

# OPTIONS

---

**Newsletter of the Independent Living Resource Centre (Manitoba)**

---



**Progression During a  
Pandemic**



# Winter 2020-2021

Independent Living Resource Centre  
311A-393 Portage Ave.  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 3H6  
Phone: 204-947-0194 (TTY)  
Toll Free: 1-800-663-3043  
Fax: 204-943-6625  
Email: thecentre@ilrc.mb.ca  
Web: www.ilrc.mb.ca

## **Chairperson**

Ken Shachtay

## **Vice –Chairperson**

Brian Baldwin

## **Treasurer**

Grant Young

## **Secretary**

John Pinkerton

Valerie Kardal

John LaRoque

Sharon Olson

## **Executive Director**

John Young

# Contents:

From the Soapbox	3
A Global Mind	4
Flipping the SWITCH	5
Did You Know?	6
Minding Our Mental Health	7
9 Steps	8
Pandemic Productivity	9
Making Choices	10

### **Important Note:**

**All subjects, materials and dates contained within are subject to change due to the COVID-19 situation and closure of most facilities and programs at the ILRC.**

*Created/Edited through the ILRC Options Newsletter Committee. The views and opinions expressed in this edition are those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of ILRC*

## From the Soapbox

John Young



I extend my deepest appreciation to all ILRC volunteers, board members, Independent Living Attendants, community members and staff. There is no way to say it or look at it other than this is the hardest thing our centre, community and IL movement has ever had to face. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the world, and on some communities much harder than others. This has become the realm we all have to function in.

I hope this message conveys to each and every one of you how important you are to the Independent Living movement and the centre as a whole. We recognize that if it weren't for our base of volunteers, board members, ILAs and staff, we could never have gone through these past 10 months. To me personally, as an administrator, this indicates that we have many leaders in our organization. I thank you for the collaboration and kindness many of you display in your leadership. With this kind of perseverance, I know we can continue to dig deeper every day to remain self-motivated and engaged. With new and ongoing developments almost daily concerning the virus, new uncertainties are becoming commonplace and yet you still show up for work every day, bringing your best selves always. This is how we're going to help keep people safe, by combining clear and concise information from the centre and your dedication to the IL movement. Even as you learn ever-changing protocols, you are becoming very astute to keeping yourself and our community safe.

Know that the ILRC will always put consumers, ILAs, volunteers, staff and board members first when it comes to safety in their independence and the gathering and keeping of their independence. 2021 is going to be another trying year, although there is room for optimism with the coming vaccines. Even as we work towards this light, we must still stay very vigilant on this virus in order to keep us all safe, an endeavor we have been successful in for the most part.

Thank you again to all of you, especially when looking for good is hard to do when all you see is bad, when finding your way through a situation is the only way because going around is not possible. Even when you feel scared and somewhat angry at our situation, you still reach out with kindness and collaboration. For this, I thank you for from the bottom of my heart. Everyone, keep safe and know that we will progress through 2021 with ongoing collaboration and kindness.



# A Global Mind for Exponentials

Robert Mitchell

**M**athematician Albert Bartlett said that “the greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function.” COVID-19 has given us a glimpse into how impactful and profound exponential growth is but this virus is but one of many phenomena growing exponentially.

Exponential growth is a pattern of data that shows sharper increases over time, essentially the rate of change of an amount of something. It can sneak along with the graph inconspicuously before the amount shoots up rapidly. It looks somewhat like a hockey stick when placed on a chart. Consider how COVID-19 started – case, case, a few clusters, then boom! Governments globally are struggling with navigating this virus – the exponential growth snuck up and has hit the world hard.

Data is growing exponentially. We have collected more data in the past four years than in the entire existence of humanity prior. The staggering amount of data generated each day is growing exponentially as it builds an exponentially more massive storehouse of information over time. In 2018, mobile traffic accumulated an astounding 292 exabytes compared to just 32 exabytes 5 years prior. Machine intelligence is expanding exponentially. The reality is exponentials are everywhere: global population, energy consumption, life expectancy, the trillions of dollars floating around in the US economy, national and world debt. They are all expanding exponentially – a whole bunch of hockey sticks pointing towards unlimited growth. Try a Google search for world population, energy consumption as exponential growth charts, and you will see these phenomena went mostly unchanged for the vast majority of the time. It is only in recent decades that these numbers have begun soaring.

