



REPORT, ARRC Webinar January 10th, 2024, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

“Strengthening Long-term Care Communities from Within
Residents and Families Make A Difference with What They Have – Their Voices”
Presented by the
Independent Long Term Care Councils Association of B.C.

On January 10, 2024, ILTCCABC Vice-President Lisa Dawson opened the second year of ARRC’s webinar series with her presentation entitled “*Strengthening Long-term Care Communities from Within. Residents and Families Make a Difference with What They Have – Their Voices*”. The webinar was hosted by ARRC Leadership Team member Dawn Hemingway and was attended by 36 participants.

Lisa began by speaking to the value and power of stakeholder engagement on our journey to influence change in long-term care. She defined the purposes and goals of Family Councils and offered practical strategies which can help to elevate the voice of residents and families to leadership. She noted that Family Councils give members opportunities to share ideas and open lines of communication between families, residents and staff. As well, they enable members to provide input into system processes and projects.

This presentation articulated the ILTCCABC’s belief in collaborative, respectful communication between families and facility personnel. Like many organizations, they use ‘Appreciative Inquiry’, a strength-based approach to communication and engagement, to be a useful philosophy. This approach to communication generates positive ideas to work with, rather than focusing on problems. As people plan and make decisions, it moves them from criticism and blaming to seeing what is possible – a more positive path.

Lisa noted that the COVID pandemic encouraged family members and Councils across B.C. to reach out and forge collaborative relationships. She commended the outstanding work of Kim Slater in this area. Lisa reviewed the history of the Family Council regional associations and the development of the ILTCCABC and explained the ILTCCABC’s organizational chart.

The ILTCCABC is pleased that the Ministry of Health regards it as a partner and is grateful for a grant that was recently awarded. Staff and Board members are able to take important issues to the Ministry including such challenges as staff shortages, staff training issues, people with addictions and mental health challenges being housed in long-term care, and quality of food.

The ILTCCABC believes that “Family Councils are the eyes and ears of our care homes.” They are *care champions* and work to establish relationships based on trust, respectful communication, and effective problem solving skills. Councils are action-focused on items that



can't wait, noting that “residents are here for a good time, not a long time.” Collaboration amongst all stakeholders – Ministry, Family Councils and other organizations – is essential. The ILTCCABC supports ARRC’s Advisory Forum proposal and was pleased to collaborate with ARRC on providing input to the recent Quality Framework initiative.

A robust Question & Answer session following Lisa’s presentation. Questions came from family members, health care professionals and members of the ARRC Leadership team. Questions explored several existing local and provincial policies and programs. Lisa provided clear and practical explanations, for example, naming the specific obligations facilities must fulfill in supporting their Family Councils. A number of participants thanked Lisa for speaking tonight and commended the work of the ILTCCABC.

Lisa encouraged anyone wanting to contact the ILTCCABC, or to volunteer, to reach out through the website. Many thanks to Dawn for facilitating tonight’s program and to Lisa for a positive and hopeful presentation. ARRC wishes the ILTCCABC every success in their work as advocates for residents and families in long-term care.

For further description and list of future webinars: <https://www.rrcbc.ca/issues.html>