



# Building Bridges between the Aging and Disabilities Communities in Nova Scotia



OPADD  
Conference  
March 10, 2009

***nsc***

School of Health  
& Human Services



# Project

## *The Next Stage: Retirement Planning for Older Adults with Developmental Disabilities*

- Funded through a financial contribution from Public Health Agency of Canada
- Collaborative project involving service providers, organizations, educators and decision-makers
- Focused on linking the aging and disability sectors to respond to the emerging needs of aging persons with developmental disabilities
- Key messages from the project emerged via several avenues: focus groups and interviews; workshops & presentations; dialogue; development of educational resources

# Project Partnerships In Action

<b>Service Providers &amp; Provider Organizations</b>	Regional Residential Services Society DirectioNS Council
<b>Educators</b>	NSCC – School of Health and Human Services Mount Saint Vincent University •Nova Scotia Centre on Aging
<b>Decision-makers</b>	NS Department of Health (Continuing Care) NS Department of Community Services NS Disabled Persons Commission
<b>Organizations</b>	People First Nova Scotia (resource) NS Association for Community Living

# Purpose of the Project





# Brief Overview of the Issue

- There are growing numbers of aging individuals with developmental disabilities
- Little information or planning is available about retirement for this group
- Within Canada, there is a mandate of social inclusion for all ages
- Aging and disability sectors seem to run “in parallel” to each other
- Few alliances currently exist between aging and disability sectors
- There is a growing recognition that sectors must work together to meet new needs

Aging in Place Discussion Paper:

<http://www.mcu.ca/pcc/wbtorow.ca>

# Key Messages

Many  
voices.....  
Common  
themes



# Key Messages

- The concept of “aging in place” can be a bridge between the aging and disability sectors
  - *It is a shared goal for programs and services*
- There is a willingness in both the aging and disability sectors to respond to new needs
  - *Each sector has gaps in its understanding and knowledge of the other sector*



# Key Messages

- Intentional processes are needed to build bridges between the aging and disability sectors
  - *Few formal or informal links currently exist*
- Additional resources are required to support aging persons with developmental disabilities in retirement
  - *Extra staff and programs are needed to offer new services to meet changing needs*



# Key Messages

- Education is needed for all stakeholders
  - *Variety is needed in learning opportunities*
- Options for retirement activities in communities are needed
  - *People want similar things in retirement: ongoing relationships with friends/family, meaningful activities, adequate income for choices*



# Key Messages

- Some opportunities already exist
  - *Where are the barriers to inclusion?*
- Age criteria can be a barrier
  - *Access to seniors' programs is often based on age – is this relevant for older adults with disabilities or should access be based on need?*
- New models of cross-collaboration are needed
  - *Aging and disability sectors must work together*



# Key Messages

- There is a central role for service providers in the disability sector to support retirement planning for older adults with disabilities. They have:
  - *Knowledge of clients needs and interests*
  - *Extensive experience with social inclusion*
  - *Well-understood client-focus*
- Existing initiatives offer learning opportunities
  - *Look to the strengths in existing partnerships and listen to the success stories*



# Applying the Key Messages

## *Building Bridges*



# Building Bridges (metaphor)

- Site Preparation?
- Location?
- Need?
- Resources?
- Travel patterns?
- *Whose job is it?*
- Sustainability?
- Are there existing b



# Education is a Bridge

- Education....
  - Stimulates dialogue
  - Builds on unique strengths
  - Offers a venue to exchange knowledge and expertise
  - Connects groups who share a common commitment to positive aging
  - Fosters social inclusion



Education is a common need  
across and within all sectors





# Focus on Education

The Project team developed....

- Resource Guide – Retirement Planning

- Aging in Place Discussion Paper

- Provincial Updates

- Education Sessions for Front-line Workers


- Presentations to organizations in aging and disability communities

- Educational Resource

Also... Shared materials developed by other groups

# Educational Resource: Themes & Topics





# Contents of the Educational Resource

- Overview of each theme based on *Next Stage* project learnings
- Workshop and facilitator guides
  - Handouts, discussion guides, feedback sheets
- Chart of alternate activities for self-study, staff meetings, and community formats
- CD containing PowerPoint presentations
- Resource Guide – Retirement Planning (PDF format)

