



Beyond Speaking Up: How Family Councils Turn Individual Voices into Collective Change

Handout from Aug 26th, 2026 Zoom Presentation
With Karen Tyrell & Lisa Dawson

What is a Resident and/or Family Council

A Resident and/or Family Council is a group of persons who either live in a long-term care (Residents), or are their families/friends or representatives, who meet regularly to maintain and enhance the quality of life of residents in long-term care (LTC).

Councils have a legislated voice to be supported by all LTC homes. They exist to engage the resident and family community in decision making that affects Resident quality of life.

One of the main goals of councils is to improve the experiences of residents, by providing their insights and advice, representing their collective interests.

Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC (ILTCCABC)

“Provincial Association of Family Councils” representing the important collective voice of residents, their families, and residents’ representatives.

Subscribe to newsletter or become a volunteer.

Learn more: <https://iltccabc.ca/>

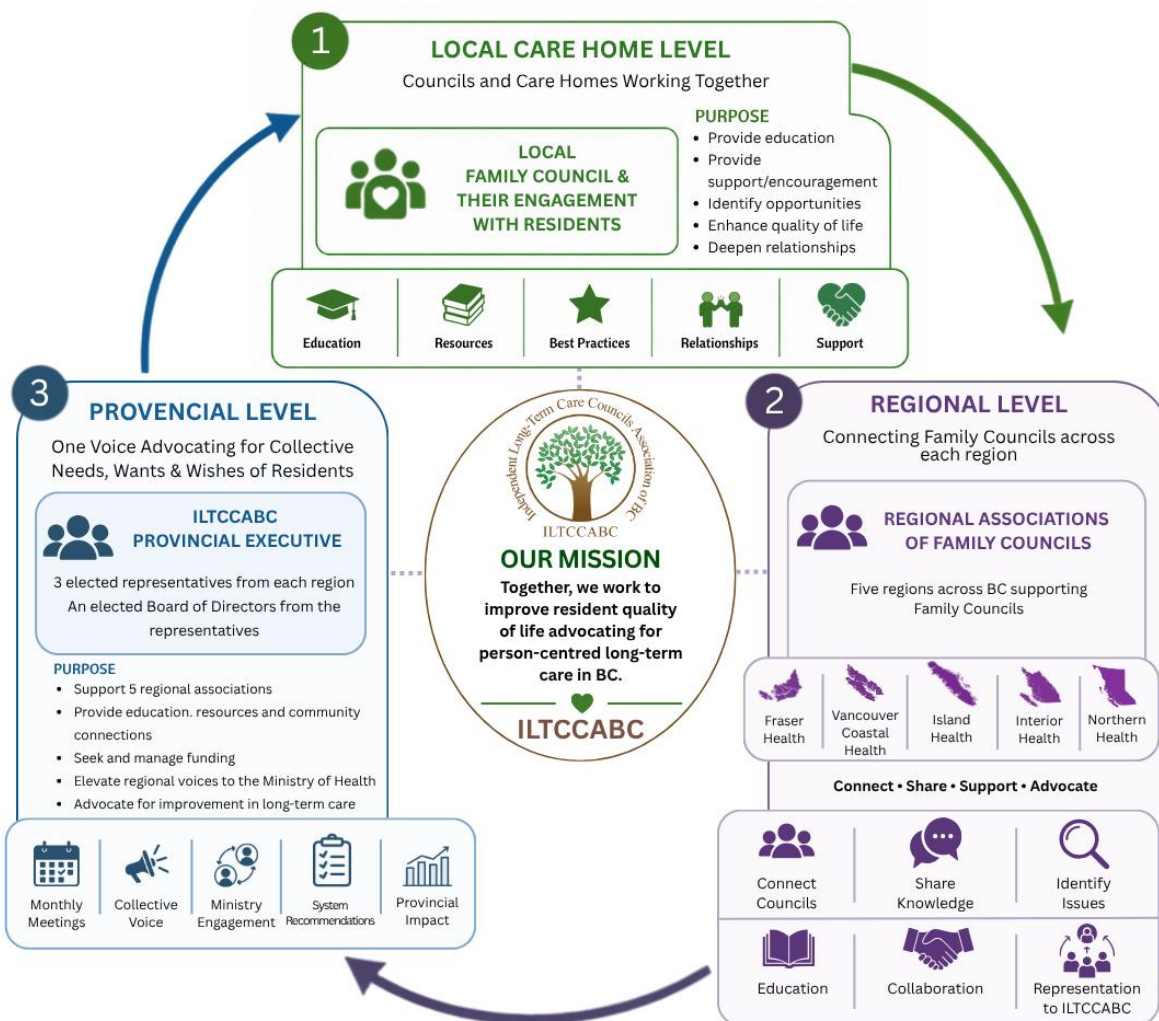
Education portal: <https://portal.iltccabc.ca/>