The problem is us – we are linear creatures. We measure progress and change incrementally and are not hard-wired to process exponentials. As the world changes at an exponential rate, the human experience remains absolutely linear. We move through life step-by-step and one day at a time.

The problem with facing exponentials is that global population, debt accumulation, fossil fuel consumption, and data all come with hard caps or limits. There is a physical limit to how many people this planet can sustain, for instance. We will run out of fossil fuels by the year 2050. The US Energy Information Administration projects a 50% increase in world energy consumption by 2050. This predicament will be challenging to navigate, considering we use 50% of the world’s energy today to sustain rapid global growth. We must find a way to extend the human experience and our capacity to think exponentially. We must somehow augment our linear understanding to adapt to a world of exponentials. We need some help to do that. We have to find some way to shift our linear thinking towards exponential thinking – either through acting more boldly on our place in the modern environment, using machine learning and artificial intelligence to support our ability to adapt. We can cultivate an exponential mindset, a form of thinking about the future that closely analyzes the real and rapid impacts of rapid growth.



# Flipping the SWITCH to Independence

Doug Lockhart

**T**he ILRC is known to be responsive to consumers changing needs and consumer demand. Well, if this pandemic has taught us anything, it's that people want to stay in their community homes rather than count on an Institutionalized care system that can be, at the very least, unpredictable. In response to consumer demand, as evidenced through the ILRC Agent program, we are altering our focus or making a "SWITCH," if you will, to transitions that impact seniors with disabilities.

SWITCH (Seniors With Independence in Their Community Homes) is designed to utilize ILRC's existing infrastructure and many years of expertise to maximize the impact we can have in supporting seniors as their community needs change. As a result, this program will attract seniors already using Self or Family Managed Care or unfamiliar with community care options that we can funnel to the AGENT program. With SWITCH, seniors indeed will have access to the easy switch where ILRC assumes the majority of their coordination roles as individually determined/directed by the consumer and their support network.

The ultimate goal is to flip the "SWITCH" on old thinking and patterns of behavior among our aging population and start putting the "AGE" in AGENT by using our vast experience in supporting life transitions complemented by a deeper understanding of holistic care as needs change.

To further validate the need to embrace the change in our community, we need to

recognize that the oldest baby boomers are turning 75 this year. Over the next three decades, the number of people aged 85 plus will more than triple. This decade, 5 million Canadians will turn 65. This need was magnified by COVID-19 that has shown us that there aren't enough private sector solutions to the questions that face older adults and has reconfirmed that home is where 90%+ seniors wish to live. By 2050, there will be more than twice as many people needing long-term care. This care will need to be provided outside the hospital. By then, the cost to all levels of government will have tripled. The home will be the focus as the first solution. Aging in Place will dominate the next decade and beyond.

Why ILRC? We have the expertise in the community since 1984, ensuring dignified consumer directed care for seniors as they age in Place. In addition to the role we play around disability awareness, we have humbly become the cornerstone of community care in Manitoba due to our in-house resources. Being consumer-controlled has its advantages from a personal and community perspective. This "SWITCH" may seem like a departure from our principles of consumer control when in reality, we already support many consumers who sit on this precarious ledge of independence teetering from control to controlled but because of our Mission and commitment to the IL philosophy, consumer preference and decision making will always be a priority. Focusing on this strengths based perspective maintains our Mission's integrity and launches us into a realm of support where our expertise can shine.

Shine is precisely what we have done in responding to consumer and community demand. We can talk about PACE and how it is already set up to support aging in Place

options as a cornerstone to community-based care. We can lean on ADAPT and the five training components to ensure our community is endowed with compassion and understanding. We can look at the evolution of accessible transportation and the impact ILRC is making to ensure community participation is not only a priority but a reality that we, as people with disabilities, have control over. Furthermore, we can realize ILRC's role in S/FMC Coordination is a starting point for people seeking community care options. Having control over this program administration puts us in the driver's seat for change as we respond to consumers evolving needs. Also, we continue to be at the forefront of training and awareness when it comes to disability and emergency response that supports the preparedness of the community.

