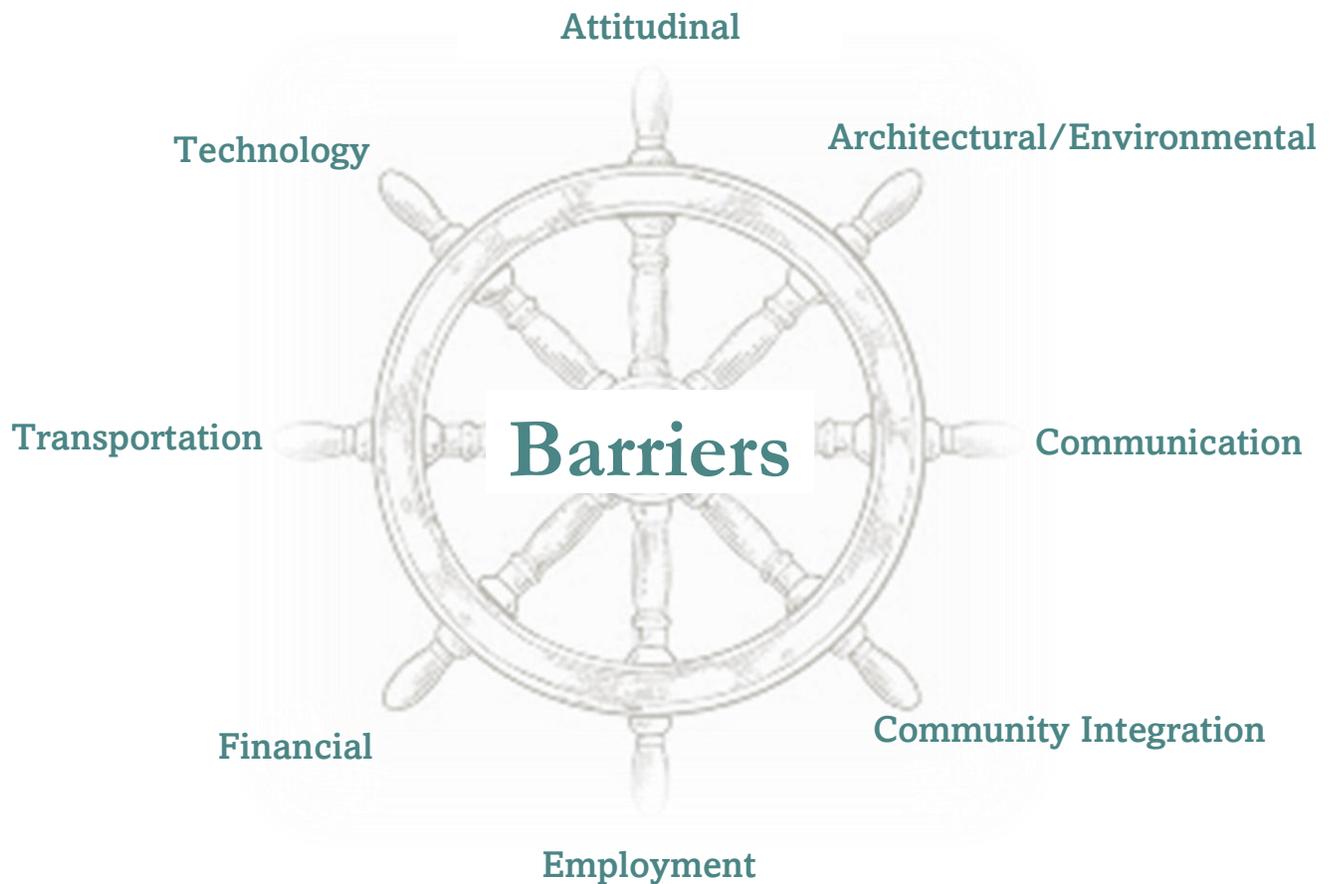




BONAVENTURE
SUPPORT SERVICES

Accessibility Plan



2023-2025

Accessibility is a human right and should apply to all areas of daily life for all citizens



Accessibility is a journey of learning. Its an ongoing process that involves continuous education, awareness and adaptation.

