Good economic times have not meant better times for people & their support staff.

Images of chaos capture our sense of continual change.

Politics & media tend toward polarization/fragmentation... ...tyranny of majority ...action blocked by interests unwilling to negotiate.

Sense of need to reorder social & system priorities but wide differences on how to do so.

Shifting demographics... ...more older disabled people ...fewer people physically close to family members ...greater obvious diversity.

Growing inequalities... ...income ...housing ...health care.

Increasing sense of scarcity: demand exceeding resources.

Threats to the earth's resources: air, water, soil...
Adaptive Intelligence

(re)defining purpose
(re) organizing to create

What is going on?
What is our purpose – what do we want to create?
What are we learning?
Who else can we engage?
What does difference/conflict make possible?
How do we get the stuff we need?

What else is connected?
(re)defining purpose
(re) organizing to create

What is going on?
What is our purpose – what do we want to create?
What are we learning?
What does difference/conflict make possible?
Who else can we engage?
How do we get the stuff we need?
What else is connected?
Learning creates discomfort as we…

…face the gap between what we say we value and what people actually experience

…find that the routine ways we do things don't work for people

…discover that our time is taken up with activities that keep us from listening to people and acting with them to make changes

…deal with the conflicts that come up because involved people have different ideas, values, and points of view

…feel the increasing uncertainty that comes from shifting power to the people who use services

…admit that we don't know all the answers and trusting others to help us to invent them

…experience tensions between implementing models prescribed from above and responding in a practical way to the needs people communicate

Ways to shift power towards people

• Direct payments
• Giving people a say in hiring staff
• Involving people with more experienced self-advocates as mentors and advocates
• Investing in the development of self-advocacy organizations: not asking too much too fast; allowing time for people to build skills and relationships
• Individualizing services
• Giving up jargon
• Providing support to people involved in consultation and governing groups

The keys…

…building trust by taking the time people need to communicate their experiences and desires, listening carefully, and taking action on what we hear

…recognizing that people know what they need and want but can make mistakes in getting what they want; support people to learn from mistakes and difficulties rather than using risks or mistakes as an excuse for taking over people's lives

…realizing that people have a history that makes a difference: for example, some people who lived in institutions need safe places to tell their story; they may find it hard to say what matters to them when staff or carers are present; peer support is important

…inventing actions with people that will produce definite, often small, positive results for people instead of trying to implement large scale models on people

…providing the support people need; not getting in the way

…finding new partners and exchanges that expand available resources

…reduce fear so that people can speak honestly about what is working and what is not working

Ways our organizations can support learning

…make time to reflect; were doing lots but not stopping to notice and draw lessons

…celebrate achievements

…invest in developing new skills and ways to understand

…make connections with others doing similar things

…look for things that work in other kinds of services and organizations

…put people with learning disabilities in teaching roles

…assist people to make plans for themselves before they negotiate with care managers

…develop our own ways of looking at our work with fresh eyes by asking :“What is life like for people?”: invite outside teams to review, invite local people (committee members, media people, etc) to review; involve people with disabilities and staff from other local services

…define our own standards, assess ourselves; make and implement plans for improvement: don't wait for inspections

…provide feedback on the ways policies affect people's lives: what works and doesn't work about care management; what has changed for people because of “best value”?

…make connections to other agendas, like primary health care

…build up the courage to speak honestly