

Vulnerability Analysis and Safeguards Assessment



The Role of Safeguards in Supports for People with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities





The term, **'vulnerable'** means to be susceptible to emotional or physical harm. Another way to describe vulnerability could be "at-risk".

Safeguards are intentional actions to help reduce a person's vulnerabilities and to help protect good things in their lives.

Safeguards ideally involve thoughtful, individualized design. Thinking about safeguards is not specific to having a disability. Each of us lives with some level of vulnerability in aspects of our lives, and many of us have established safeguards to manage risk and respond to these areas.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities may experience heightened vulnerability in their lives due to a variety of factors. These include:

Not taking part in community activities.

Not having a job or enough money.

Not having friends or supportive family regularly involved in their life.

Not belonging to clubs or groups where alliances with others and visibility in community can be developed.

Not knowing or understanding personal rights.

Having difficulty communicating personal needs and preferences, including access to technology that can be of assistance.

Being labelled e.g. having 'challenging behaviours'

Not being listened to or having opportunities to use your voice and not being taken seriously or believed when you do.

Only spending time with other people with disabilities or with people who are paid to provide support. Many individuals with intellectual disabilities still primarily rely on people who are paid to be in their lives. Loneliness and isolation are often typical experiences for them.

These factors can enhance an individual's vulnerability. The application of safeguards is a means to assist with navigating these areas of vulnerability. As well, the process of considering safeguards with individuals with disabilities, provides an opportunity to support their self-determination, consideration of their individual decisions about risks, as well as increasing the range and nature of intentional, natural supports that can have a positive impact on their quality of life.

Kinds of Safeguards

Formal Community Safeguards

Laws, regulations, or policy/standards designed to reduce the vulnerability of everyone, or of a group of people.

Define the role and expectations between the people being supported and the agencies in the formal safeguarding role. This might include the role that Licencing or CLBC play with respect to monitoring and inspections.

Informal Community Safeguards

Set up by concerned or ordinary citizens and involve valuing all people, or a group of vulnerable people.

Rely on people's goodwill, creativity, and values-based intentions to sustain the social contract with one another.

Formal Personal Safeguards

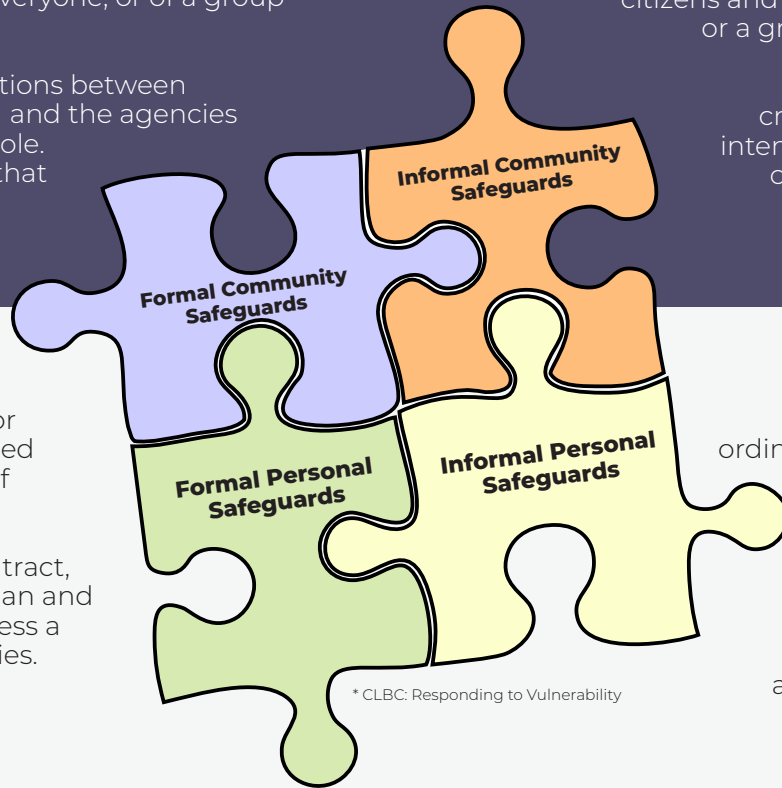
Based on a law, regulation, or policy/standards, but designed to reduce the vulnerability of one person or family.

Often take the form of a contract, protocol, or individualized plan and are typically tailored to address a person's unique vulnerabilities.

Informal Personal Safeguards

Set up by concerned or ordinary citizens, often outside of the service system(s).

Based on trust and caring personal relationships
- listening, valuing, and knowing an individual on a deep level which provide opportunities for creative and unique responses to situations.



Applying a Vulnerability Assessment and Safeguards Analysis

The Safeguard Analysis is the intentional process of considering areas of vulnerability for an individual in all aspects of their life. Identifying both formal and informal safeguards not only assists with reducing risk(s) but also emphasizes activating natural supports wherever possible. Natural supports, including personal networks, represent vital safeguards in everyone's life. Further information can be found in the CLBC resource entitled: *Belonging to One Another: Building Personal Support Networks*.

In the Safeguard Analysis, the areas to be considered are broadly organized to correspond with the Quality of Life domains which have been adopted by CLBC and which are meant to be integrated into the person centred planning process. This assessment and analysis of safeguards is foundational to person centred planning helping to define both what is "important to" people and what is "important for" them.

The benefit of considering areas of vulnerability is to then ensure that safeguards are identified, both formal and informal, and actions are then initiated to mitigate risks and help prevent potential harm from occurring to the individual. It is recognized that in some cases it may be difficult to predict or prevent

harm from occurring, however there are some precautions that can be put in place to limit the risk such as increased monitoring, additional training, extra supports, or in some instances creating a specific, risk management plan.

The intent of this process is also to support each person to be able make their own decisions about how they wish to live their life and make informed choices about the risks they chose to undertake. The ability of each person to exercise self-determination must be balanced with due diligence to promote and assess the elements associated with maintaining a reasonably safe life.

The assessment is designed to support highly responsive monitoring and determine the frequency of contact needed to assist with ensuring effective and responsible management of identified areas of vulnerability. The review may result in increased frequency of monitoring activities or other safeguarding action for a temporary or long-term period.

Further information on the activities of addressing individual vulnerabilities through the planning process is available in the CLBC resource entitled: *Addressing Personal Vulnerability Through Planning: A guide to identifying and incorporating intentional safeguards when planning with adults with developmental disabilities and their families*.



Resources:

A Discussion Paper About Safeguards and People with Developmental Disabilities. March 2023.

<https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Responding-to-Vulnerability-1.pdf>

<https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Belonging-To-One-Another-final.pdf>

<https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Addressing-Personal-Vulnerability-Through-Planning-1.pdf>

<https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/resources/safeguards-resources/safeguards-resources-documents/>