Our work as a community-driven agency has us in the right Place to flip the SWITCH and lean into the most urgent community need with seniors at home.



## Did You Know?

Chelsey Sommerfield

**T**he Community Financial Helpline was created to answer questions from community members living on low incomes. The helpline can be reached by calling or texting 431-813-4357 (431-813-HELP) or toll-free 1-855-955-4234 (1-855-955-4CFH).

The helpline can assist with issues such as:

- Tax filing
- Obtaining identification
- Income supports (such as CERB, EIA, EI, OAS, CPP, and CPP-D)
- Benefits and credits such as the Canada Child Benefit
- Debt management and credit counseling.

Information provided by the Community Financial Helpline is free.

Ceridian Cares believes that people across the country should have access to the basics like food, clothing, and shelter. We also believe that quality of life matters, which includes physical and emotional well-being. The charity was established in 2013. It provides grants to low-income individuals in need of assistance. Examples of What Ceridian Cares Supports: Ceridian Cares provides grants for food, clothing, footwear, and household items. They assist with medical devices, home adjustments for barrier-free living, and recreation programs for individuals and families in need. For more information and to see if you qualify, go to [ceridiancares.ca](http://ceridiancares.ca)

## ILA's – Thank you!

**C**ovid 19 has been a challenging time for most people. While we are all being told to stay home and stay safe, some people still go to work every day. During a time like this, no one is more important and appreciated than the people who go out every day and put themselves at risk to help others. I'm talking about the Independent Living Attendants. This group of people shows dedication, compassion, understanding, and hard work like no other. There are no amount of words to express the gratitude that the ILRC and Consumers have for all of the ILA's. These ILA's go above and beyond the call of duty to care for others. They are putting others' needs above their own and making sacrifices to ensure our Consumers continue to get the care they deserve. We are in awe of their selfless dedication to helping others. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for everything you do. We could not do this without you!

**Krystal Polson**

**On behalf of the Community Living Team**

**ILRC supports a “Stay Healthy” policy for all consumers, volunteers, visitors and staff members.**

**Please DO NOT come to the office if you are sick. Do your part to help everyone stay healthy!**



## Minding Our Mental Health

Mandi P.

**R**ecently I have been offering long-distance support to a friend experiencing an on-going mental health crisis. Drawing from my own experiences, mental health awareness, and a heart full of empathy, I can offer her the time, care, and resources she needs to be well.

Words carry a lot of influence, and sometimes what is said is enough to alter a person's mindset for the better. Providing support for someone else has brought me a great sense of purpose during a time when life has slowed down for most of us to some degree. As a woman with a mental health disorder, I understand the real struggles many of us face during this temporary “new normal.” I know there are those in the community experiencing poor mental health for the first time, and I call upon our experienced mental health community to offer their support. You don't need a professional degree to be of assistance. You can check on your neighbors, call a friend who lives alone, or assist in bringing food necessities to someone with mobility restrictions. Like a soldier in a silent war against the virus, armed with a facemask, sanitizer, and social distancing maneuvers, we all have life-saving roles to play. Although, at times, I feel I am fighting the battle alone, I know that I am not. All around me, my friends, family, and community are here, doing their part to keep each other safe during this trying time.

If you or someone you know are experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact the mobile crisis unit at 204-940-1781 or contact ILRC's Information and Referral for a list of mental health resources.

It has been said that the best things in life are free. This is truer today than ever: love, knowledge, and happiness.

## 9 Steps to Accessibility

Patrick Stewart

**W**hile at the moment, community participation (physically not digitally) may feel like a distant memory, there is much underway that could fundamentally change access and inclusion through our public transportation network. By accident and design, neglect, and advocacy, Winnipeg is poised to ask what we expect accessibility to look like. And are we willing to put the resources and policy in place to get there? It's time to step up, "nothing about us, without us" could get pretty real.

