

August 2024

FSC NATIONAL NEWS

Newsletter for members of Family Service Canada



Message from the Board

Hello all!

I hope people are still feeling the warm feelings from many summer memories! The Fall is always such a busy time, and if your organization runs on an April to March fiscal year, September 30 marks halfway through the year! That is a sobering thought that catches me every year. Perhaps this is why many networks and organizations hold conferences in the Fall - to bring the community together for sharing and support in many ways.

On that note, I hope many of you have already registered or are planning to register for the upcoming Community of Learning conference in Toronto, Oct 27 – 29. The planning committee has been working steadily to create an informative and fun couple of days.

This year, plus a wonderful speaker and some great sessions, we will have some of our member agencies present on services and activities they are undertaking. I am looking forward to learning even more about the great work Family Service of Canada agencies are doing nationwide.

I also would like to gently remind those who still need to complete their FSC membership renewal. If you are having any issues, please contact me or Simone Plusa splusa@fsgv.ca; we would be happy to help with any questions you may have.

I hope you enjoy the stories below, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the end of October in Toronto!

Cheers,
Maria

FSC Board Chair

Paul Born joins us at our Annual Conference

Our understanding of leadership is changing. Traditional, hierarchical views of leadership are less and less useful, given the complexities of our modern world. Leadership theory and practice have transitioned to new perspectives that account for the complex adaptive needs of organizations and the communities we serve. Today, many have come to understand that leadership is a dynamic that transcends the capabilities of individuals alone; it is the product of interaction, tension, and exchange. Leadership, therefore, can be defined as an event created by the interactions of the actors involved in producing it.

Collaborative leadership thinking has evolved in similar ways. Leaders often focus on creating conditions for collective creativity and collaborative action rather than relying on control-based leadership.

Positional leadership, such as Executive Director or President, focuses less on traditional leader/follower strategies with centralized power and more on appreciating organizational or community interdependencies and creating an environment where the workforce is engaged, competent, and empowered to solve problems innovatively.

When we gather in October, we will explore the complex nature of the work we do in our communities and organizations. After defining complexity leadership, we will engage in a series of exercises to help you review your leadership styles and identify the challenges and opportunities facing leaders today. We will then consider ways to apply complexity leadership theory to the everyday actions required to grow an organization.



By applying complexity leadership, you will have the opportunity to strengthen how your team plans together and shares responsibility, making your work easier and more effective. Complexity leadership also asks us to consider how to get as close to the issues we are addressing as possible. When we authentically engage with our communities and deliberately listen to our community's needs, we can better identify the underlying or root causes of the challenges people face.

Our facilitator will be Paul Born each morning of the conference. He is a global leader and award-winning author on issues of leadership, community engagement, and change. Paul is the Co-founder of Tamarack Institute and, for 20 years, was the CEO/Co-CEO. He is the founder and was director of Vibrant Communities, a national network of nearly 500 cities and communities ending poverty, deepening community, building youth futures, and advancing climate transitions. Prior to that, Paul founded and served as the CEO of Community Opportunities Development Association (CODA). CODA was awarded the distinguished United Nations Best Practices (Top 40) global award for their community economic development work in the Waterloo Region of Canada. Paul's newest venture is founding BE Community Ltd., a consulting company whose mission is to support communities to discover and realize breakthrough community change.

Paul is the author of five books, including two Canadian best sellers (Deepening Community and Community Conversations). His latest book, Breakthrough Community Change, is a practical guide to whole community change and was released in April 2023.

Paul holds an M.A. in Leadership and, in 2020, was selected as the Arts Alumni Achievement Award recipient at the University of Waterloo, Canada's top innovation university. He is a global faculty member of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD) and a senior fellow of Ashoka, the world's largest network of social innovators. Paul was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2019.

View his Full Profile on [LinkedIn](#) or visit www.paulborn.ca

Complexity Leadership at the COL

Written by: Sandra Rupnarain – Family Services of Peel

We in Ontario are delighted to be the host of the Annual Family Services Canada Community of Learning in Toronto from October 27 to 29, 2024. We are even more excited to have Paul Born as our main speaker for the event, who will lead us through two days of exploration around Complexity Leadership. Why Complexity Leadership?

Complexity Leadership supports Transformative Change for Leaders and Organizations because it is a paradigm rooted in the principles of complexity science and offers a practical and relevant perspective for today's leaders. It acknowledges the unpredictable and interconnected nature of modern environments, and by embracing this approach, leaders can expect significant improvements in their leadership style, team dynamics, and overall organizational health.

It is transformative and supports change, and leaders who adopt complex leadership can anticipate a substantial shift in their approach. They will move from a traditional, linear, command-and-control style to more adaptive, flexible strategies. This transformation sees organizations as complex adaptive systems with emergent outcomes rather than predetermined ones. Leaders focus on fostering environments where innovation and creativity can flourish organically, enabling teams to navigate uncertainty and co-create solutions.

The Value in Addressing Complex Issues—The most significant value that complexity leadership brings to a leader's toolkit is its effectiveness in addressing complex issues. Traditional leadership styles often rely on standardized solutions that may not be suitable for the unique situational challenges. Complexity leadership promotes continuous learning and adaptation. Leaders become skilled at sensing patterns, experimenting with different strategies, and learning from outcomes.

Simplicity in Integration: Enhancing Leadership, Team Growth, and Organizational Health - The core principles of Complexity Leadership —such as fostering collaboration, promoting open communication, and encouraging decentralized decision-making—are already recognized as best practices in many leadership frameworks. These principles support the creation of a culture of trust and empowerment where team members feel valued and more willing to engage. It fosters team growth by leveraging the collective intelligence of diverse groups. As team members engage in collaborative problem-solving, they see each other's strengths and perspectives, which enhances team cohesion and drives individual and collective growth.

Moreover, it positively impacts organizational health. Organizations become more resilient to external shocks and disruptions by cultivating an adaptive and responsive culture. Employees experience greater job satisfaction and engagement as they feel more connected to the organization's mission and values. This leads to higher retention rates and a more vibrant organizational climate. It represents a transformative shift that equips leaders to navigate the unpredictable landscape of modern organizations, address intricate issues more effectively, foster team growth, and enhance overall organizational health.

The simplicity of integrating this approach into existing practices makes it an invaluable addition to any leader's toolkit. Join us in Toronto as we learn together as leaders and position ourselves to guide our organizations toward sustained success and innovation.

CEO Spotlight: Heather Hale

Heather (she/her) has experience in community health, international and cooperative development, and project management, holding various leadership roles. She joined Navera Community Connections in June 2024. She earned a Master of Arts in Community Development from the University of Victoria and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Saskatchewan. Her focus is on community building, equity-based advocacy, and collaborative teamwork. Heather works with local, provincial, and national partners to address community needs through thoughtful programs and evaluations. She is committed to making a positive impact through effective leadership and collaboration.



We want to know what is happening in your agency. Let us know about your successes, new initiatives, important changes in staffing, anniversaries, etc. We will include them in future issues of our newsletter.

