

# Rebuilding HOPE Conference Report 2025

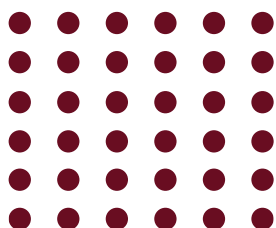
# WELCOME



This was the second Rebuilding HOPE conference where more than 1200 registrations in four locations across Nova Scotia and online. The conference had almost 90 volunteers including DOSD staff, community members and First Voice members.

The Department of Opportunities and Social Development committed to sharing a final report of the conference to provide a summary of the input and ideas provided by all attendees. This report shares what happened and the comments and ideas that were given after the conference.

If you have any questions about the report, you can email [dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca](mailto:dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca)



For more information, please email us at [dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca](mailto:dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca)  
Or visit: <https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/>

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# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It was a true honour to join you at this year's Rebuilding HOPE Conference. Whether you joined us in person or participated online, your energy, insight, and commitment was an important reminder of just how important—and how possible—transformative change truly is.



As someone who spent many years in the classroom and as a principal, I've seen the difference inclusion makes—not only for individuals, but for families and communities. I've seen what happens when a child feels safe enough to raise their hand, when a parent finally feels at ease, and when a community is designed to welcome everyone from the start. That's the Nova Scotia we are building—together.

As we mark the end of year two in implementing the Remedy, I want to recognize the progress we've made and the dedication, partnership, and collaboration I've seen from families, service providers, advocates, and first-voice participants. From system design to hiring in regional hubs, and now to strengthening communities through the newly announced Regional Advisory Councils, we are beginning to see real results take shape.

continued...

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE



The most powerful part of the conference was hearing directly from first-voice participants. Your stories, experiences, and ideas are shaping the path forward in real and meaningful ways. You remind us why we do this work, and you continue to guide how we do it.

As we look ahead to year three, let's carry this momentum forward. Let's keep listening, keep collaborating, and keep striving for a province where every Nova Scotian has the opportunity to live with dignity, choice, and independence.

Thank you again for being part of this journey. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Warm regards,  
**Scott Armstrong**  
Minister of Opportunities and Social Development

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second Rebuilding HOPE Conference took place on Saturday, March 29, 2025 in four locations across Nova Scotia, Halifax, Middleton, Sydney, and Pictou County, as well as online.

There were 1,237 registrations for all four locations online and participants at various watch-parties across the province. In total, 90 people signed up to volunteer including staff, community members and First Voice.

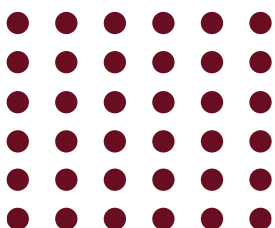
Updates were provided to community on:

- The transition to Regional Hubs, new DSP support roles and how DSP will work differently
- Moving to community and an updates on the closure of facilities
- Individualized funding plan over the next three years for all participants



This report summarizes common themes from the conference. For simplicity, the term ‘we’ is used here to emphasize commonalities, shared goals, and collaboration among all members of the disability community who participated in the conference.

