

A Fact Sheet on **Individual Planning**

What is The Vulnerable Persons Living with A Mental Disability Act?

On October 4, 1996, a law came into force in Manitoba called *The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act*.

The Act was developed to promote and protect the rights of adults living with a mental disability who need assistance to meet their basic needs. The legislation recognizes these Manitobans as “vulnerable persons.”

The Act is based on the belief that vulnerable persons should have the opportunity to make their own decisions and direct their own lives, with support if necessary.

What is individual planning?

This is a dynamic process that helps the vulnerable person identify and move towards a desired future. The vulnerable person, members of that person's support network, and the substitute decision maker or committee (if any) work with a community service worker to identify the person's strengths, needs and dreams for the future. The planning process then assists the vulnerable person to identify the services and supports required to meet his or her needs and goals. Services may include those provided through The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs, as well as those available in the larger community. This process results in a written document, called an individual plan.

Are individual plans a requirement?

Yes. The Act states that an individual plan must be developed for every vulnerable person who receives support services through The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs.

What are the steps in the planning process?

Before planning begins, a community service worker invites the vulnerable person and his or her support network, if desired, to make some decisions about the planning process. These decisions include:

- Which individual planning method will be used?
- Who will facilitate or lead the planning process?
- What is the scope of the vulnerable person's plan?
- Who will be invited to participate in the planning process?

Once these decisions are made, the vulnerable person and the others involved in this process work with the community service worker to develop the plan. The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs requires that the following components be addressed in planning for support services provided through the department:

- **Knowing the Vulnerable Person and His/Her Vision** - Planning team members start by gathering a personal history of the vulnerable person and identifying who the vulnerable person is and what the current situation is. The team discusses the person's dreams, hopes and interests for the present and future. The dream or visioning piece is important because it gives the team something to aim for - even though the dream may not be attained.
- **Goal Planning** - Goals are important because they encourage team members to be clear about wants and needs. Once they are identified, the team can prioritize and begin to act on them. Opportunities, resources and barriers to attaining an improved quality of life should also be considered.

- **Action Planning** - At this stage the team identifies the activities through which goals are to be realized, and assigns responsibility to specific persons or agencies, along with time lines for completion.
- **Planning for Accountability** - Here the team determines who is responsible for following up on specific actions identified during planning.

During this process, the vulnerable person may wish to visit several potential service providers in order to choose the one that is most suitable. If a service provider is able to accommodate the needs of the vulnerable person, the community service worker will request funding for the desired support services.

Once support services are in place, planning team members and the community service worker will keep in touch with the vulnerable person to monitor the situation and ensure that services remain relevant.

At least once a year, the community service worker will contact the vulnerable person to assess the person's level of satisfaction with the planning process and its outcomes. If the vulnerable person wants to engage in further planning, the worker will take steps to start the process again.

How often must an individual plan be developed?

The Act states that there must be an individual plan for each vulnerable person receiving support services through The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs. Once a plan is in place, a vulnerable person may decide that there is no need to engage in further planning efforts. However, some vulnerable persons may, because of their particular circumstance, be involved in planning on an ongoing basis.

Who initiates the individual planning process?

The process may be initiated by the vulnerable person, substitute decision maker or committee, or the community service worker.

Other fact sheets in this series:

- Supported Decision Making and Support Networks
- Support Services
- Protection
- Substitute Decision Making

Additional information:

For more information about *The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act*, contact your nearest regional office of The Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs or the Office of the Vulnerable Persons' Commissioner:

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Flin Flon	(204) 687-1700
The Pas	(204) 627-8311

Parkland

Dauphin	(204) 622-2035
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