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ILTCCABC

The Collective Voice of Residents & Families in Long-Term Care

A registered non-profit powered by volunteers with lived experience in long-term care



CHAMPION
Independent Family Councils



SUPPORT
Member Regional Associations

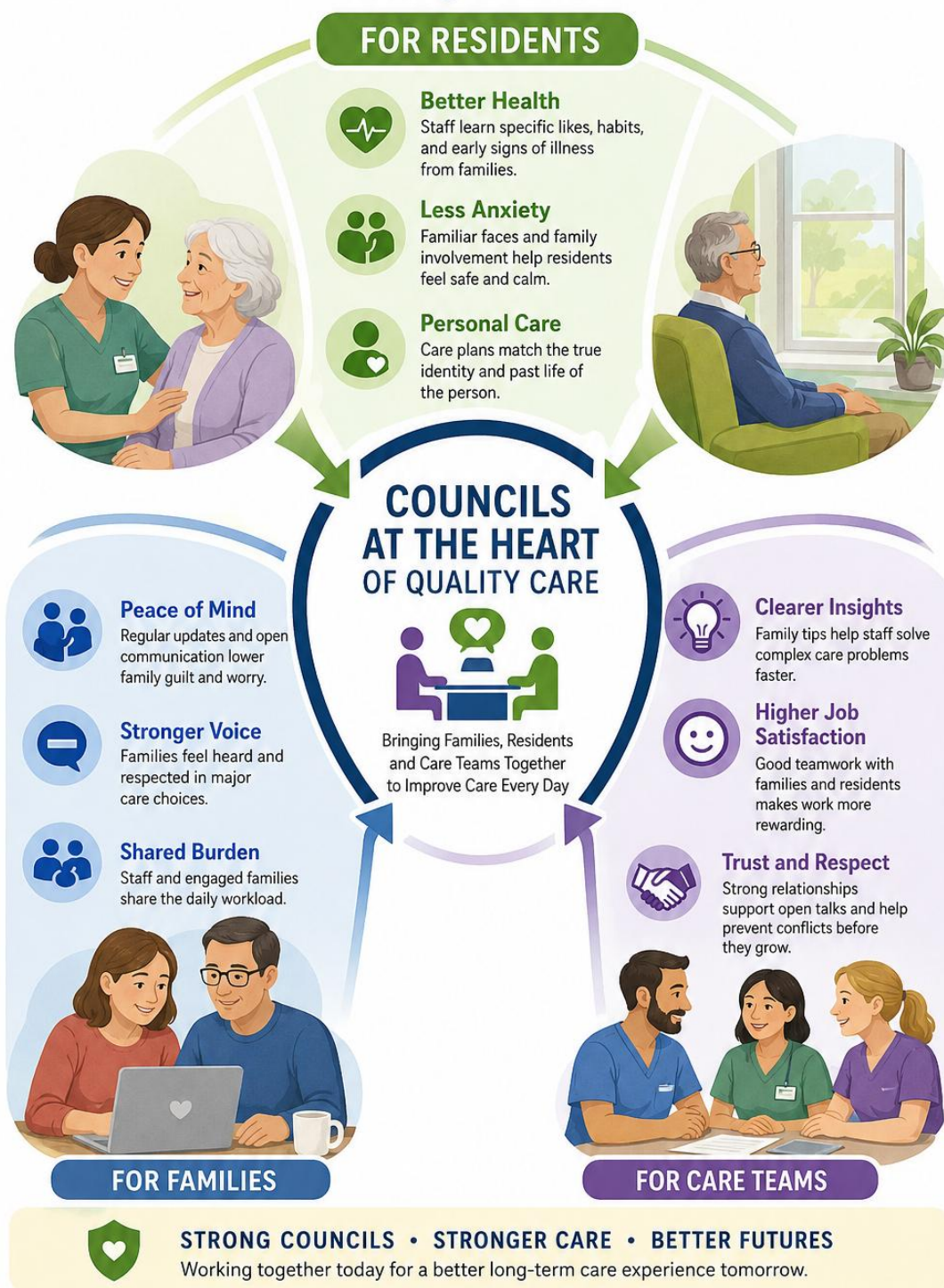


ELEVATE
The Resident, Family & long-term care Voice

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 <https://www.facebook.com/ILTCCABC> |
 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/iltccabc>