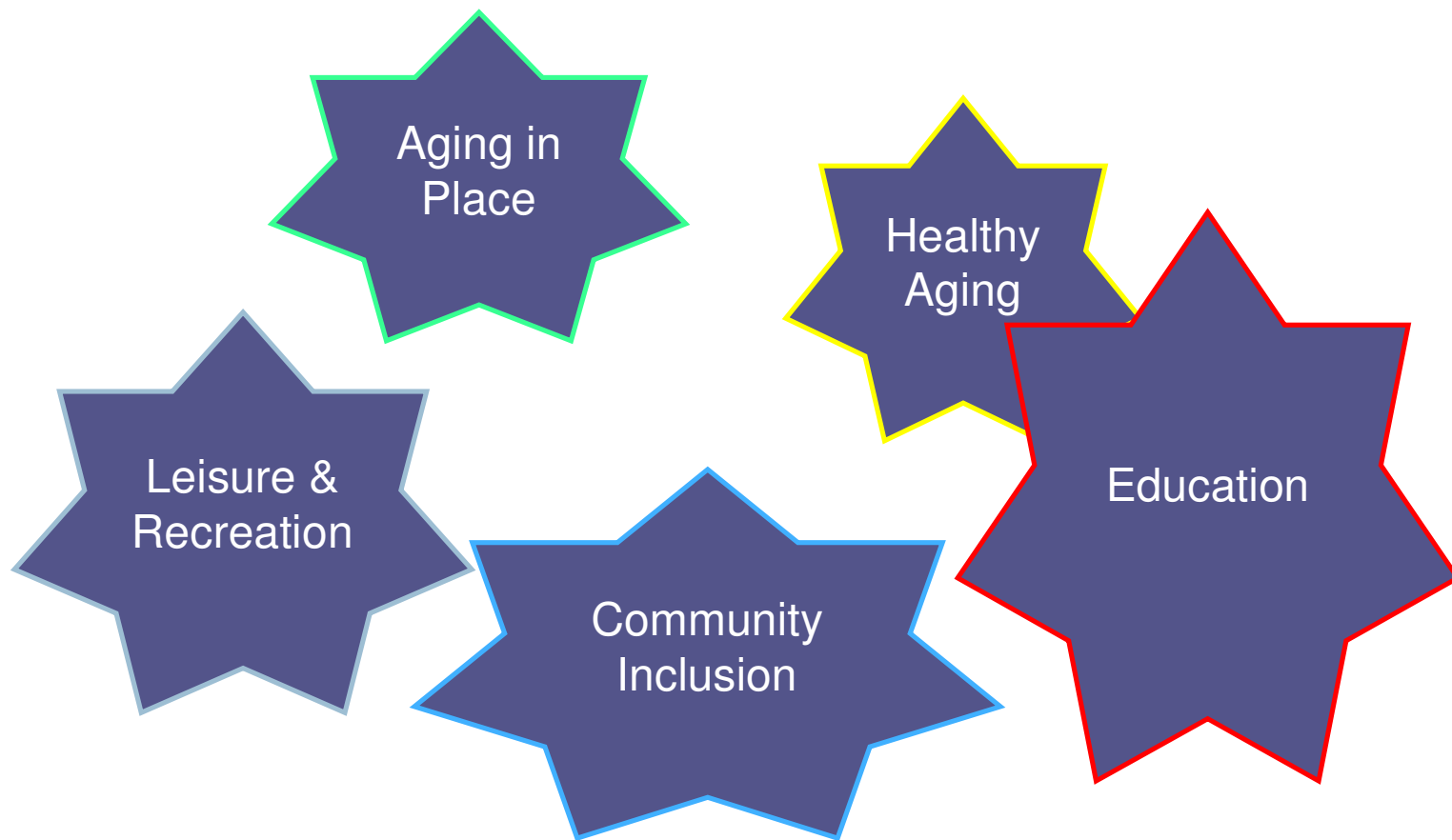
# Using the Resource



- Identify topics that are specifically helpful for your agency or organization (custom design)
- Select topics for a series of inter-agency or staff meetings
- Establish a partnership with one or more agencies and develop a project proposal to deliver workshops in the community
- Combine topics and workshops for a community workshop, seminar, or conference
- Use the materials for individual staff development or orientation of new staff members



# Partnership Bridges (Summary)





Website Address for Project  
Materials

<http://www.msvu.ca/ARCFamilyWork/publications.asp>

HAPPY RETIREMENT