

Supporting Safe and Inclusive Lives

**Report of the Persons with Developmental
Disabilities Safety Standards Consultation 2016**

Plain Language Version



Letter from John the Chair of the Consultation Team

The PDD Safety Standards Consultation brought together many Albertans to talk about safety for people with developmental disabilities. This paper is everyone's ideas put together.

Thank you to every person who talked and wrote to us. Thank you to the Government workers for all of their help. Thank you to the members of the team who listened to what people had to say.

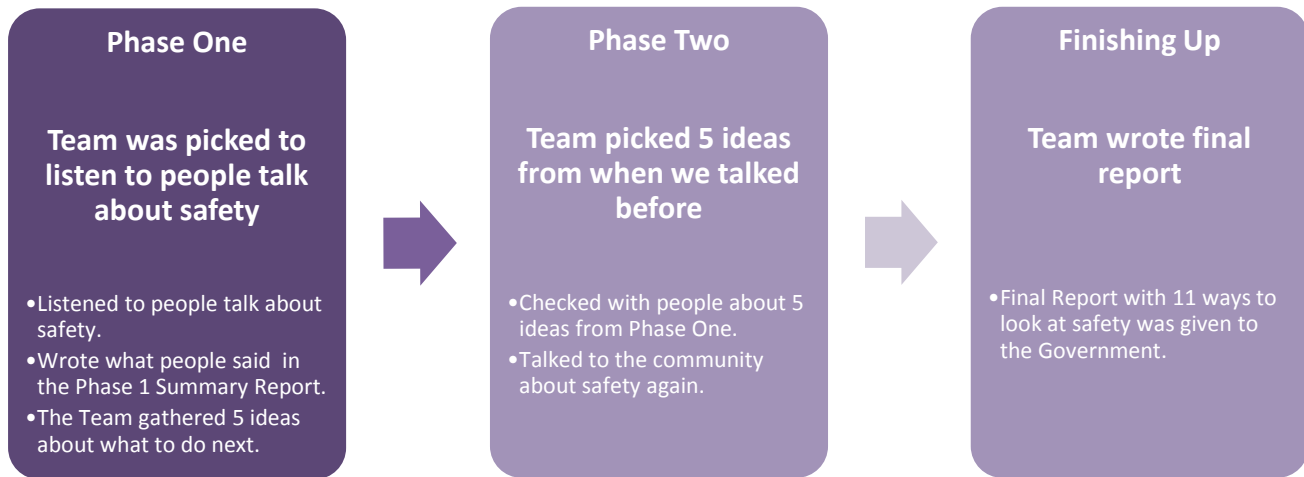
We have learned that Albertans really care about safety. We think this paper will give the Government good ideas about how to help keep people safe while respecting their rights to live in the community just like their neighbours.



John te Linde,

Chair of the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Safety Standards Consultation Team

What we did to make this Report



We got together to talk about how to be safe

The disability community were worried about the PDD Safety Standards (called “Safety Standards” in the paper) that were created in 2012 for people with developmental disabilities (called People with a big “P” in this paper). Many thought the new Safety Standards were not fair. The Government of Alberta (called “The Government” in this paper) put together a team of people (called “The Team” in this paper) from the community and from The Government to look at how everyone can help to support People to be safe in the community.

The Team talked to many Albertans. Everyone was very clear that to be safe People need to live in and be part of their communities. The Team knows we cannot make sure People are always safe. The Team also knows People have the right to take risks (which means sometimes People can choose to do things that may not be safe).

The first thing The Team did was to listen to what hundreds of people had to say. Here is what they learned:

1. The Safety Standards were hard to understand.
2. It takes much more than health and safety laws for People to be safe.
3. Helping to keep People safe is everyone’s job.
4. Workers need to know how to help keep People safe.
5. People thought the new laws were not fair and might cost them too much money.

Then The Team asked The Government to do these things:

1. Get rid of the Safety Standards.
2. Get all parts of The Government to work together to get rid of the Safety Standards.
3. Get The Team to talk to everyone again to figure out the best ways to help People to be safe a part of their communities.

The Government agreed to do these things.

We got together again to talk about how to be safe

In June 2016, The Team went back to talk to the community. The Team thought that there were five things that were really important (called “values”) to keep in mind when keeping People safe.

1. Make sure People are part of their communities.
2. Make sure The Government respects People’s rights, choices, dignity and their health and safety.
3. Make sure The Government knows and respects that People’s homes are their homes.
4. Help keep People safe in the community in a way that really works.
5. Show what The Government should do to help keep People safe and to make sure that People have good supports.

What The Team heard

The community thought that safety was about more than safe homes. They thought that People were safer when they know many people are a part of their communities. They also thought it is important for People to be comfortable in their homes. People need to learn how to keep themselves safe. People need workers who know how to keep People safe. Everyone needs to work together to make sure People are safe but that they still have the right to take risks and make choices.



What do we need to do to help keep People safe?



Look at the PDD Program and how it works to help keep People safe

The PDD program is very important to People. There have been lots of changes in the PDD program. Sometimes changes lead to problems and confusion. The PDD program needs to listen to People and to work with the disability community.