Accessibility is about removing barriers and increasing inclusion and independence for everyone. Accessibility is more than a plan, it's a mindset that is fundamental in going beyond individual perspectives and attitudes. It's a core principle of design and inclusion that ensures that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can access and interact with services and information. Accessibility Plans challenge agency to better promote and improve inclusion and equitable opportunity to a diverse population it supports.

As technology, design principles and regulations evolve, so does our understanding of how to make our services and environments more accessible. In essence, accessibility is a journey that requires a commitment to learning, adapting and growing to create a more inclusive and equitable world for all.

Statement of Commitment

Bonaventure is committed to service excellence and will strive to provide supports and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all supported individuals. Bonaventure will strive to remove barriers, ensuring equal access and full participation for supported individuals, employees, stakeholders and families to ensure equal access, and integration in all supports and services.

We believe in integration and full participation and are committed to promote accessibility and the prevention and removal of barriers for supported individuals, employees and stakeholders. All levels of employees must work together to improve accessibility in all areas and to establish a culture of inclusion.

Bonaventure addresses accessibility issues in order to:

- Enhance the quality of life of Individuals supported in their programs and services.
- Implement non discriminatory employment practices
- Meet the expectation of stakeholders in the area of accessibility.
- Allow persons with diverse abilities to benefit from the same service as those without limitations in the same location and in a timely manner considering the nature and of the service accommodations.



BONAVENTURE
SUPPORT SERVICES

Introduction to B.C.'s accessibility plan

The Government of British Columbia is working towards being an inclusive province. There are over 926,000 people with disabilities in B.C. In June 2021, the Accessible B.C. Act became law. It provides a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. The new law is an important step to make B.C. a more accessible province.

Under the law, the government needs to create an accessibility plan. The plan will be updated every three years. Government and the Provincial Accessibility Committee worked together to create this plan. The committee will continue to provide advice to government on this plan.

Who must comply with Canadian accessibility laws in Canada?

The Canadian Accessibility Laws apply to all sectors, including government, private businesses, and non-profit organizations. These laws require that businesses and organizations provide accessible goods, services, and facilities to all individuals, including those with disabilities.



Bonaventure's Accessibility Planning

Annually, BSS programs review accessibility barriers, conduct surveys and review Individual "RoadBlocks" to aid in the evaluation process. The leadership team explores innovative approaches to gather input from supported individuals, personnel, and other stakeholders to assist in the identification of barriers and take into consideration any accessibility needs: physical, cognitive, sensory, emotional, or developmental: that may hinder full and effective participation on an equal basis with others.

The spring of 2023 the leadership team was tasked with a new approach to reviewing accessibility barriers, where programs were encouraged to meet as teams and discuss one specific program barrier assigned to them. The following was the direction given:

Creating an effective Accessibility Plan involves identifying and addressing barriers to ensure inclusivity. This year, rather than each program led by the manager complete the Accessibility Plan in its entirety, I'm going to assign Programs one Barrier to complete, not only thinking of your program but including the agency as a whole when you reflect on the Barrier Heading:

- *Assess, identify potential barriers that hinder access, supports and services*
- *Familiarize yourself and your team with the accessibility expectations*
- *Prioritize, determine which barriers have the most significant impact and should be addressed*
- *Consult those supported within your programs*

Each Program was asked to review their assigned barrier heading as a team, give thought, discuss, do a little research, identify the barrier and create a potential solution.