COUNCILS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

*Advocating for Continuous Quality Improvement
in Long-Term Care*



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Why Families Often Hesitate to Advocate

1. Retribution / retaliation
2. Too busy and exhausted
3. Lack of knowledge
4. Clinical culture of care
5. Individual advocacy gets lost

Practical Solutions: Turning individual concerns into positive, lasting improvements through Family Council

- ✓ **Connect**
 - [The Family and/or Resident Council Effectiveness Tool](#)
 - [The 12 Days of Tips for Family Councils Long-Term Care](#)
 - [Key Factors of Effectiveness of Councils in Long-Term Care](#)
- ✓ **Build Relationships**
 - To become more educated on the chronic and complex issues facing your relative
 - To develop greater empathy towards your care team (this builds trust)
 - [Building a Positive Council-Operator Relationship in Long-Term Care](#)
- ✓ **Communication:** The way you say it counts.
 - *Can you help us understand this care decision?*
 - *How can we work together to support the residents?*
- ✓ **Define and promote Family Council advocacy**

“A Family Council transforms “my problem” into “our opportunity.”

 - Understand that resident and family engagement is legislated – new to many care homes whose culture is still institutional and transactional and not yet relational.
 - [Use Gentle Advocacy](#)
 - When concerns are raised collectively, they are less likely to be viewed as personal complaints and more likely to be recognized as opportunities for quality improvement. Issues that may appear isolated often reveal themselves to be systemic when multiple families share similar experiences.
- ✓ **Self Care**
 - You are done if you don't take care of number one!
 - [Family Caregivers of BC - Self Care](#)
 - [Your guide to Navigating Long-Term Care](#)
- ✓ **Seek Collaboration Opportunities**

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- Learn staff names and thank them when they do a good job.
 - Recognize what is working to build on or train all staff towards desired outcomes
 - **Keep Good Records:** Write down dates, times, and details of every issue or talk. Photos are good.
 - **Focus on Facts:** Talk about specific events instead of showing anger.
 - **Use Formal Meetings** rather than tapping someone's shoulder in the middle of the hallway: ask for care plan meetings to share concerns in a calm setting.
 - **Become educated** about the complexities your loved one faces
 - **Turn frustration into questions** in order to remove blame and complaint.
- Approach your issues with curiosity like a detective would and listen to why things are the way they are with a lens to improve it. (Appreciative Inquiry)

Resources:

1. [Building a Relational Approach](https://iltccabc.ca/news/deborah-baktis-podcast-on-the-relational-approach-in-long-term-care-building-trust-through-family-councils-a-relational-conversation-with-lisa-dawson/) <https://iltccabc.ca/news/deborah-baktis-podcast-on-the-relational-approach-in-long-term-care-building-trust-through-family-councils-a-relational-conversation-with-lisa-dawson/>
2. [Person-Centered Care Must Be More Than a Philosophy - Dignified Senior Care](https://iltccabc.ca/news/bc-care-providers-association-bccpa-49th-annual-conference/) <https://iltccabc.ca/news/bc-care-providers-association-bccpa-49th-annual-conference/>
3. [Building a Positive Council-Operator Relationship in LTC](https://portal.iltccabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/25-ILTCCABC-Education-Session_-Building-a-Positive-Council-Operator-Relationship-in-Long-Term-Care.pdf) https://portal.iltccabc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/25-ILTCCABC-Education-Session_-Building-a-Positive-Council-Operator-Relationship-in-Long-Term-Care.pdf
4. [Leveraging Family Councils](https://iltccabc.ca/news/iltccabc-joins-care-collaborative-session-3/) <https://iltccabc.ca/news/iltccabc-joins-care-collaborative-session-3/>
5. [The Family and/or Resident Council Effectiveness Tool](#)

How Dementia Solutions Can Help:

- 🌸 Private Consultations & Dementia Support (Free 20-minute Initial Phone Consult)
- 🌸 Group Support (Free Zoom sessions on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7pm)
- 🌸 New! Our Family Support Membership of ongoing *Knowledge/Guidance/Resources*
- 🌸 Dementia Education to Community & Staff (Online or in-person)
- 🌸 Talks for community groups/events/conferences

Visit our website to learn more: www.DementiaSolutions.ca