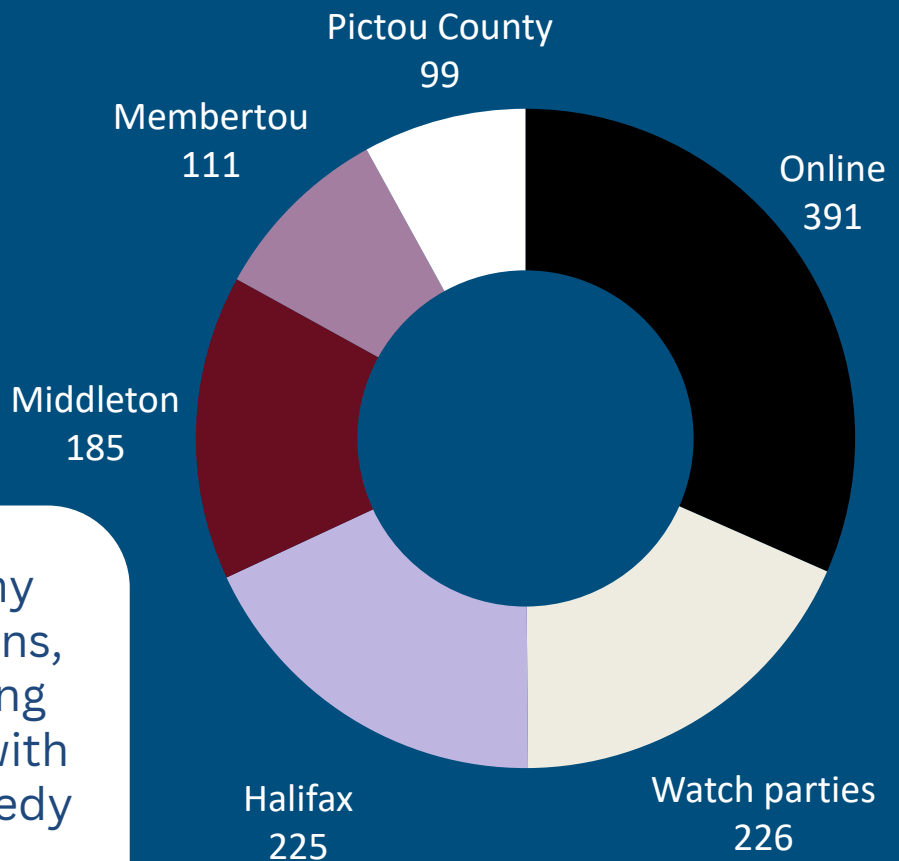
The views expressed here are representative of many people who attended and may not reflect the views of all the disability community.



The second Rebuilding HOPE Conference took place on Saturday, March 29, 2025 in four locations across Nova Scotia, **Halifax, Middleton, Sydney, and Pictou County**, as well as **online**.



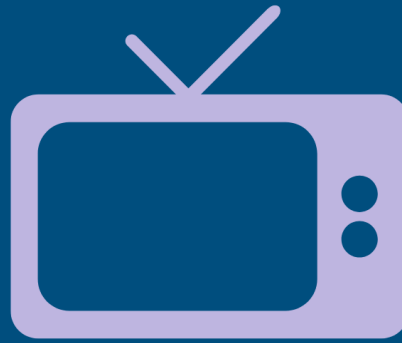
**1,237**  
**Registrations**



“There are still many unanswered questions, however, I am looking forward to working with everyone as the remedy moves forward.”

- Attendee

In total, **90** People  
signed up to  
volunteer



There were **226** of  
participants at watch-  
parties across the  
province

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## Updates were provided to community on:

The transition to Regional Hubs, new DSP  
support roles and how DSP will work  
differently



Moving to community and an updates on  
closures of facilities



Individualized funding plan over the next  
three years for all participants

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# A NOTE FROM MARIA



Hello all,

A heartfelt thank you to each of you for joining us at the second Rebuilding HOPE Conference. It was wonderful to come together to reflect on the progress we've made and to recommit to the important work of transforming Nova Scotia's Disability Support Program.

As we move into year three of this multi-year journey, we're beginning to see the results of the foundational work that has been underway. This kind of transformation takes time, care, and collective effort. The conference was a powerful reminder of how far we've come and how deeply committed we are to continuing this work together.

This year's conference highlighted progress in three key areas:

1. Moving to Community – Our continued efforts to support individuals as they transition from facilities to inclusive, community-based living.



# A NOTE FROM MARIA

2. Closing Facilities – Progress on our commitment to phasing out facilities that do not reflect the inclusive future we’re building.

3. Individualized Funding – Advancing a funding model that empowers individuals and families with greater flexibility and choice to meet their unique needs.

