

# Handbook for Individuals and Families



*My Life - My Choice*

## L.I.F.E.

*Lifelong Learning*  
*Inclusion and Involvement in Community*  
*Friendships and Relationships*  
*Employment*



community living society

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This Handbook, along with the Handbook for Individuals and Families- Information About CLS are yours to keep so you can look at them at any time to help answer your questions.

You can also ask CLS employee to help you.

If you don't know who to talk to, call the number above and we will be happy to connect you.

**Important**

This Handbook was printed on September 22, 2023.

Please note that contents may have changed and the most recent copy of this Handbook should be referenced on our Resource Portal on the CLS website.

<https://www.communitylivingsociety.ca/portfolio-items/important-information-about-cls/>

Thank you

# Welcome to the L.I.F.E. Program

## About L.I.F.E at CLS

The L.I.F.E. program is one of our community inclusion programs. L.I.F.E offers a special mix of supports to help you have a good life where you have meaningful work in community, feel connected and involved with others and enjoy opportunities to learn and grow as a citizen. Our goal is to develop a service plan with you that starts with finding out about the life you want and then implementing steps to help you get there. We focus on these four areas:



<b>L</b>	<b><i>Lifelong Learning</i></b>	All of us are learning new things throughout our lives to help us enjoy our lives. This doesn't just mean school... it can be many things.	Check out the section on <b><i>Learning</i></b>
<b>I</b>	<b><i>Inclusion and Involvement in Community</i></b>	Getting involved in your community is important for building a good life. We explore the ways you want to be connected in your community.	Check out the section on <b><i>Inclusion and Involvement</i></b>
<b>F</b>	<b><i>Friendship and Relationships</i></b>	Having people you enjoy spending time with and can count on in your life is another way to make sure you have a good life. We work with you to support the relationships you already have and to build new ones.	Check out the section on <b><i>Friendships and Relationships</i></b>
<b>E</b>	<b><i>Meaningful Employment</i></b>	Having a job supports the life you want. At L.I.F.E., we focus on finding a job you enjoy where you can be successful. To join this program, you need to be committed to finding work as part of our plan with you.	Check out our section on <b><i>Employment</i></b>

Our L.I.F.E program is funded by Community Living British Columbia (CLBC). CLBC manage referrals to the Community Living Society (CLS) and refer eligible people to us when we have an open space in the program. There is no cost to you for this service.

## Deciding if L.I.F.E is the Right Fit

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Not everyone who is referred to the L.I.F.E program decides it is the right fit for them. To help you decide if it is the right fit, and to assist CLS in learning if we can serve you well in this program, our L.I.F.E. Coordinator and/or Director of Programs will meet with you. They will spend time with you and your personal support network to learn about your expectations, goals, and areas where you would like to focus. They also find out about your support needs.

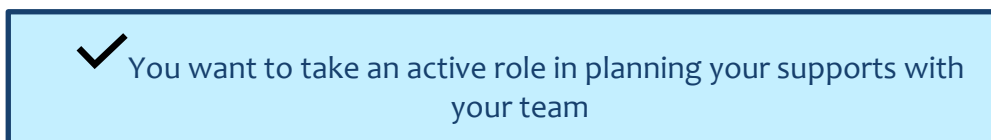
We want you to make a good choice for yourself so take time to:

- make sure you learn about the L.I.F.E. program and what its all about.
- make sure you want to find employment (this is a requirement of the L.I.F.E. program).
- explore how the 4 key areas - Learning, Inclusion, Friendship, and Employment fit for you.

Our L.I.F.E. program might be the right fit for you if you want to:



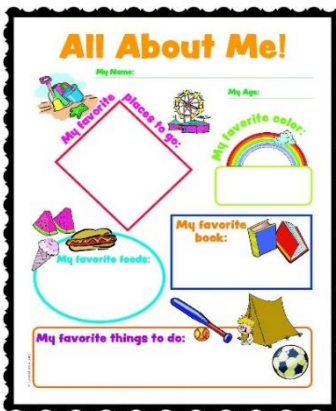
AND



## Ways We Help You Learn About the L.I.F.E. Program

We will:

- Provide you with this Handbook.
- Share examples of the types of activities that people in the program have been working on.
- Introduce you to our employees (you will likely have a chance to work with many of them).
- Possibly introduce you to some of the people in the L.I.F.E. program if they consent to do so.
- Answer your questions about how the program fits for you.



