



Initiatives for Just Communities: Touchstone Program

Touchstone Supports Include:

- Supported Independent Living
- Drop-In
- Visions and Voices Program

At Touchstone, we assist youth and adults with intellectual disabilities by supporting them in their everyday situations and by advocating on their behalf in their communities; thereby nurturing opportunities for their growth, belonging, and success.

Expertise:

Providing support that is non-judgmental, and is informed by participants' lived and living expertise, to individuals who have intellectual disabilities and who experience psychosocial challenges. Touchstone's historical focus on supporting people with FASD informs its work.

Our Emphasis:

Building Meaningful Connections: The Touchstone Program is dedicated to supportive relationships and mentorship for adults and youth with intellectual disabilities in Winnipeg. Our objective is to support individuals to experience empowerment in their personal lives by nurturing trustworthy bonds and encouraging meaningful choices. We understand the importance of good and reliable connections in enhancing quality of life and independence. Through our program, participants receive ongoing personalized coaching, crucial learning opportunities, and life skill development, within the program's broader focus on fostering natural supports within the community.

We Will:

The Touchstone Program is dedicated to creating a supportive and participant-directed environment for each person. Through strengths-based, person-centered approaches, we celebrate people throughout their successes, their challenges, and their experiences of barriers. We encourage individuals and problem solve with them towards their desired achievements. We understand that every person's journey is unique, and we remain genuinely curious about their situations, knowing that limitations arise in complex circumstances.

Dedicated support staff form professional and transparent relationships with program participants, meeting them where they are and providing any necessary support. We embrace harm reduction and trauma-informed approaches in relationship and in mentorship with participants, fostering spaces and dynamics that resist stigma. We recognize and respect all varying identities and cultures.



We are mindful of the reality that we are a non-Indigenous program working in Treaty 1 Territory, the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

Key Elements:

- 1. Celebrating Strengths:** We see the ever-present strength in all program participants. We nurture and celebrate these strengths, as well as participants' growth and successes, fostering a sense of pride and accomplishment.
- 2. Advocacy and Support:** We advocate on behalf of participants and their families, ensuring their voices are heard, their questions are answered, and their needs are met. We work collaboratively with families, funders, and external agencies to provide holistic services that address every aspect of a participant's support network.
- 3. Transition Support:** We assist participants in navigating the transition to adulthood and adult services, providing guidance and resources during this significant phase of their lives.
- 4. Outreach and Engagement:** We actively reach out to participants who face accessibility challenges, ensuring that everyone has opportunities to connect with their supports.
- 5. Residential Support:** When appropriate, we will develop personalized residential support models for individual participants towards a sustainable, safe, and fulfilling living environment.
- 6. Food Security and Emergency Support:** We assist participants in accessing food banks and emergency shelters when necessary, ensuring their basic needs are met during challenging times.
- 7. FASD Awareness:** Through our Vision and Voices Program, comprised of speakers with lived and living experience, we promote awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in communities across Manitoba, advocating for understanding and informed support.

Enhanced Program Support:

- 1. Individualized Planning & Person-Centered Services:** We initiate an individualized planning process, collaborating with participants, family members, key service providers, and other stakeholders. This ensures tailored plans that recognize individual choice, potentials, limitations, and cultural competence.
- 2. Progress Reporting & Effective Collaboration:** We provide regular reports to each participant's Community Support Worker (CSW), keeping them updated on progress, achievements, and addressing any support plan modifications. We also establish and maintain effective communication and collaboration with various stakeholders involved in the individual's support network. This includes professionals such as EIA representatives, landlords, psychiatrists, physicians, legal professionals, and other key individuals who are invested in the participant's well-being and success. By fostering strong relationships and open lines of communication with these professionals, we ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to support.

3. **Community Connections & Individual Support Networks:** We facilitate connections between participants, their families where relevant, and community-based supports, enabling access to resources and services. Additionally, we assist individuals in developing their personal support networks, fostering empowerment and interconnectedness.
4. **Self-Advocacy & Promoting Independence:** We encourage and support individuals to be self-advocates, confidently expressing their needs, desires, and goals. Opportunities for independence are promoted through supports that are least restrictive and least intrusive, honoring the importance of autonomy while fostering meaningful connections within the community.
5. **Housing Stability & Crisis Intervention:** We prioritize stabilizing housing issues, ensuring secure and suitable living arrangements for participants' overall well-being. In times of crisis, we are equipped to provide immediate support and resources to address emergent needs.
6. **Professional and Ethical Standards:** Upholding the highest levels of quality and integrity, all our programming and services adhere to professional and ethical standards.

Individuals are eligible for services if:

- They have a documented intellectual disability as determined by Family Services (as opposed to mental illness). Dual diagnosis is acceptable and common in individuals, but the intellectual disability is what carries the funding for the program.
 - We have expertise supporting people with FASD, but that is not a pre-requisite.
- They live within the southeastern area of Manitoba.
- They are 18 years of age or older.
- They are supported through Family Services or the Provincial Alternative Support Services

Contact Information:

Referrals: referrals@initiativesjc.org

For more information:

- Visit our website: <https://www.initiativesjc.org/wpblog/>
- Email us: info@initiativesjc.org
- Telephone: 204-326-1050