On December 4th (2020), the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works (IRPW) will receive two critical reports from Winnipeg Transit. The first will explore the feasibility of restoring 30% of Transit Plus service "in-house", meaning it will be operated by city bus drivers with city-owned vehicles. Since 1997, to save costs, Transit Plus (formerly Handi-Transit) has been 100% privately contracted, which some say has reduced the quality of service, as contracts often go to the lowest bidder. Recently the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) has investigated reports that privatization has also negatively impacted drivers, who may be working extraordinary hours for close to minimum wage. Whether it is spurring competition between public and private providers, improving service standards, or addressing labour practices that

interest city councillors, the conversation is part of a broader reckoning that requires Winnipeg to determine how we ensure a parallel level of service between 'para' and fixed-route options.

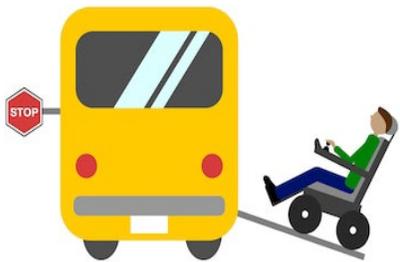
Secondly, Winnipeg Transit will be reporting the results of their public consultation regarding the priority seating area (on buses). Handi-Transit was created at a time when boarding the bus required traversing three steps at the entrance. The city now features a fleet comprised entirely of low-floor kneeling vehicles. However, as any rider can observe, there are still many significant barriers, i.e., overcrowding, snowfall, negative attitudes for other riders, inaccessible securement systems, lack of signage/policy, etc.

In consultation with the community, stakeholders, and significantly the ATU, ILRC has developed a set of 9 recommendations intended to tangibly improve accessibility through low-cost, sensible improvements, such as updated signage, stroller size guidelines, and the support of bus drivers. The full '9 Steps' document (draft) is available on-line for public viewing.

While the '9 Steps' address decades' old barriers and leverage upcoming provincial legislation (the AMA Transportation Standard) and the best practices of other jurisdictions, their necessity could become much more urgent shortly. The Winnipeg Transit Master Plan, which recently wrapped up its own public consultation, is set to level a potentially seismic shift in public transportation for the disability community. Their proposed "family of services" model would blend Transit Plus and fixed-route (bus) service for cost savings, meaning that door-to-door service would be scaled back, and instead, users would now be delivered to their closest bus stop. Quite obviously, the city can't just 'flip a switch' and

expect Transit Plus riders to start taking the bus seamlessly, without great difficulty, as the entire reason riders have access to para-transit is that barriers do exist, and they are very, very real. Without advocating (at all!) for this change in practice, ILRC is attempting to move forward with a coalition of stakeholders. We encourage the city to do the right thing (in advance, prior human rights complaints). The community has provided policymakers with a set of solutions that could be implemented immediately if the will exists to do so.

Public transportation provides access to work, school, health, the economy, and society. It is in everyone's interest that no one is left out. If you are interested in speaking your mind, providing insight, or asking an important question, talk to your city councillor, then contact your MLA and encourage them to move the AMA forward.



## Productivity Through a Pandemic

Natalie Pirson

**P**rogression through a pandemic? Is it possible? I believe it is, and as an Agency, ILRC has been able to do just

that, transitioning from working in an office environment to working remotely. What about you? What has your progression been like during this pandemic? It hasn't been easy for a lot of us, but we've been learning to adapt. I've been thinking a lot about what one can do for themselves to adapt to our current situation.

You hear phrases like "virtual learning," "connecting remotely," "Let's meet on Zoom, Skype, Facetime," being thrown around like candy during this time. Sure, technology is great, but what about those who don't have access to it? Those of us who are exhausted from it? Sometimes I need a break from screen time.

I think phone calls are important. Check-in with a friend or loved one via a different form of communication. Letter writing. I am finding that a handwritten note or a voice has had much more of an impact.

I have been asked by older adults what resources are out there that don't require technology. A&O for Older Adults has a program called seniors without Walls, which provides educational and recreational programming in a fun and interactive atmosphere. All programming is provided over the phone. There is a link below, or call 204 – 956 – 6440 for more information.