Program Barrier Headings:

CI Nanaimo: Attitudinal Barriers

CI Duncan: Architectural/Physical Barriers

CI PV/Employment: Community Integration Barriers

Buttertubs: Communication Barriers

Horizon: Community Integration Barriers

Quarterway: Employment Barriers

The Cove: Environmental Barriers

Ross Place: Financial Barriers

Anchor: Transportation Barrier

Beacon: Technology Barrier

Mariner/Sanctuary: Architectural/Physical Barriers

Outrigger: Attitudinal Barriers

HO: Communication Barriers



Attitudinal Barriers: Any thoughts or approaches, that can cause an individual to feel uncomfortable or causes problems in seeking/receiving services. Such “attitudes” can include but are not limited to disregarding individuals supported input, addressing stigma and preventing access to services. Evaluate preconceived opinions of persons with disabilities that personnel may have, or how one is treated. Terminology and language the organization may use in policy, website and communication methods. How a person with diverse abilities is treated within the organization, there families and community.

Architectural/Physical Barriers: barriers that prevent access services to a building, lack of light alarms for those hard of hearing or absence of signs for visually impaired.

Communication Barriers: A barrier resulting from difficulties an individual may have in expressing their needs including language preferences. Absence of materials in a language or format that is understood by an individual supported. Social media, newsletters and website user friendly and easy for individuals supported to navigate and understand, language that is inclusive and understood by all.

Community Integration Barriers: These barriers would interfere with an individual from returning to full participation in their community of choice. Community integration is designed to help persons to optimize their personal, social, and vocational competency to live successfully in the community. Persons served are active partners in determining the activities.

Employment Barriers: Any barrier that exists from or is impacted by an individual’s employment or lack thereof. Any location or characteristics of the setting that compromises, hinders or impedes service delivery. Services in locations that individuals or employees don’t feel safe, or confidentiality may be at risk. Internal barriers may include noise levels, lack of soundproofing, lack of lighting or harmful lighting, lack of décor and furnishings that impact the comfort level of supported individuals and personnel.

Environmental Barriers: A characteristic of the environment, which may compromise service delivery and the benefits of the program service. Such barriers can include but are not limited to unsafe areas, inappropriate decor, etc. A review of flexibility in the workplace. The use of tools and technology to help complete tasks more effectively.

Financial Barriers: A barrier of a (primarily) monetary nature that can prevent an individual from receiving the proper services. Insufficient funds for services and or supports. Advocate for increased funds or promote activities to directly raise money for supports and services.

Transportation Barriers: A barrier resulting an inability to reach or participate in services due to a lack of or inadequate means of transport. May include persons being unable to reach service locations, or unable to participate in the full range of services, supports and activities offered.

Technology Barriers: Limited access to useful, relevant, and appropriate hardware and software; managing technology and the upkeep of equipment and assistive technology.



Thinking Ahead

Within each target barrier identified, it would be helpful to leverage the city's Accessibility Plan to our advantage. By aligning our efforts with each city's accessibility plan, actively participating in related activities, and utilizing available resources, we can contribute to a more inclusive environment while gaining support and recognition from our initiatives. To leverage a city's accessibility plan, we will consider the following steps:

- Familiarize ourselves with the Plan,
- Identify Available Resources,
- Networking with Local Agencies
- Align with City Initiatives
- Access Funding Opportunities
- Collaborate with City Programs/other organizations
- Provide Feedback

Our Internal findings point to 5 main themes for actions on accessibility.

1. Systemic Barriers

Breaking down systemic barriers is crucial for improving all accessibility barriers because systemic barriers often contribute to and reinforce various forms of exclusion and inequality. Addressing systemic issues can have a cascading effect, positively impacting different aspects of accessibility. Although not technically within the list of known barriers, BSS is adding Systemic Barriers to one of the "themes for action".

Systemic barriers within any company can hinder the achievement of its goals by impeding diversity, equity, and inclusion, ultimately affecting overall performance and innovation. Addressing these barriers is crucial for fostering a more inclusive work environment and aligning with organizational objectives.

