



# **Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) - 2024 Showcase**

# What makes this model different?

## A brief introduction

Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities (STADD) is a provincial partnership between the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR), Community Living BC (CLBC) and various other organizations. They primarily support youth aged 16-24 in their transition to adulthood.

# Holistic transition planning for youth

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STADD stands out for its focus on supporting youth with developmental disabilities as they transition to adulthood. Youth typically have a large amount of supports in place when they are children, and this steadily dwindles as they get older, making the transition difficult. STADD aims to bridge this gap by helping youth create “transition plans” and connecting them to the appropriate resources they need to make this transition as smooth as possible.

By involving the youth, their families, and other key support figures, STADD ensures that each transition plan accurately reflects the youth’s goals. This model is unique because it offers youth-centered, individualized planning that is primarily focused on the element of transition, which does not currently exist in other navigator programs.

## Coordinated support from multiple agencies

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Another key feature of the STADD model is its collaborative, cross-government approach to support. STADD navigators help connect youth with services across various government ministries and community organizations, bringing everyone onto the same team to work together on behalf of the youth.

By coordinating with agencies like the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Community Living BC, and WorkBC, STADD navigators make it easier for youth to access the right services at the right time. This united effort helps prevent youth from being shuffled between services and ensures that their needs are addressed in a seamless, coordinated way.

“A big part of the role of a navigator is the transition plan. So working with the the young person to identify their short and long term goals, and to create a transition plan to help support [those goals].



## Flexible, accessible communication methods

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STADD navigators use many communication methods to ensure that youth and families can connect with them easily. The program provides support via phone, email, text, video calls, and in-person meetings in many communities across BC.

While some communities may not have navigators present in their area, navigators from neighbouring regions can occasionally drive over (sometimes from hours away) to provide that in-person support which some people may need.

For folks with limited access to technology, STADD also offers fax and mail options, removing barriers to access. This flexibility in communication ensures that youth and families, regardless of their circumstances, have a reliable way to reach out for assistance and stay connected to their support team.

## Comprehensive intake and ongoing support

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STADD's intake process is thorough, covering areas like health, housing, education, employment readiness, and cultural connections. This approach helps navigators understand each youth's full support network and identify any gaps or additional resources that may be needed.

As the young person's needs change over time, STADD offers ongoing support through regular service reviews to adjust the transition plan as necessary. This adaptable approach means that STADD navigators are there to provide consistent, evolving support as the youth's goals and circumstances change, setting them up for long-term success.

“Before the [navigator] role existed, there was often breakdowns in communication. There wasn't a focus on more of a seamless connection to adult supports, and families were having to do a lot of repetition and retelling their stories, and that's exhausting.”

# **An overview**

# Overview of the navigator program

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The STADD navigator program provides support for youth with developmental disabilities and their families as they transition to adulthood. Serving over 145 communities across BC, STADD helps youth between the ages of 16 and 24 create a tailored transition plan, covering everything from education and employment to housing and community connections. STADD is typically supporting around 600 people across the province at any given time.

Folks are often referred to STADD through “referring partners”-- this can include educators, parents, or even organizations such as Work BC. Youth can also self-refer themselves to the program. Once a youth has been referred to the program, they undergo a screening process to ensure they are eligible.

Youth must be eligible for Community Living BC (CLBC)’s criteria to be eligible for the STADD program. This eligibility criteria includes an official diagnosis of a developmental disability, autism spectrum disorder, or fetal alcohol syndrome (confirmed through a psychological assessment).

Once a youth is confirmed to be eligible for the program, they will be contacted for an intake interview. The referring partner is often a part of this interview, but special attention is given to ensure that the youth’s voice is heard and their needs expressed. This intake interview helps the navigator collect information about the youth that will help inform their transition plan.

STADD navigators act as the primary point of contact for each person, coordinating services across government agencies, schools, and community organizations. They help establish a team around each youth, which may include teachers, social workers, healthcare providers, and family members. Through this teamwork, STADD navigators provide a seamless transition experience, removing barriers that can arise when working with multiple agencies.

# Overview of the navigator program (Continued)

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STADD's engagement approach is person-centered, encouraging young people to define their own goals, interests, and dreams for the future. Navigators spend time getting to know each person, learning about their strengths, challenges, and aspirations. Navigators bring a vast level of skills and expertise, as the role requires them to have a minimum of 3 years of experience working with folks with intellectual disabilities and complex needs.

With each youth's permission, they also gather input from family members and other key figures to create a supportive network. Throughout the process, navigators make sure that each youth's voice is prioritized, so the transition plan truly reflects their individual vision for adulthood. Regular check-ins help keep the plan updated and responsive to any changing needs, ensuring that the support remains relevant and effective over time.

While navigators do not typically help youth fill out applications or paperwork, they try their best to connect the person to a community resource that can be helpful. In instances where the person has nobody else to support them in filling it out, they may step in to assist, but this is not typical of their role. Navigators work to build the capacity of the youth, and help them identify those in their circle who can support them past their time with STADD.

STADD exclusively works with youth aged 16-24, so a person's file would need to be closed by their 24th birthday. This is worked up to and prepared for ahead of time to ensure the youth has all the necessary supports in place.

To make the program accessible for as many people as possible, STADD offers various methods of communication, including phone, email, text, video calls, and in-person meetings. If anybody requires support in a language other than English, STADD employs translator services to make sure the language barrier is not a problem.

The service is available in many locations around BC where a prominent need for the service has been assessed. However, there are some areas in the province (for example, Victoria) that do not have any navigators.

# Funding

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STADD's navigator program is funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). As a government-funded program, STADD benefits from public resources that enable it to operate in 145 communities, supporting a large and diverse population.

This funding supports 28 full-time navigators.

# Limitations

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Though STADD serves 145 communities across British Columbia, there are still gaps in certain areas, particularly remote regions. Although STADD offers remote support through phone, email, and virtual meetings, this may not be ideal for every person, especially for those who benefit more from face-to-face interaction.

Limited access to physical support options in certain areas can reduce the effectiveness of the program for folks who lack reliable digital access. The navigators go to great lengths to try to make the service as accessible as possible (including sometimes driving hours away to a neighbouring region that is underserved), but additional funding would help take this burden off of individual navigators.

Another potential hindrance is the strict eligibility criteria to be able to formally access the STADD program. Since a formal assessment is required to prove their diagnosis, this may present a barrier to some folks and make it harder for them to get the support they need. Although navigators can still provide some informational support to youth that are not eligible or that have not yet been screened for eligibility, it would not be as extensive as the support given to youth that are formally assigned to a navigator.





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