The conference was a remarkable experience. The conversations, personal stories, and insights shared throughout the day were deeply moving and energizing. They reminded us not only of the challenges still to be addressed, but of the power of collaboration and community in driving meaningful change.

I am pleased to share this report, which captures key discussions and reflections from the conference. I hope it serves as both a record of our shared progress and an inspiration for the work still to come.

Your presence, your voices, and your commitment are vital to this journey.

Thank you for being part of it. Together, we are shaping a stronger, more inclusive Nova Scotia for everyone.

Maria Medioli

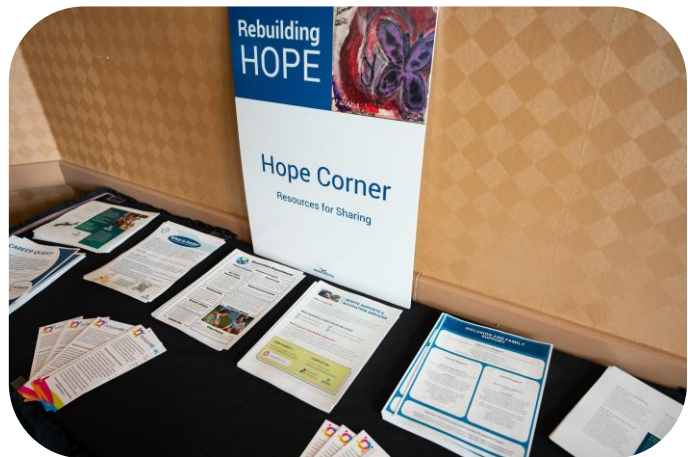
# Conference Survey Results

## Informative and Educational



Across all locations, attendees found the conference very informative and educational.

There was appreciation for the organization, valuable information, and excellent presenters.



There were positive remarks about the clarity of the information shared and the smooth technology integration.



## Overall Experience



Attendees enjoyed the conference and appreciated the opportunity to connect with others.

Participants benefited from the networking opportunities and province-wide connections.



The facilitated discussions and group interactions were met with positive engagement.

Attendees appreciated hearing personal stories and testimonials, which added a meaningful and heartfelt element to the conference.

While many found the conference valuable, some were hoping for more workshops and breakout sessions.

There were mixed feelings about the balance between performances and information sharing.

“The personal stories of the individuals with disabilities and family members clearly show the transformation to services.”  
- Attendee

## Inclusivity and Accessibility



Attendees appreciated the involvement of First Voice and the importance of their participation in the conference.

“This is a work in progress, and I look forward to participating in this as much as I can.”  
-Attendee

Multiple positive remarks were made about venue accessibility and the involvement of cultural groups.

Feedback from participants included an emphasis on the importance of inclusivity and accessibility, especially for people with diverse abilities.



## Suggestions for Improvement



Suggestions for smaller group discussions to enhance engagement.

- Requests for handouts of slides and more interactive sessions.
- Feedback on the need for better pacing and clarity from speakers.
- Requests for more detailed financial information and future plans.
- Suggestions for better visibility of sign interpreters and close captioning.
- Feedback on the need for better food options and more interactive activities.
- Requests for more outreach to include people with disabilities, families, businesses, and the general community.
- Suggestions to document and share success stories from institutions to the community.



“My one complaint would be the large monitors where we saw what was happening in other areas, I found the background too dark.”

- Attendee

## Questions and Concerns



There were concerns about the availability of funding and resources to achieve the vision.

People wonder how the solution will actually work and what changes it will make in people's lives.



There was some uncertainty about the future roles and support for individuals with higher support needs.