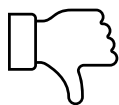
### The Types of Information We Gather About You

We want to build your service about what matters to you. This means we will ask you and your personal support network members who you choose to be involved, lots of questions about your interests, preferences, school, work experience, and your support preferences and needs. When gathering all

this personal information about you, we encourage you to involve your personal support network members to help us get to know you better.



## Making a Decision About Whether to Proceed with L.I.F.E



After visiting and seeing our services or thinking through your needs and wants, you and/or your personal support network may decide this service is not what you want. Similarly, we may reconsider if this service can be a good fit based on our capacity to meet your needs. In either case, we will work with you to make sure you connect with CLBC to explore other resources that may better meet your needs.



If all looks good and we all feel confident this service is a good fit for you, then let's get started by reviewing this Handbook together. Be sure to ask lots of questions. Don't leave your questions unanswered!

## Getting Started with the L.I.F.E. Program

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### Meeting Our Employees – Your Support Team

In the L.I.F.E. program you will likely be working with a number of different employees. All CLS employees are enthusiastic champions for the L.I.F.E. guiding principle of **MY LIFE - MY CHOICE**. All employees support all 4 focus areas, but sometimes, a particular employee may be better suited to support your **employment** goals because of their skills and background in your areas of interest, while another employee may be a better fit for your goals related to **inclusion, friendships** or **learning**. With your guidance, we will mix and match employees to best meet your needs and their schedules. These employees are called your support team.

The L.I.F.E. Coordinator will also play an important part in your service. The Coordinator will check in with you regularly and your support team so that your service is **always guided by and with you**.

## About CLS Employees and their Skills

Our L.I.F.E. employees have lots of experience helping people find work, build community connections and develop their skills. CLS belongs to the Canadian Association of Supported Employment (CASE), to ensure that members of our team have access to training and resources to support best practices for supported employment. Employees also take special workshops and training to help them in all 4 focus areas of this program - *Learning, Inclusion, Friendships and Employment*.

## Types of Support Employees Provide

We focus on helping you achieve the life you want. We work directly with you on your goals and spend time, outside of the time we spend with you, exploring resources and supports to help you achieve your goals.

**A-Support Time**  
**Spent with you supporting your goals.**

**B-Support Time**  
**Exploring resources for you.**

## Planning Your Service – Your Plan, Your Voice

Our first step will be to help develop a plan for how we will focus our time together. You will already have told us a lot about yourself as part of intake so that will be our starting place. Together with those who you choose to include, we will map out a plan to get us started. It may involve focussing on some of the goals you already have, or it may focus more on exploring your interests and hopes for your life so that we can decide on some goals together. In all cases, part of this first service plan is about getting to know you and building our relationship with you so we can work together successfully. This means listening to you and learning from you.



## Keeping Your Plan “Tuned Up”:

As we get to know you and you start to learn about how you might use the L.I.F.E program, together we will update your plan. In fact, we expect that you will update your plan regularly. As things change for you, your plan will change. To make sure we stay on top of changes, your team will do check-ins regularly with you – usually every 3 months (or more often). The L.I.F.E. Coordinator will check in with you monthly as well. At these check-ins, we do what we call “Tune-ups” to adjust any parts of you plan that need to change. We also celebrate successes you have had and problem solve any issues or problems you are experiencing.



*I am learning life skills.  
Now I need to move out on my own.*

## Your Schedule – You Choose

We have designed our L.I.F.E program to be as flexible as possible so we can support you when and where you need it. Employees will help you plan and decide what you want to do with your time with us, and then you decide your own schedule from week to week and work out the details with your support team. Having more than one L.I.F.E. employee on your support team makes this easier. If one employee isn't available because they are working with someone else, then another member of your team may be able to step in to support you at that time. We partner with you as a team!

*"I like the flexibility; I can give my Coordinator a call when I have plans and she will check who is available for the change in my schedule and a staff will come."*

## Hours of Service – Matching Your Needs

You can expect to have your hours of support change to match your needs as you start to build your life the way you want it. When you first start services, and/or when you set some new goals that require more exploration or support, you might meet with employees more often, and they might spend more time doing research or background work (Type B-Support). Once some of your goals are met and you are settled into work and community activities or have developed connections in your community with people who are your 'natural supports', you may find you don't want or need to meet with us as often. What's great about the L.I.F.E. program is that we do regular **Check-ins** and **Tune Ups** with you so that the support and the hours we are providing match what you need.

