



## Welcome!

Welcome to a special edition of the Nidus Newsletter.

On February 28th, 2000, the British Columbian legislature took a giant leap forward with the proclamation of the *Representation Agreement Act*, which established a new way of viewing and supporting capacity in law.

Proclamation of this innovative legislation took courage, faith and more than a nudge from citizens and community groups.

Join us in celebrating ten years of Representation Agreements in action!

### **Representation Agreements: The Next Decade**

The history of the *Representation Agreement Act* can be traced through its milestone decades - ten

### **BC's Legislation: Ten Years Ahead of its Time!**

On March 11th, 2010, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention is the first international treaty that affirms the rights of people with disabilities.

Article 12 of the Convention states that people with disabilities should be recognized as full persons before the law, equal to all other citizens. It goes on to say that adults are entitled to support with decision making without the need to take away or restrict that adult's rights. Governments that ratify this treaty are responsible for implementing "supported decision making mechanisms that are

years to develop the legislation, the regulations and the policies and ten years of solid use to bring us to the point that we are at today. In 2010, I believe that we can tell the world that Representation Agreements are working in just the way we had hoped they would when they were conceived twenty years ago. Despite the many compromises that have been made along the way, the heart and soul of the Representation Agreement, trust in the power and safety of personal relationships, is still alive and being nurtured by the thousands of people who are using it.

British Columbia has led the way in understanding that supported decision making is the rule not the exception in life and over the last ten years we have proved that this once radical idea can be enshrined in law without fear that it will engender abuse or misuse. Over the next ten years we need to move the Representation Agreement model across the country and the world in order to enable the UN declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and legal access to financial instruments like the new Registered Disability Savings Plan. Let's celebrate this tenth anniversary by putting aside any doubts or fears about legal supported decision making, rejoicing in the good sense of the *Representation Agreement Act* and promoting its adoption around the world.

Christine Gordon  
Nidus Board of Directors

recognized in legislation."

This Convention and Canada's ratification represents a significant step forward for all adults who are vulnerable to adult guardianship and loss of rights when they need assistance with decision making. This applies not only to adults with intellectual disabilities but also to those with dementia, brain injuries or other disabilities that may affect a person's ability to manage his or her own affairs.

As other Canadian provinces and countries consider how to implement the UN Convention, the government and citizens of British Columbia are celebrating ten years of Representation Agreements in action. The *Representation Agreement Act* of BC is an effective legal model for supported decision making that embodies the principles of the right to full personhood, self-determination and support as needed.

Representation Agreements were the idea and effort of citizens and community groups who began the reform of adult guardianship in BC over twenty years ago. The Nidus

**A Message from  
the Honourable Michael de Jong, Q.C.  
Attorney General**

Greetings to Nidus as you commemorate the 10th anniversary of the implementation of the *Representation Agreement Act*.



I commend your organization for acknowledging the value of Representation Agreements and for the leadership you have demonstrated in assisting British Columbians with personal planning in communities across the province.

Congratulations and I wish you continued success in your endeavours.

Yours truly,  
Honourable Michael de Jong, Q.C.  
Attorney General and Government House Leader

**Representation Agreements in Action!**

Who is making Representation Agreements with standard powers? Who are people naming as their representatives? Do people name alternates? When are they appointing a monitor?

Find the answers to these questions in a new Nidus fact sheet, which presents the findings from an

Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry was established to provide education and assistance with Representation Agreements and to be a clearinghouse for the public's experiences with making and using this new legal tool. This means that other governments who sign the UN Convention can draw on Nidus' expertise and years of research and hands-on experience.

Nidus would like to congratulate the Canadian Association for Community Living for their leadership in the development of the Convention and Canada's ratification of this treaty.

To watch a short video that explains Representation Agreements as a legal tool for supported decision making click [HERE](#).

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analysis of nearly 1,000 Representation Agreements.

The study includes Representation Agreements made by adults who need help managing their affairs today, as well as those who are planning for possible incapacity tomorrow.