<https://www.aosupportservices.ca/our-three-pillars/social-engagement/senior-centre-without-walls/>

Not sure about you, but I have seen an increase in my reading material since this pandemic started. For those of us who love to listen to audiobooks, you can download them for free at <https://ibvi.org/blog/top-10->

## [audiobook-sites-for-blind-and-visually-impaired/.](#)

I have had friends and consumers of all ages tell me how they have discovered knitting or crocheting during this pandemic. There are a couple of resources I would like to share with you: A Guide to Knitting with a disability <https://simmonsliis.libguides.com/KnittingGuide/Disability> and a website called **Vision Aware** that has a section called Knit Your Life Back Together at [https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/recreation-and-leisure/arts-and-crafts/sewing-and-embroidery/knit-your-life-back-together/.](https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/recreation-and-leisure/arts-and-crafts/sewing-and-embroidery/knit-your-life-back-together/)

I like to keep physically active. I use a manual wheelchair and prefer to do my miles outside. In the Winter, unless I can find some ice or

## Making Choices

Natasha Klassen

Everyone's lives have changed in many ways this year. There seem to be new guidelines and ever-changing information on how to deal with this Pandemic. I want to say a big thank you to all of our ILA staff who have and continue to work so hard to support the consumers in our programs. I also want to thank the consumers for understanding all of the changes that have had to occur due to the ever-changing guidelines to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Through all of these changes, ILRC has continued to offer our ILRC as Agent program. This program works alongside the WRHA Self and Family Managed Care program (SFMC). In the Agent program,

access the river trail at The Forks, the snow is tough. I discovered limited mobility workouts on YouTube that have been a great motivator.

Is there anything new you'd like to share that you discovered during this unprecedented year? If you have any ideas or resources you'd like to share, please shoot me an email at [nataliep@ilrc.mb.ca](mailto:nataliep@ilrc.mb.ca) or give me a call at 204 – 947 – 0194. We will publish these in our next newsletter.



consumers can benefit from the added flexibility of the SFMC program while having ILRC take care of some of the financial pieces that can often be stressful. Agents have the opportunity to create their schedule and interview staff from our pool of Independent Living Attendants. ILRC Finance handles payroll administration and deductions. Agents also have access to ILRC's expertise in benefits administration, attendant pay scale, Health and Safety standards, and Manitoba Labour Law requirements. I am sure that in the next number of months, we will continue to see changes and new guidelines in Manitoba as we press on.

One thing that won't change is our desire to continue to promote and support citizens with disabilities to make choices and take responsibility for the development and management of personal and community resources.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Your membership helps support newsletter distribution. Being a member has its benefits in that you can vote at our next annual meeting and receive exclusive invitations to community events. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so. The cost is **\$5.00**.

**Please inform us about the following:**

**New Member**

**Renewal**

**I prefer not to receive any mailings from ILRC.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Org. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Visit Us at [www.ilrc.mb.ca](http://www.ilrc.mb.ca)

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ILRC STAFF

<p><b>Executive Director:</b> John Young  <b>Project Development and Training Coordinator:</b> Doug Lockhart  <b>Operations and Administration Coordinator:</b> Robert Mitchell  <b>Finance and Accounts Coordinator:</b> Eugene del Mundo  <b>Payroll Coordinator:</b> Sonia Muncal  <b>Reception:</b> Mandi Panetta; Volunteers  <b>Media/Web Administrator:</b> Jason Hirose  <b>Information &amp; Referral:</b>  <b>Independent Living Skills/Peer Support:</b>              IL Consultants: Chelsey Sommerfield, Natalie Pirson  <b>Individual Self-Advocacy:</b>              DART Team  <b>Personal Attendant Community Education (PACE)</b>              IL Consultant: Susianti Fierce</p>	<p><b>Community Living Program</b>            IL Consultant: Natasha Klassen            IL Consultant: Krystal Polson   <b>Qu'Appelle Tenant Resource Coordinator:</b>            Kelly Thurston   <b>Independent Living Staffing:</b> Romeo Recalde, Christina Buebos   <b>MIST Housing Team Leader:</b> Francesca de Fiesta   <b>Leisure Education:</b>            IL Consultants: Natasha Klassen, Yonas Bekele, Oliver Gutierrez, Shelly Walker  <b>Disability Awareness Resource Training (DART)</b>            IL Consultants: Patrick Stewart, Mandi Panetta</p>
---	---