Systemic barriers can be defined as attitudes, policies, practices or systems that result in individuals from certain population groups receiving unequal access to or being excluded from participation in employment, services or programs (e.g. , through unintentional bias, discrimination, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, habits and ableism.

Systemic barriers can manifest in various forms, such as:

- **Bias in Hiring:** Unconscious biases in recruitment processes that favor certain demographics, hindering diversity.
- **Unequal Advancement Opportunities:** Lack of equal opportunities for career growth and promotions, disproportionately affecting underrepresented groups.
- **Inaccessible Policies:** Policies and practices that inadvertently exclude certain groups, such as those with disabilities, due to lack of accommodation.
- **Limited Inclusive Culture:** Organizational culture that may not actively encourage diverse perspectives, making it challenging for employees to contribute fully.
- **Unconscious Bias:** Implicit biases influencing decision-making at various levels within the company, impacting performance evaluations and resource allocation.



Action Plan:

- Addressing the above mentioned barriers requires BSS to review and implement a comprehensive approach to create a more equitable and inclusive workplace.
- Ongoing/Regular Training: Transformative Reconciliation Training: Involves comprehensive efforts to address and eliminate systemic barriers that perpetuate inequalities and injustices.

Key strategies to do this will include:

- Learn and acknowledge historical injustices
- Equitable Policy Development
- Education and Awareness
- Representation and inclusion
- Cultural Competency Training
- Community Led Solutions

2. Transportation Barriers

It was identified that transportation barriers continue to be a “hot topic” each year. As we encourage independence, and empower ableism, we need to be stronger and more active advocates for change. It was also identified that transportation could easily be split into two categories;

1. Individuals Supported: lack of accessible public transportation in all communities that BSS provides supports. Limited bus schedules, next to know public transportation to remote areas and locations and Handi Dart services with little flexibility.
2. Employees: Limiting Job Opportunities: Most roles require a valid driver's license, therefore restricts job options for potential employees without one.

Action Plan:

Increase Public transportation:

- Create a community working group to spear head change.
 - Participate in the BC Transit Travel Training
[BC Transit Travel Training](#)
 - Research and Data Gathering: Collect data on current public transportation usage, identifying gaps, high-demand routes, and areas with limited service.
 - Identify Key Issues: Clearly articulate the key issues with the existing public transportation system, emphasizing its impact on Individuals, and the overall community.
 - Engage Stakeholders: Reach out to community groups, Individuals and family members to secure endorsements and testimonials supporting the need for enhanced public transportation
 - Proposal Development: Develop a detailed proposal outlining specific improvements needed, such as increased frequency, extended service hours, or new routes.
 - Approaching city council with a well-researched, community-supported proposal and sustained advocacy efforts
- Explore or create a Ridesharing program/ Volunteer Driver networks
 - Creating a community-based ridesharing programs specifically designed for individuals with disabilities. Establish a network of volunteer drivers within the community who are willing to provide transportation for individuals with disabilities.



- Bonaventure will reevaluate the requirement for employees to hold a valid drivers license:
 - Does this limit, or create a barrier to employment for those with other qualified skills? What alternative can we create. Would exploring a ride share/volunteer driving program be an option?

3. Community Integration Barriers:

It was identified that our local communities have limited access or sensory friendly times available to access recreation or food supplies.

Some examples identified:

- Local pools will not take the liability of allowing certain individuals access to the pool outside of Special Olympic times.
- Limited hours available for individuals to access food banks, grocery stores
 - Loaves and Fishes Food bank has very limited hours of operation, only one-two hours at random times/days each week.
 - Landmark Cinema offers very limited days for Sensory Friendly Films (SSF).
- Grocery stores: dedicating sensory friendly hours for those with sensory sensitivities, creating a more inclusive environment.

Action Plan:

Approach businesses, community resources and or the city with a solution-based plan to the identified barrier. Within the Self Advocate Group, empower and encourage, support ones to make the recommendation and change needed.