The results of the analysis revealed that there was no uniform set up for a Representation Agreement and that each Agreement varied from one situation to the next. The range in the number of people appointed, the different roles assigned and the various relationships involved showed that Representation Agreements are unique and flexible tools able to meet a range of individual needs and circumstances.

Take a closer look at Representation Agreements in action [HERE](#).

### **Representation Agreement Success Stories**

Have you ever wondered why people might make a Representation Agreement with standard powers? Ever wonder where these types of Agreements can be used or how effective they can be?

Nidus is excited to bring you two personal stories of Representation Agreements with standard powers in action!

The first story shares the experience of Mary, a senior, who made a Representation Agreement with her daughter's help when she could not make a new Power of Attorney. You can read Mary's story [HERE](#).

### **A special thank you...**

Nidus would like to send a special thanks to Community Living British Columbia for their support of Representation Agreements and the Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry.



### **Gold Star Awards**

Enacted ten years ago, the *Representation Agreement Act* was the result of a grassroots, community driven effort by self-advocates, family members, seniors, consumers of mental health services, people with disabilities, personal and professional supporters and groups from all sectors.

The second story features Heather, a representative, who shares her experience of making an end-of-life decision for a friend. You can read Heather's story [HERE](#).

Do you have a story about a Representation Agreement in action that you would like to share? Would you like to be interviewed? Please let us know at [info@nidus.ca](mailto:info@nidus.ca)

### **Representation Agreements and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

Nidus recently completed a project that explored how adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and their personal supporters might use Representation Agreements as a tool for supported decision making.

One of the results of this project was a research paper, which presents findings from interviews with personal supporters who assisted adults with FASD to make and use Representation Agreements. This paper reveals that Representation Agreements played a critical role in ensuring the adults involved had support from people they trust to assist them and advocate for them with respect to decisions affecting their lives.

Nidus would like to thank the Victoria Foundation, for funding this project, and Dr. Deborah Rutman, who conducted the research and evaluation component of this project.

Read about more Representation Agreements in action [HERE](#).

Nidus presents this month's Gold Star Award to all those who have helped develop and champion Representation Agreements over the last two decades.

In particular, we thank our founding organizations:

Alzheimer Society of BC  
BC Association for Community Living  
BC Coalition of People with Disabilities  
Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC  
Family Link  
Network of Burnaby Seniors

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### **Words of Praise from the Community**

The Alzheimer Society of BC (ASBC) congratulates the community and government partnership that produced the *Representation Agreement Act*. The ASBC sees Representation Agreements as an important legal tool for individuals and families faced with a diagnosis of dementia. Representation Agreements are going to be more important than ever as BC and

**Thank you to our current project funders:**



vancouver  
foundation



Canada face a [rising tide](#) in the incidence and impact of dementia over the next three decades.



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### **Announcements:**

#### **Nidus Display**

Burnaby Family Caregivers  
Information Fair  
Saturday, April 10  
10:00am to 2:00pm  
Bonsor Community Centre  
6550 Bonsor, Burnaby

#### **411 Seniors Centre Income Tax Clinic**

Monday to Friday  
March 1 to April 30  
8:30am to 1:30pm  
411 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver  
Please call 604-684-8171 for more  
information.

#### **BCCPD Free Income Tax Clinic**

Friday, March 19  
Friday, March 26  
9:00am to 4:00pm  
#204-456 West Broadway,  
Vancouver  
Please call 604-872-1278 for an  
appointment.

**BCCPD hosts a Chronic  
Pain Self Management  
Program**

Six Thursdays

April 8 to May 13

1:00pm to 3:30pm

#204-456 West Broadway,

Vancouver

Please call 604-940-1273 to  
register.

Our mailing address is:  
Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry  
411 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 1X4

[info@nidus.ca](mailto:info@nidus.ca)

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Tel: 604-408-7414

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Nidus is a Latin term for nest: a symbol of support, safety and self-development.

Nidus is a non-profit charitable organization. We do not give legal advice.

Nidus promotes alternatives to adult guardianship by helping British Columbians to learn about legal planning tools.

Nidus also operates a centralized Registry for personal planning documents..

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