*"I like that I get support when I need it, my staff helped me get a job that I love, and I made lots of new friends."*



# Understanding Program Expectations

## Communication is Key

Because this service is focussed on your life, it is important that you make sure we are “in the know” about what is going on so we can support you when and how it works for you.

Keeping us **In the Know** means letting us know:

If you have to cancel a scheduled time with us.	It is important to give us lots of notice if you can but if you are sick or something urgent comes up at the last minute, just let your support team know so they aren't waiting for you.
If you have concerns or issues about your service.	We can't work with you to find a solution if we don't know there is an issue, so be sure to tell us.
If you need support with something outside of your scheduled time.	Sometimes things might come up at your job or a community activity we have been supporting you with and you need support in the moment. Reach out to your support team.
If you have new ideas about your life, or you want to update your goals or explore new options.	Our check-ins are a good time to talk about changes - but don't wait. If things come up and you want to explore new options sooner, talk to your support team.

## Regular Check-ins

We have learned that the key to success in our L.I.F.E. program is regular communication with everyone involved – you, your personal support network, and your support team here at CLS. That way everyone is informed, feels safe, and is heard.



We schedule regular check-ins with you and your personal support network and follow up on these check-ins as needed. We also invite all of you to reach out to us when something comes up.


#### Check-ins Help:

- All of us stay focussed on what you want in your life – it can be easy to lose focus sometimes when you or we get caught up in our day-to-day activities.
- You to make changes to your goals or move on to new things if you have achieved your current goals or decide they are not a good fit.
- Us all to make note of and celebrate your successes.
- You to feel more confident and independent in your life.

CLS employees will support you in person, by phone, by text or any other preferred method including communication technology. We make sure we follow CLS practices around communication technologies if you choose this option. See the section on Information and Communication Technologies in the *Handbook for Individuals and Families – Information About CLS*.

### Exploring Options/Trying New Things

A big part of our support in the L.I.F.E. program is about helping you increase options, so you have the life you want. This means trying new things.



*“I have overcome fears of mine with the encouragement and support from my staff.”*



A participant following her interest in cats by volunteering in community.

We know trying new things, going to new places, and testing new skills can feel scary sometimes. We support you at your pace and won't ever make you do something you don't want to do. However, we promise to give you gentle nudges to test yourself and take small steps (or big ones if you prefer) to make new things happen for yourself.

## Together We Grow to Support You to Grow

### Being Prepared

It is important for you to remember the things you will need for your sessions with us such as:

- A bus pass if using transit,
- Personal ID and Health Cards for emergencies,
- Money if there are costs for activities chosen,
- Appropriate clothing for the activity and the weather.



### Bringing Your Medications and Other Personal Supplies



If you have medications that must be taken during the time you are at the program, you will be responsible for bringing your medications each time you attend. CLS cannot store them on site. The Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator will review our medication policy with you so you can work with them to make sure medication is brought in the right packaging along with the Medication Administration Record

(MAR) form, how it will be stored, and who will be administering the medication if you cannot take it yourself.

You are responsible for supplying and bringing other personal supplies you might need such as sanitary supplies, sunscreen, or devices such as walkers, canes, hearing aids, etc.

It is important to talk with CLS employees about any support you might need and how you can make sure to remember to bring your medications, personal supplies and devices so you can be comfortable while engaged in activities.

## Making the Most of Your L.I.F.E. Program

Living a good life means something different for everyone. You will be the one guiding your services and you can count on us to work with you.

## How Might You Use the L.I.F.E. Program

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### Independence

We focus on **personal development** - doing the things you like and learning new things.

We focus on your **self-determination** - making your own choices and decisions in your life.

### Social Participation

We support your **relationships** with the people who you care about and who care about you.

We support your **social inclusion** so you are an active and important part of your community.

We focus on your **rights** so you have control of your life and your choices are respected.