4. Employment Barriers

There are approximately 334,000 people in BC, aged 15 to 64 who self-identify as having a disability. In BC people with a disability are employed at a rate of 48.4%. This number significantly drops for those in the social service sector.

Upon analyzing program feedback, a key observation emerged: employment stands out as a primary goal for Individuals supported. This also prompted an internal inquiry: Could Bonaventure inadvertently present barriers to employment for those in our community that also self identify with a disability.

Action Plan:

Individuals Supported: To align with CLBC target, BSS will strive to set an employment goal for supported Individuals: to have 25% of people served report an income. Change, reducing barriers starts by educating the public and bringing awareness to.

- Training Programs: BSS will offer training sessions for community businesses/potential employers on creating an inclusive workplace, addressing myths and misconceptions about diverse-abilities (disabilities), and providing guidance on accommodating diverse needs.
- Success Stories: BSS will share success stories (website, social media) of businesses that have successfully integrated employees with diverse-abilities, emphasizing the positive impact on workplace dynamics and productivity.



- **Legal Compliance:** BSS will provide businesses/potential employers information about legal obligations and incentives related to hiring persons with diverse-abilities, fostering awareness and compliance with disability anti-discrimination laws.
- **Job Fairs and Networking Events:** BSS will participate in job fairs or networking events that specifically highlight the skills and talents of individuals with diverse-abilities, providing employers with direct exposure to potential candidates
- **Offer Resources and Toolkits:** Provide businesses/potential employers with practical resources and toolkits that guide them through the process of hiring, onboarding, and supporting employees with diverse-abilities.

Persons with Diverse-abilities

While our team is dedicated to advocating for employment opportunities for Individuals supported, it's crucial to introspect and assess whether the same level of advocacy is consistently applied in facilitating employment for individuals who identify as having a diverse-ability. Through this reflective process, it became evident that BSS could create a more inclusive work environment that values the unique contributions of individuals with diverse-abilities and facilitate their professional success.

Overcoming employment barriers for people with diverse-abilities involves addressing various factors to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities. Here are BSS key strategies:

- **Inclusive Hiring Practices:** Implement inclusive recruitment strategies, highlighting our commitment
- **Reasonable Accommodations:** Clearly communicate a commitment to providing reasonable accommodations and flexible work arrangements
- **Accessible Workplace Design:** Ensure that the physical workplace is accessible, with accessibility to technology.
- **Promote Inclusive Policies:** Develop and promote inclusive workplace policies that explicitly address the needs of employees with diverse-ability. Policies and handbooks and website will promote inclusive language.
- **Leadership Commitment:** Leadership support is crucial for the success of inclusion initiatives.

5. Communication Barrier

By addressing communication barriers, the intent is to make our information available to people with various diverse-abilities, promoting equal access.

Accessibility Plans not only caters to legal requirements but also enhances the user experience for a broader range of individuals. It reflects a commitment to social responsibility, inclusivity, and customer satisfaction. For this reason, BSS found it necessary to include Communication Barriers as a “theme for action”.

Action Plan:

Web Accessibility/Inclusive Design: Ensure the BSS website has digital content and functionalities that are useable by a wide range of people. BSS will review guidelines like the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and implement practices that make our website navigable and understandable for everyone regardless of everyone’s ability. Some examples that BSS will explore:



- Review text size, and color contrast and responsive design
- Content compatibility with assistive technologies, such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, voice recognition software, keyboards, switches, and braille devices.
- Alt text for images
- Descriptive links
- Keyboard navigation
- Mobile Responsiveness

Increase Communication Methods/Aids: Increase the method of sharing and communicating with supported individuals:

- Visual calendars/posters and training material
- Pic communication/social stories
- ASL Training/Caya Training
- Video/auditorial training
- Educate team members on where they can access adaptive technology
- Reevaluate/redesign the BSS Buzz, create a newsletter for supported Individuals.
 - Clear concise language
 - Text alternative
 - Readable fonts and contrasting
 - Structured layout
 - Accessible links
 - Audio versions
 - Responsive design

