On 5 December 2012, Wisconsin DD Network convened a day of listening and thinking to explore…

…the practices that we are confident are fundamental to supporting good lives for people with developmental disabilities

…the influences on our capacity to sustain these practices

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If people with developmental disabilities are going to have more of these *valued experiences*...
…growing numbers of people will need to join the enduring work of **cultural change** by acting in the face of these social forces:

- Devaluing perceptions & habits
- Economic uncertainty
- Strains on civic life: no time
- Individualistic & mechanistic mind-set
Committed relationships translate public investments into cultural change as people with DD show up in their communities in new ways.

Legal rights

Positive Policies

Resources
(knowledge, effective practices, money, organization)

More citizens see people for their gifts & capacities & benefit directly from their contributions
Culture changing relationships find direction & power as the circles of people connected by choice to a person’s future grow wider & more diverse.

I want to build relationships that let people see my son as I do: a capable, witty person who makes a contribution.
The foundation of intentional relationship building is deeper knowledge of a person’s identity, gifts & interests. A quality of **spaciousness** invites this knowledge.

Make time

Slow down

Shift perspective

Quietly listen & notice the subtle

Let go of…

…certainty about what’s possible

…taking control of the situation

…habitual responses

Intentionally approach from equality
As spaciousness reveals a better view of the whole person, pathways to more valued experiences open up. If we are willing to face risk, uncertainty & ambiguity we can learn to move together toward a better life.
Practices that create spaciousness

Shift Perspective
Notice

Slow down
Make time
Challenge the social rule that says it’s important to be “too busy”

Spaciousness is a quality of time, not just a matter of duration. Keep the hurry out of the time you do invest

**Slow Down • Make time**

Recognize the time you can make choices about

Consider the relationship to time that you are modeling for others
Go for a walk in a beautiful place instead of driving.

Let go of the idea that every moment has to have a point.

Search out new ways to understand:

**Shift Perspective**

Seek out stories about...

...relationships that last through ups & downs

...the resilience of the human spirit

...civic action & community building

...people in positive roles
Cultivate mindfulness & compassion

Seek out models of noticing & learn from them

Notice

Reflect on the way we notice...

...what attracts our attention

...unquestioned assumptions (e.g. paid relationships can’t be authentic)

...the effect of our roles (e.g. we have to have a fix for every situation before we explore it)

...the effects of labels
The practices we have confidence in grow from relationships that open moments of spaciousness & support us to act on what we notice there to create valued experiences in community life.

The system people with developmental disabilities depend on is increasingly focused on efficient delivery of care & treatment that respond to system defined deficiencies. These differences create contradictions that are difficult to manage.
Relational

Meaning in culture change through supporting people into new & unexpected community roles & relationships: drive for innovation

Transactional

Meaning in cost managed achievement of pre-determined service outcomes: drive for uniformity & compliance
Relational

Person as contributing citizen

Transactional

Person as consumer of services
Relational

Commitment, continuity & diversity of relationships as safeguard & way to promote resilience to failure

Transaction

Compliance with detailed contracts & regulation
Risk management as professionally controlled procedure
Relational

Key support roles negotiated & refined in the context of reciprocal responsibility: aim is committed, sustained, trusting relationship

Transactionional

Service delivered within predefined boundaries: aim is efficient deployment of personnel.
Relational

Initial investment of trust to build relationship

Transactional

Vigilance & defensive routines based on fear of...
...people & families who might misuse funds
...provider greed
...negative media exposure
As Transactional approaches grow stronger...
As Transactional approaches grow stronger…

...distance grows between system management & the sites of learning for culture change

...detail complexity increases in a search for certainty

...trust & confidence decrease

...the cost of spaciousness rises & action is more constrained

...alienation grows among those committed to relational approaches
We can...

...**resist** by continuing to create spaciousness & act with the people involved on what emerges

...create more ways to **organize** & extend the circles of committed people connected to positive personal futures

...recognize that there is a **struggle** to preserve & extend relational approaches & choose to be part of it: tell the story of the costs of working around the demands of the current system; push back.

...invite **public conversation** on how we want our communities to develop in order to fully experience the contributions of people with developmental disabilities