### Well-Being

**Physical Well-being** - We help you make sure your body feels good and you have a doctor/health team working with you.

**Emotional Well-being**  
We support you to feel good and to enjoy a sense of safety in your life.

**Material Well-being**  
We support you to develop your income to meet your needs.

## Lifelong Learning

Some examples of ways we have supported participants with learning:

- Developing Life Skills to increase independence such as:
  - Learning to cook;
  - Learning to manage money;
  - Learning self care.
- Learning ways to get around in community such as:
  - Taking transit independently;
  - Learning bike routes/walking routes;
  - Learning to drive.
- Attending a college program to prepare for a job in a specific area or learn new things.
- Learning how to apply for housing, be a good tenant or homeowner.



## Inclusion and Involvement in Community

Getting involved in community in ways that work for you can involve many possible activities such as:



- Joining groups or clubs;
- Volunteering;
- Attending community events;
- Becoming a member of a church or other community;
- Going to regular community activities such as an open swim at a local recreation centre;
- Accessing community services and businesses (libraries, recreation centres, grocery shopping, banking, etc.).

## Friendships and Relationships

We also offer support to help you connect with new people, build friendships, and maintain relationships that matter to you. We do this by helping you to:

- Build connections and friendships at work;
- Meet new people;
- Work through difficulties or upsets with friends or partners;
- Find people who share the same interests;
- Learn ways to stay safe and avoid issues when connecting with people through social media;
- Learn ways to feel comfortable in social groups/ at social events, etc.



## Employment

Finding and keeping a job are key to having a good life so this is an essential part of our support. We make sure our focus is on helping you to find the right job for you.



First paycheque

Ways we support you include:

- Helping you decide the jobs that are a good fit for you that match your skills, interests and preferences;
- Guiding you in planning your job search approach – jobs in community, customized jobs in community or self-employment;
- Aiding you in preparing for your new job and providing support on the job if needed;
- Supporting you to be successful in your new workplace.
- Supporting income reporting and other job requirements.

## Involving Your Personal Support Network

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We hope that you will include others on your team to support you getting the most from the L.I.F.E. program. Your family members or other people who are important to you (your personal support network) can help you in many ways if you decide to include them. They know you best and can help us to support you.

Just like you, your personal support network may find the new ways you are getting involved in community a bit scary. They may also be worried about some of the choices you are making. This is to be expected. Change can be exciting but can also feel hard. Part of our job is to help you and your personal support network work together to support your goals and dreams.



You get to choose if and how they are involved. We can talk with you more about the ways you might want to have them be involved, but it is your choice. If they will be part of the team, we will ask you to sign a consent that will include what information you agree can be shared with them about you and your activities in this program. We review this consent every year with you.

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*“My son now goes out, has friends to go out with, attends hockey games, goes swimming, for coffee. He is enjoying his life in a meaningful way now. Before he was just at home every day not going anywhere. He is happy, more talkative, and excited about things”. (Family Member, CLS L.I.F.E. participant)*

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## Making Sure We Support Your Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Your health, safety and well-being are important. We want to be sure we support your physical, mental, and emotional well-being when we are with you. Here are some of the ways we support your well-being.

### Understanding Your Needs and Supporting Your Goals

As part of planning with you, we make sure that we regularly update all the specific support plans that we have developed with you as part of your **Individual Service and Quality of Life Plan** (ISQLP). This might include **Behavioural Support/Safety Plans, and Health or Other Plans**. We will make sure L.I.F.E. employees stay up to date and competent in any new strategies or interventions in place to support you.

### Emergency Planning and Drills

Although most of the goals we will be working on involve getting out into community, if you are at one of our locations, we will review emergency procedures with you, and you may even be part of an emergency drill. CLS practices unannounced drills at all of our program locations which means anyone at this location takes part so learn how to respond to an emergency.



CLS employees carry first aid kits and have access to emergency information when they go out with you or meet you in community. They also carry a cell phone so they can get help in an emergency. From time to time, they may invite you to talk about and/or practice managing in an emergency when out in community or in your home. They do this so you can all feel prepared if something happens.

## Changing or Ending Services

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There may be circumstances where the L.I.F.E. program no longer works for you:

- ▶ You may have achieved your goals and be ready to move on.
- ▶ You may move to another community where CLS doesn't provide service.
- ▶ You may no longer want to look for work or be employed, which would disqualify you from this service.
- ▶ You have new health or other needs that may require another type of service or level of care not available in our L.I.F.E. program.

Whatever the situation, we will work with you and your personal support network to plan next steps so that you have a comfortable transition to your new setting as outlined in the *Handbook for Individuals and Families – Information About CLS*.



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