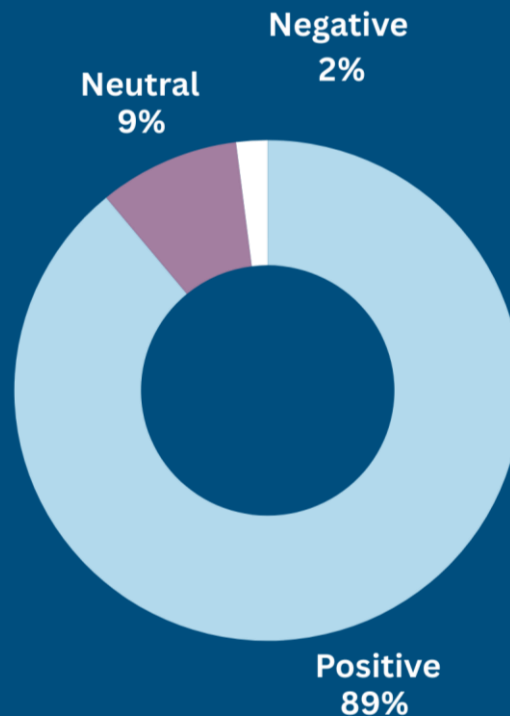
Some expressed concerns about the limited options for living arrangements and the support needed for individuals with disabilities to make informed decisions.



# Over 190 surveys received in total:

89% gave a positive response when asked *“How did you feel about the conference today?”*

9% had a neutral response and 2% had a negative response.



When asked *“How did you feel about the conference today?”* by region:

**Halifax - 65 Respondents**

**94% Felt Good**

**6% Were Neutral**

**No Participants Said They Felt Bad**



## Middleton - 32 Respondents



75% Felt Good  
19% Were Neutral  
6% Felt Bad

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## Pictou County - 31 Respondents

87% Felt Good  
13% Were Neutral  
No Participants Said They  
Felt Bad



## Membertou - 13 Respondents

100% Felt Good



# Online - 49 Respondents

90% Felt Good

8% Were Neutral

2% Felt Bad



**Good**



**Neutral**



**Bad**



# Special Thank You to Our Presenters



**Anna MacQuarrie**  
Parent & Advocate, Co-Host



**Simon Snyder**  
President, Halifax Chapter,  
People First of Nova Scotia, Co-  
Host



**Devon Bundy**  
Regional Hub Manager -  
Central



**Adam Fraser**  
Regional Hub Manager -  
Northern



**Diana Poirier**  
Regional Hub Manager -  
Eastern



**Mary Agnes Paul Elliott**  
Mi'kmaq Self Advocate,  
Waycobah First Nation



**Ivan Willis**  
Member, People First of  
Nova Scotia



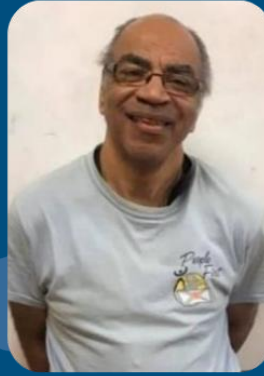
**Linda Jensen**  
Regional Hub Manager -  
Western



**Will Brewer**  
Halifax Town Crier



**John Cox**  
Member, People First of Nova Scotia



**Hughie Langford**  
Member, People First of Nova Scotia



**Charles McConville**  
President, Pictou Chapter, People First of Nova Scotia



**Honourable Scott Armstrong,**  
Minister, Department of Opportunities and Social Development



**Maria Medioli**  
Executive Director, Disability Support Program



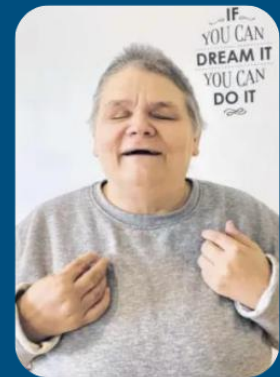
**Leta Jarvis**  
Member, People First of Nova Scotia



