will use tools like the My Plan Template to help organize and document the plan.
What the person and their network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person will be asked about their hopes and plans for the future and their idea of a good life in the community.• They will be asked about any existing informal or formal supports they have in place, and to describe their past living situations.• The person will be asked to share details about their daily routines, preferences, trusted individuals, and activities that are important to them.

Transition Stage: Planning for Success

This stage is split into three key parts:



**Support
Planning**



**Discovering
Communities**



**Finding
Supports**

The process of planning for a life in community involves looking at everything together: understanding their unique needs, exploring where they might live, and figuring out what supports will help them thrive in their new community. These things don't happen one after the other, but all at the same time, to shape their overall plan.

As the person thinks about where they want to live, they will also be thinking about the type of life they are wanting to live, and the kinds of help and support they will need to achieve that life. All these decisions work together to make sure their transition is flexible, personalized, and meets their needs as they evolve. A person's support network will play an important role in supporting the transition through the decision-making process and planning stage.

This process makes sure everything is planned with the person as the centre of the process, so they can feel comfortable and supported as they move to their new life.

Transition Stage: Planning for Success

Support Planning



What happens	<p>Here, the person transitioning works with their IPSC to identify the types of supports they want and need for daily living, such as personal, medical, and social support to achieve their vision for a good life. Formal assessments, like the InterRAI, and discussions about informal supports help form a comprehensive Support Plan. This ensures the person's needs are clearly understood and considered for their future transition.</p>
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual will work with the IPSC to identify what types of support they need.• Formal assessments, like InterRAI, may be conducted to help determine the person's support needs.• The IPSC and the persons network will help identify informal supports (e.g., family or friends) that can complement formal supports.• The person's Support Plan will be drafted based on these discussions, explorations and assessments.
What the person and their network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals may be asked about their day-to-day support needs.• They may be asked to share how they prefer to communicate and make decisions.• They may be asked about any informal supports from family, friends, or their community.

Transition Stage: Planning for Success



Discovering Communities

What happens	<p>The individual will explore community options with their support network and IPSC. Visits to apartments or community homes help them experience different settings and consider what best suits their lifestyle and goals. This exploration will guide decisions on where they would like to live and what the community has to offer for them to engage with.</p>
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person will explore different living environments, including apartments, community homes, or supported living environments.• The IPSC will help arrange visits to communities of interest to help the person get a feel for the environment and determine what works best for them.• The person will have the opportunity to explore community services, such as local libraries, recreational centers, community centers, grocery stores, and other public services they may wish to engage with to support their lifestyle and interests.
What the person and their network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person, supported by their network, will be asked or given the chance to indicate what community they prefer, whether it be urban, suburban, or rural.• The person, supported by their network, will be asked if they want to live alone or with roommates, or in Home Share.• The person will be asked to provide feedback after visiting respective communities and potential living environments, sharing what they liked or disliked.

Transition Stage: Planning for Success



Finding Supports

What Happens	<p>The individual, supported by their network, evaluates different community-based supports that align with their needs. The IPSC helps connect the person with potential support options for daily living, health care, and community involvement. The IPSC may also work with the person to develop new supports. The IPSC will also help the person understand what supports are available within the person's funding band.</p>
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The individual will meet with potential support providers who can support daily living, provide health services, and enable community engagement.• The IPSC will help the person and their support network evaluate which services and supports can best meet their needs and align with their preferences.• The IPSC will work with the person to ensure they are maximizing their available IF
What the person and their network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person will be asked to share their preferences and goals for support services, including how they envision spending their time, their interest in employment or volunteering opportunities, their desired level of community involvement, and any specific healthcare or recreational activities they wish to engage in.• The person will be asked to meet with and evaluate potential support options to ensure they feel comfortable with the services offered.

Transition Stage: Making Decisions

What happens	<p>At this point, the IPSC will work with the person and their support network to finalize a detailed transition plan. This plan outlines the steps, supports, and timelines for their move to community. It will build on the information captured in both their support plan and funding plan. The transition plan is double-checked to ensure everything is in place before the person moves into their new community.</p>
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The IPSC will review the transition plan with the person to ensure it reflects their preferences.• Roles and responsibilities of the person's support network and support providers will be clearly defined.• The transition plan will be flexible and open to adjustments based on any new information or feedback from the individual.
What the person and their network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person may be asked to confirm the timelines for their move.• The person may be asked to provide input on the responsibilities of their support network.• The IPSC will confirm the person is confident in their support plan and if any final adjustments are needed.



