Action Options for Better Life-Chances

People with developmental disabilities have better life chances when they benefit from a variety of learning efforts. This paper allows people to identify areas for local investment first by distinguishing between efforts to create a better system of assistance from efforts to organize citizens to build community, then by differentiating four types of citizen organizing, and finally by contrasting two modes of making change.

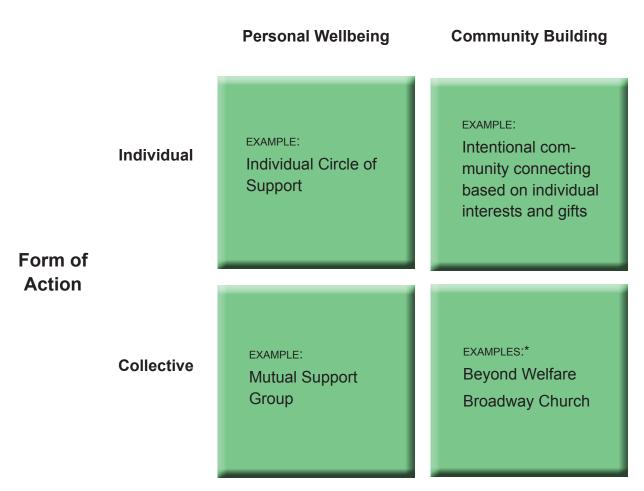| A Better System By System Means	A Healthier Community By Community Means
Continually improving the assistance the service system offers people through system means.	Organizing citizens to build community by making progress on common concerns and actively supporting the participation and contribution of people with developmental disabilities.
• Personalized assistance: individually relevant access to trustworthy and capable personal assistants, technologies, and adaptations	✓ Voluntary commitment
• Range of options to self-direct supports	✓ Shared care enough to act
• Advice and assistance to maximize income	✓ Relationships necessary for effective action
• Active promotion of access to mainstream resources: housing, health, employment support, income support	
• Safeguards to freedom to participate, personal autonomy, and well-being	

A Healthier Community By Community Means

Focus of Organizing

	Personal Wellbeing	**Community Building**
Individual	EXAMPLE: Individual Circle of Support	EXAMPLE: Intentional community connecting based on individual interests and gifts
Collective	EXAMPLE: Mutual Support Group	EXAMPLES:* Beyond Welfare Broadway Church

Form of Action

Each type might draw on system resources as one asset to assist a person to participate or a core group to organize.

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* To learn more about these examples, see Mike Green, Henry Moore, and John O'Brien (2006). *When people care enough to act.* Toronto: Inclusion Press. www.inclusion.com

Two Modes of Making Change

Search for uniformity and efficiency through command and control: requirements and standard procedures set by authority, learning from how-to training and inspection and correction.

Search for deeper understanding through letting go of old ways, gathering new perspectives, being open to the emergence of new possibilities, and committing to learning how through rapid prototyping.

For example, some citizen groups organize to advocate changes in policy or practice or to seek a particular service response for a person which they demand be implemented in a command and control manner.

For example, people organize to generate innovative approaches to assisting people into employment.