**Todd Goyetche**  
Poet, Self Advocate



**David Meuse**  
Cultural Ambassador



**Rose Deveaux**  
President, Lunenburg Chapter, People First of Nova Scotia



**Tim MacDonald**  
Artist; Member, People First of  
Nova Scotia



**Tricia Murray**  
Director of Regional Hubs,  
Disability Support Program



**Mary Clare MacIntosh**  
Executive Director,  
Highland Community  
Residential Services



**Kim Long,**  
Parent; Member, Inclusion  
Nova Scotia



**Randy Acker**  
Director, Disability Support  
Program



**Stephanie Carver**  
Parent, President,  
Inclusion Nova Scotia



**Thivjan Tharmaratnam**  
Executive Director,  
Inclusion Nova Scotia



**Jane Gillis**  
Parent; Vice-President,  
Inclusion Nova Scotia



**TJ Smith**  
Vice President, Pictou  
Chapter, People First of  
Nova Scotia

# CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS



Tim MacDonald  
Artist



David Meuse  
Cultural Ambassador  
Membertou

“I appreciate hearing from diverse voices and personal lived experiences, a great opportunity for discussions at the table. The cultural performances were also great.”  
- Attendee



Culture Shock

# CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS



Todd Goyetche,  
Poet

“Enjoyed province-wide connections during the conference.”  
- Attendee

“Increasing the in-person experiences - adding a cultural performance at each venue so the people attending would be have to have that same experience.”  
- Attendee



Drummers from Home

# CREATOR PRAYER

- Delivered by David Meuse

## CREATOR

Great Spirit ~ whose voice we hear in the wind ~ whose breath gives life to the world ~ hear us. We are weak ~ we need your strength and your wisdom.

May we travel within your beauty ~ and may we see the majestic, multi-colored sky at each sunset.

We wish to respect all that you have made ~ that our hearing be sharp so that we may recognize your voice. Grant us wisdom so that we may fully appreciate all you have taught us.

Guide us to where we may find your teachings whether they may be in a leaf or rock.

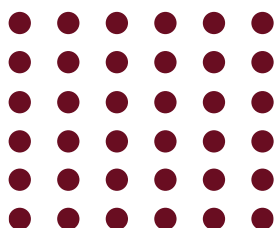
We seek strength, not to be superior to our sisters and brother, but only to use that strength against our worst enemy...Ourselves.

We humbly ask that you help us prepare well before we travel to where you reside ~ so that on our last day when our lives fade like the setting sun, we will not feel shame as our spirits return to you in your territory

Amen



# UPDATES & SUPPORTS



For more information, please email us at [dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca](mailto:dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca)  
Or visit: <https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/>

# REMEDY UPDATE

When the Rebuilding HOPE conference was held in March, the province had just submitted its second interim report outlining key progress since 2023. Since then, the Year 2 report has been submitted, building on that work.

The work the province has focused on is laying the groundwork for lasting change, including:

- Setting up regional hubs and hiring Regional Hub Managers
- Finalizing the new Individualized Funding policy and the systems to support it
- Planning for new allied health teams in communities
- Putting a workforce strategy in place to support and grow a skilled team
- Ending admissions to ARCs, RRCs, and RCFs as of January 1, and planning to help residents move into the community so these facilities can close permanently

# UPDATES & SUPPORTS

## New Way of Working Providing Support in Your Community

'A New Way of Working' is all about making sure support is built around the person, not the system. The new Regional Hubs and support roles will continue to reinforce this by focusing on what matters to each person they support.

The new way of working means taking the time to get to know people well and understanding their vision for their future.

The Regional Hub Model will prioritize a person-centred approach, improving support options (both natural and formal) for individuals with disabilities.



# UPDATES & SUPPORTS

Existing Care Coordinators will continue to be a part of the lives of program participants up until they have received their funding allocation for the future state.

<https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/timeline>



**LAC**  
Local Area  
Coordinator

Building & Strengthening  
Community Inclusivity

Individualized Support &  
Planning

Partnership & Capacity  
Building



**IPSC**  
Intensive Planning &  
Support Coordinator

Intensive Individualized  
Support & Planning

Transition Planning and  
Coordination

Partnership & Capacity  
Building



**EFAC**  
Eligibility, Funding, and  
Assessment Coordinator

Eligibility Determination for  
Funding

Comprehensive Assessment  
for Funding

Funding Allocation

# UPDATES & SUPPORTS

## Moving to Community - Closing DSP Facilities



- Regional Closure Specialists and Community Living Facilitators
- Closure strategies and timelines for Group Homes and Developmental Residences will be developed in the coming year.
- New roles to support facilities and participants in larger congregate facilities.
- Clear guidelines for those impacted and a Service Evolution Fund to assist service providers.