Transition Stage: Moving to Community

What happens	<p>With the transition plan finalized, the IPSC will work alongside the person and their support network to coordinate the move to the community. The IPSC will ensure that essential services, housing arrangements, and initial supports are in place to help the person settle in. While much of the planning will be completed in earlier stages, there will likely be additional details to address as the person adjusts to their new environment. The tools developed earlier, such as the Support Plan and Funding Plan, will guide this process.</p>
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person's move into their chosen community will be supported by their support network and IPSC. • The IPSC will ensure that all necessary services and supports are available and ready. • Check-ins with the person will take place to ensure the move is going smoothly and adjustments are made as needed.
What the person and their support network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person will be asked about how they are settling into their new home and community. • The person may be asked whether the services and supports from their Support Plan are being delivered as expected. • The person will be asked if any additional supports are needed or if adjustments should be made to their current plan.



Transition Stage: Ongoing Support

What happens	<p>After the move, the focus shifts to ensuring that the person feels supported in their new environment and is happy with the arrangements. Their IPSC will have regular check-ins to make sure the supports they are receiving are meeting their needs and working for them. This stage ensures that the support plan and funding plan continue to meet their evolving needs.</p>
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IPSC will have regular check-ins with the individual and their support network to ensure support services remain aligned with their needs. • The IPSC will adjust the person's support plan if necessary to reflect any changes in their circumstances. • The person's services and funding will be monitored and adapted based on their preferences and feedback.
What the person and their network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person will be asked how they are adjusting to their new life and if their needs are being met. • The person will be asked whether the services listed in their Support Plan continue to reflect their needs or if changes are required. • The person will be asked to provide feedback on their satisfaction with their current living and support arrangements.



Moving Forward

What happens	Even after the formal transition process is over, ongoing support is important. Regular check-ins and flexibility in the support plan help ensure the person continues to thrive in their new community.
What to expect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued support and communication to ensure the person feels comfortable in the long term.• Flexibility to adapt the support plan as the person's needs and preferences change.
What the person and their network may be asked about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person will be asked how are they feeling about their new life in the community now that some time has passed.• The IPSC will discuss if the individual feels like the support they are getting is enough?• There will be discussion around new opportunities and goals that the person would like to work towards?



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the transition process and why is it important?

- The transition process helps a person move from an institution to a good life in the community of their choice.
- Following a step-by-step process gives everyone a clear view of what to expect throughout the transition. It also ensures the voices and choices of people with disabilities are understood.

2. How long does the transition process take?

- It will be different for everyone, depending on their unique needs and how quickly they feel comfortable moving forward.
- People will move when they are confident their hopes and dreams for a good life are understood and that the supports they need are in place.

3. Who will be involved in the transition?

- In addition to the individual, the team will include an IPSC, support networks (like family, friends, and advocates), and support providers.

4. What if the person is not sure about the choices made during the transition?

- It's okay for a person to take their time and ask questions, and for their preferences and needs to change and evolve.
- The person's choices are most important, and the team is there to help them make decisions.



Frequently Asked Questions

5. How will the person's needs be assessed?

- The IPSC will ask the individual and their support network about their needs and preferences, as well as their goals, hopes and dreams for a good life in community.
- A formal assessment, like the InterRAI, help determine the supports a person needs.

6. Can the person change their mind about their living situation after the transition?

- Yes, they can change their mind. Some trial-and-error is expected in this process as people try things for the first time.
- Needs and preferences change and evolve over time – for everyone. Ongoing support from the IPSC means support plans and funding plans can evolve over time, too.

7. What if the person needs help understanding the information being shared with them?

- The team will explain things in a way that's easy to understand.
- They can use different methods to make sure the person comfortable with the information and in making an informed decision.

8. What types of supports can people access in the community?

- Supports include housing support, healthcare, how they may want to spend their day and use their time, connecting with their community and people, and social activities.
- The team will help the person find what works best for them.

Frequently Asked Questions

9. Do those supports exist in every community?

- Government is working with communities and support providers to ensure those supports in place for people before they move.
- Many support providers are already offering disability supports to people living in the community and are available right now. Some services and supports are available right now to people living in the community.
- We also have dedicated staff in each region whose focus is making sure the supports people need are available to them in their community.

9. Will the person be able to stay connected with family and friends?

- Yes, staying connected is important.
- The team will help the person stay connected with family and friends in their new community.

10. What happens if a person encounters challenges after the transition?

- Support doesn't stop after the move.
- The team will check in with the person regularly and adjust the plan if needed.

11. How can the person get more information or ask additional questions?

- A person can always ask their IPSC for more information or help with any questions they have

We believe in a Nova Scotia where everyone belongs

Everyone should have the freedom and opportunity
to experience, enjoy, and participate in everyday life,
in a community that welcomes you as you are.

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