Sourcing cost effective resources for assistive technology:

- Government Programs
- Community Resources
- Educational Institutions
- Online Platforms
- Tech recycling Programs/Loans



Accessibility Strategy

Legend

Priority Coding

- A – This year
- B – Next year
- C – As needed
- D – Continual

Cost Coding

- \$ - 1-99
- \$\$ - 100-299
- \$\$\$ - 300-500
- \$\$\$\$ - 500 +

Barrier	Action to be taken	Priority	Cost: Funding Source	Timeline	Responsible Person
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformative Reconciliation Approaches: comprehensive effort to review policies and practices that perpetuate inequalities and injustices. Increase awareness and training 	D	\$\$\$\$ Funds provided by funders	Jan 2024: Training Registration 1-3 yrs- Ongoing reflection and adjustment	HR /ED
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create working group: Train, analyse needs and submit a proposal Explore ridesharing/Volunteer driver program 	B	\$\$\$ Explore available bursaries or grants	3 yrs Multi layered approach: capacity	Committee/ working group
Community Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self Advocate group-support in identifying barrier, creating a solution- based plan, approach city and businesses 	D	\$\$\$	2024 Gather feedback/ input Locate local resources Submit/share plan	CI Director/ Managers
Employment	<p>Individuals Supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate local business and community <p>Persons that Identify with diverse- ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a more inclusive work environment. Inclusive hiring practices, reasonable accommodations 	D	\$\$ \$\$	1-3 yrs- Ongoing- Community awareness	Directors HR/ED
Communication	<p>Website Accessibility</p> <p>Increase communication methods/aids</p>	D	\$\$\$\$ Secure grants, community government resources	A-D	Director CI Leadership Team



2022-23 Accessibility Goals:

1.Improving website accessibility: (with the goal and intent that the BSS website becomes a valuable tool for resources, connection and community engagement)

- Added the Community Inclusion monthly Rec Calendar and Community Inclusion calendar
- Added a feedback opportunity: Accessibility form, complaint form
- Library of resources
- List of Rights

Ongoing Improvement plan with Website:

- addressing various aspects to ensure that individuals with disabilities can navigate, understand, and interact with the site.
- Consult for website- EZsurf.ca

2.Accessible Office space: BSS will explore a new accessible HO location to ensure easy access. In the meantime, the Barons CI space has been set up with a training Center: to host meetings, trainings.

3.Ensure all program locations are safe and secure, accessible to those supported and those that visit or work in the space-On going maintenance requests, improvements.

4.Training: Ensure the leadership has ongoing training around accessibility and breaking down barriers.

- Training will cover a range of topics to ensure the importance of accessibility, know how to implement inclusive practices and foster an inclusive culture within the program spaces.
- Ongoing training around recruitment and hiring practices: identify bias and unintentional decision making.



Accessibility Canada Act (ACA)

1. all persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities
2. all persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities
3. all persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities
4. all persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities
5. laws, policies, programs, services and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons
6. persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures
7. the development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities

The ACA defines a barrier as:

“Anything – including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice – that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.”



UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Article 9 – Accessibility

1. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:
 - a. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
 - b. Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

2. States Parties shall also take appropriate measures:
 - a. To develop, promulgate and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public;
 - b. To ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;
 - c. To provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities;
 - d. To provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms; Inclusion BC Brief - November 2019 British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation 9 of 40
 - e. To provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public;
 - f. To promote other appropriate forms of assistance and support to persons with disabilities to ensure their access to information;
 - g. To promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;
 - h. To promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost. A potential step toward ensuring alignment with the UNCRPD is to submit BC's draft legislation to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for review and comparison to the Convention. Inclusion BC understands the