# UPDATES & SUPPORTS

## Moving to Community - Closing DSP Facilities



## The Approach

- Prioritizes individual determination and participant choice
- Promotes equity across institutions by starting all closures simultaneously
- Sets closure timelines around the institution's size/number of occupants
- Prioritize planning and assistance for participants who need it
- Sets clear phase-out timelines across regions, while starting all closures simultaneously

<https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/timeline>

# UPDATES & SUPPORTS

## DSP Financial Support - Individualized Funding

### How does individualized Funding Work?



- Under the Remedy, those on the Service Request List (SRL) and currently not receiving DSP support, and those currently living in institutional settings will be the first priority.
- Over the next three years, all participants will gradually have access to Individualized Funding.
- If you are enrolled with DSP, you will continue to work with your Care Coordinator until an LAC or IPSC is assigned to begin support planning with you, and a new assessment occurs.

# UPDATES & SUPPORTS

## DSP Financial Support - Individualized Funding

- For DFSC families, nothing is changing in the near future. However, in the coming year, DSP will be developing new programs and services for children/youth.
- This is the initial roll-out of individualized funding – more information and updates will be provided as we the Remedy is implemented.

Individualized funding provides funding for:



**Supports** funding for direct support hours, day programming, and costs associated with community inclusion.



**Basics** for items such as shelter, food, and transportation.



**Special Needs** disability related needs not covered by basics.

# REGIONAL HUB MANAGERS



**Devon Bundy**  
Regional Hub Manager  
Central Region



**Adam Fraser**  
Regional Hub Manager  
Northern Region



**Diana Poirier**  
Regional Hub Manager  
Eastern Region



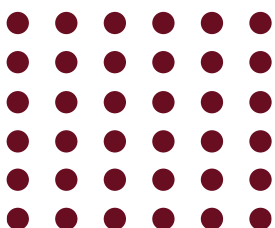
**Linda Jensen**  
Regional Hub Manager  
Western Region

# DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As we look back on year two of this five-year conference, we want to thank the Disability Advisory Committee who helped shape the plan and gave the series its powerful name: “Rebuilding HOPE.”

This committee, made up of people with disabilities, families, service providers, and advocacy groups, has been instrumental in guiding the first two conferences. Their insight and dedication laid the foundation for what this series has become—a space for learning, connection, and transformation.

We are especially grateful for the committee’s advice, guidance, and support, often under tight timelines, to ensure these gatherings were meaningful and inclusive.



# DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

John Cox, People First of Nova Scotia

Hughie Langford, People First of Nova Scotia

Leta Jarvis, People First of Nova Scotia

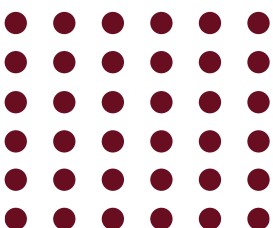
Charles McConville, People First of Nova Scotia

Thivjan Tharmaratnam, Inclusion NS

Kathleen Watson, Autism NS

Harman Singh, Diverse-Abilities of Nova Scotia

Lora Church, Nova Scotia Residential Agencies Association



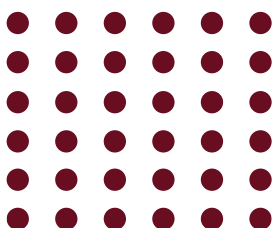
# REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

As we now transition into regional councils, we carry these values with us—along with the spirit of Rebuilding HOPE. Thank you to the DSP Advisory Committee for your leadership, your voice, and your unwavering commitment to building a better future for people with disabilities in Nova Scotia.