People want everyone to look at how the PDD program works to make sure it is doing its best to help keep People safe. In other words, we should do a check of how the PDD program helps to keep People safe (which is called “The Review” in this paper).

The Review of the PDD program should not be led by The Government. Everyone needs to be part of The Review. The Review should look at everyone’s job in keeping People safe in the community. The whole community should be part of The Review but People need to be at the heart of it. People should be open, honest and should respect each other in The Review. We all need to learn how to work together so that People are safe, treated fairly and are active in their communities.

Here is what The Team thinks should happen:

1. We need to look at how the PDD program works to help keep People safe.
2. We need to find a way for the PDD program and the disability community to work together. We need to learn to trust and to talk to each other to help keep People safe.



Look at how workers keep People safe in the community

Workers and agencies can help keep People safe in the community. They need to learn how to do that. There are no rules that say what workers need to learn to help People. Also, workers change their jobs a lot. Sometimes this is because they do not make enough money. If workers do not make very much money, they cannot afford to go to school to learn how to be better workers. Even if they want to go to school, there are not many schools left. When workers leave it makes it hard for People who get support as they have to keep teaching new workers about them. It is also costs lots of money for The Government and agencies to keep hiring new workers.

People thought workers should have to learn things so they could do a good job. They thought schools, The Government and the community should work together to make sure workers can learn how to be a

good worker. They thought workers should be paid more money when they learn how to be a good worker. They also thought someone should check to see if workers know the best ways to help People (this is a test for workers called “certification”). Everyone needs to work together to come up with a plan to get, teach and keep good workers.

Here is what The Team thinks should happen:

3. The Government needs to work with agencies, workers and schools to make a plan to help People be safe and active in their communities.
 - a. The plan needs to make sure that workers learn how to support People (by going to school and learning in other ways).
 - b. The plan also needs to make sure that someone checks that the workers know how to support People (certification).



Look at ways to make sure agencies help to keep People safe

There are tests to make sure agencies are good at helping People (These tests are usually called accreditation but are called “The Test” in this paper). The ones who do The Test talk to People, their families, workers and others in the community to make sure the agencies are doing a good job. Agencies have to do The Test once every three years.

The Team heard that The Test can help keep People safe in the community. The Test could check for things like fire alarms and emergency kits. It could also check to make sure People do many things and know many people in their community. The Team knows that People need to be safe but also to have choices and dignity. They want the community to work together to make sure The Test helps People to be safe. The Team also thought it would be good to share The Test with families who do not use agencies so they know how to keep People safe too.

Here is what The Team thinks should happen:

4. The Government needs to work with agencies and others in the community to make The Tests that help keep People safe better.



Safety standards

There are lots of rules and laws that help to keep People safe in homes. These rules and laws are for everyone. The Safety Standards were “special” rules and laws made just for People with developmental disabilities. The Safety Standards were confusing. People thought the Safety Standards were not fair. Also, People did not want “special” laws and rules just for them. They want to be treated the same as other Albertans even if they get help from the PDD program. The Safety Standards have been stopped. We all need to work together to figure out a way to make laws and rules that keep people safe, are fair to everyone and that mean People can still be a part of their communities.

Here is what The Team thinks should happen:

5. The part of The Government that watches cities, towns and the countryside (called “Municipalities” in this paper) needs to get rid of the special rules that tell them to go into People’s private homes to see if they are safe.
6. The Government needs to tell Municipalities how they can help People be safe. If People rent or own their homes, The Government should not call People’s homes “PDD Residences.” The Municipalities should treat People the same under the laws as anyone else living in the community even if they get PDD help in their homes. If The Government wants to make laws about how to keep People safe that are fair, they should check with People first.
7. People, their families and service providers should teach safety workers about People and how they live in the community.



Other ideas

When there is an emergency the police, firefighters, ambulance drivers and others (called “First Responders” in this paper) come to help. In Calgary, People can give the police their name and other information about them so all of the First Responders know how to help them if they are in trouble. People do not have to do this. It is their choice. First Responders can only use what they know about people to help them. If People decide they no longer want the police to know about how to help them in an emergency, they can ask the police to take their information off of the computer. This is one way to help keep People safer in the community.

Here is what The Team thinks should happen:

8. The Government should ask all Alberta Municipalities to think about making a way for police, firefighters and other emergency services to know what kind of help People may need in an emergency.

For People to have good lives in the community it is very important that People and their families can speak out about what they need (called “advocacy”). They need to be able to talk about what is good for every person, as well as what is good for all People. Sometimes People may need help with advocacy from someone who is not part of The Government or the disability community (called “Advocate” in this paper).

Here is what the Team thinks should happen

9. The Government should support self-advocacy and family-advocacy.
10. The Government should look at the idea of having an Advocate separate from The Government to help People.

First Responders and other health people who work for The Government are happy to teach People, their families and agencies the things they know about how to be safe in the community. It should be up to People and their supporters to decide what they want to learn about safety from First Responders and other Government workers.

Here is what The Team thinks should happen:

11. Fire and health workers should tell People, their families and their service workers about safety, but only when they ask for help.

Working Together

We all need to work together to help to keep People safe. The things written in this paper are a place to start. Everyone should be talking together.



Appendix

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