The newly formed Regional Advisory Councils will look to their communities for things that need to change, and we will work together to make those changes happen.

The councils will also be a way to ensure more people know about the Remedy. They will be talking with people in their communities.

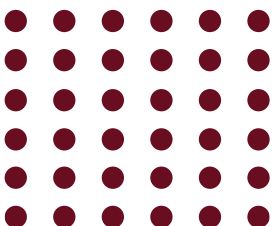
Each council will have 16 members, where at least half are people with lived experience of disability, and the other half represent families and community advocates, such as service providers..



# REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL NORTHERN REGION

Regional Advisory Council members are:

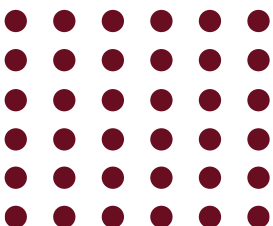
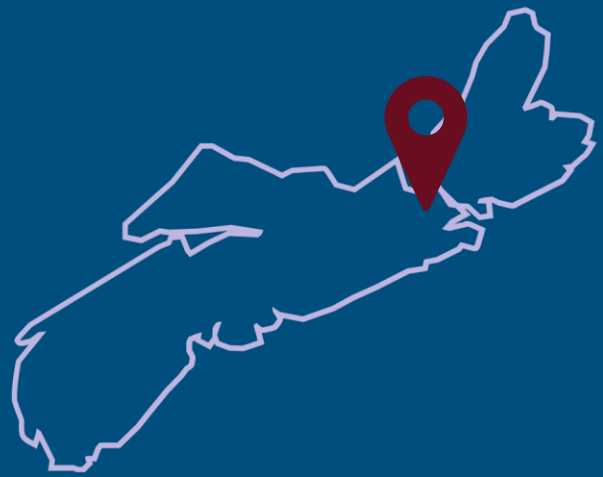
- Gabreyel Brazil
- TJ Smith
- Charles Mcconville
- Ivan Willis
- Leta Jarvis
- Edith MacKay
- Crystal Maclean
- Nancy Chueng
- Rae Gunn
- Sheri Scott
- Melissa Higgins
- Tiffany Taylor
- Debbie Cavers
- Shannon MacLellan
- Angela Vlasic
- Keith Appleton



# REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL EASTERN REGION

Regional Advisory Council members are:

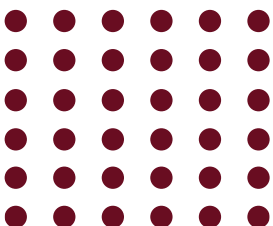
- Debra MacLean
- Chelsea MacPhee
- Lois Landry
- Jolene Clair
- Kim Bates Cusack
- Mason Rudderham
- Jarod Jenkins
- Stephanie Myette
- Chelsie MacLeod MacNeil
- Brittni Bailey
- Katelyn Marchand
- Carol Ann MacDonald
- (Helen)Louise Gillis
- Mary Agnes Paul-Elliot
- Vicki Patterson
- Harman Singh



# REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL CENTRAL REGION

Regional Advisory Council members are:

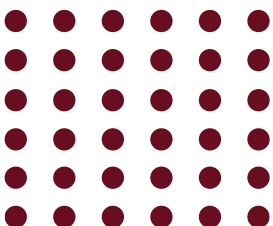
- Krystyna McIntosh
- Brent DeYoung
- Jamus Dorey
- Simon Snyder
- Patrick Flewelling
- Kaylie-Anne Adamski
- Melissa Myers
- Tova Sherman
- Hamza Munawar
- Milo Ewing
- Faith Scattolon
- Jessie Greenough
- Tim Vassallo
- Joanne Bernard
- Linnea Sinclair
- Sydney Henry



# REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL WESTERN REGION

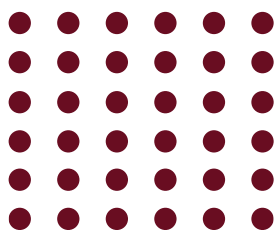
Regional Advisory Council members are:

- John Cox
- Suzanne Belliveau
- Alyssa Turner
- Brenda Francis-Jarvis
- Lora Church
- Jeff Moore
- Catherine Collins
- Natasha Vaughan
- Brandy Jarvis
- Connor Campbell
- Morgan Heron
- Debbie Austin
- Holly Rogers
- Donnie MacLean
- Donna Muise
- Peter Hanson





# FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY



# FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY



Participants gathered to discuss their thoughts and feelings regarding updates on moving to community, closure of institutions and individualized funding. Feedback from the table tops discussions across all regions are highlighted below.

## **Overall**

Many shared excitement about the opportunity to live independently, form meaningful relationships, and participate fully in community life. At the same time, thoughtful concerns were raised about housing, accessing natural supports, decision making, and the pace of transitions.

People want to feel safe and have a fair system for all—no matter where they live or what they need. They want rules to be the same for everyone and work together to build a strong system.

## **Moving to the Community**

People are happy about the chance to live in the community. They want to make friends, have more freedom, and be part of daily life. But they also worry about finding a home, getting help, and moving too fast. People said plans should be slow, clear, and made for each person.

# FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY

## A Good Life in the Community

A good life for people means feeling safe, welcome, and part of things. Belonging looks different for each person. Some may not want to go back to where they lived before. People want to be heard and not feel stuck in new “mini-institutions.”

## Thoughts on Individual Funding

People are excited to have more say in how they use their money. They want to use it for rent, food, fun, or things they need. But they also worry about losing money or not knowing how to plan. People want help learning about money and how to use it well.





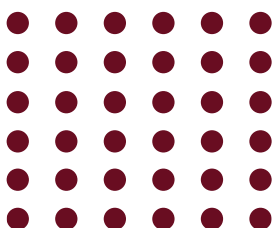
“The Remedy is an opportunity for every person in Nova Scotia to change how we interact with each other going forward so that we are more inclusive as a community...there is a world of possibilities and opportunity out there for all of us from this work.”



Hilary Amit

“What you leave as a legacy is not what is etched in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.” –Anonymous

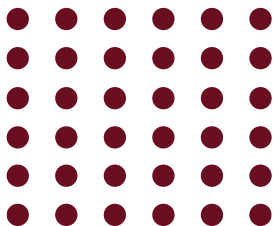
# HILARY AMIT IN MEMORIUM 1958- 2024



For more information, please email us at [dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca](mailto:dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca)  
Or visit: <https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/>



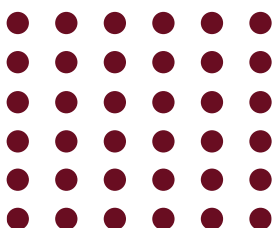
# ONGOING ENGAGEMENT



For more information, please email us at  
[dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca](mailto:dsp-engagements@novascotia.ca)  
Or visit: <https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/>

# ONGOING ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

- Year 2 progress update on the remedy was submitted May 30, 2025. Details are available on the remedy website at [dsp-transformation.ca](https://www.dsp-transformation.ca).
- Conference feedback: We are currently reviewing all of the conference feedback and will share the results with Regional Advisory Council (RAC) and DSP for future event planning.





# RESOURCES

## Rebuilding Hope Conference Report 2025

[Disability Support Program - The Remedy Website](#)

[People First Nova Scotia](#)

[Inclusion Nova Scotia](#)

[Autism Nova Scotia](#)

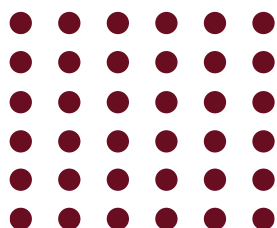
[Nova Scotia's Accessibility Directorate](#)

[Nova Scotia Works](#)



# Thank You

## See you at the next conference!



For more information, please email us at  
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