

KY DD Network Joint Meeting Small-Group Minutes
KY Council on Developmental Disabilities
KY Division of Protection and Advocacy
Interdisciplinary Human Development Institute
August 18, 2005
Embassy Suites, Lexington, KY

The following represents the small group planning of our five work groups: Education, Quality Assurance, Employment, Transportation, and Health.

Education Group

What is the challenge?

Professionals do not receive enough real-world pre-service and in-service training on how to do working, practical problem solving when educating children with disabilities and preparing them for the journey to adult life. Also, there is a lack of accountability for tenured teachers who do not want to work with children who have disabilities.

Who is affected?

Teachers, parent educators, assistants, principals, directors of special education, therapists, and providers of other related services (such as bus drivers and aides).

Examples?

1. Therapists are trained to work only with adults, many lack the skills to work with children. In addition, therapists can say they are specialists in an area without undergoing training in the specialty or certification.
2. Teachers have very limited hands on experience. Their KTIP training may be with a teacher who did not major in special education. Many teachers resent having to work with children with disabilities and feel it is not their job since they are not special education teachers. Much of the training they receive is not capacity building. They do not know how to handle the daily problems and challenges.
3. Administrators set the tone for the school. Only administrators can rectify the problem of a lack of daily accountability for tenured teachers who choose not to follow IEPs or who exclude children with disabilities from the regular life of the classroom. Yet there is no disability-specific training that is required of them to learn practical problem solving skills to help teachers, therapists and students with disabilities deal with daily issues. (For example, SPLASH is voluntary.)

How can this challenge be addressed?

Professionals need more intense real-world training (something comparable to internships for physicians). IHDI, P&A and the DD Council could develop accessible resources (like the IHDI MD training DVD) to increase every school professionals' ability to deliver services on a day to day basis. A disability specific training DVD would increase professionals' working practical knowledge and problem solving skills. Once the DVD was completed, the three agencies could use it to

1. Work with schools in the pre-service arena
2. Develop training for professionals in field already
3. Work with all professional standards boards to help effect policies that would make training mandatory, specific to inclusion, problem solving, and accountability
4. Collaborate with educators, advocacy groups, Pritchard, SPIN, SBDM, OEA to get the materials out to professionals

*The education group felt hampered by the enormity of trying to address identified early intervention, primary-secondary, and post-secondary education issues. The group thought that targeting pre-service and in-service training would address needs across the age span.

Quality Assurance (QA) Workgroup

The group discussed some areas of QA that they felt were important. The group felt the most important aspect of Quality Assurance was self-determination. It was noted that in order to be successful in any area of emphasis – a person must first be self-determined! The group then discussed what age was appropriate to begin self-determination awareness. With a great deal of input from the consumers in the group – it was decided that 11 years old was the most appropriate age. From there the group came up with the idea of a mentorship program. The following were discussed:

What - Self-Determination Mentorship Project

Change Created – Increased self-esteem; independence; self-care; make own decisions; speak-up; improved transition process; higher expectations for people with disabilities.

Who would benefit – the individual (children 11 – 17 yrs old); mentors, family members, friends, people hearing the message; professionals; service providers; co-workers; peers.

How – P&A – training; DD Council – funding and hotline; HDI – curriculum design and follow up survey.

Employment Group

The Employment Group developed the following proposed project: the DD Council, P and A, and the HDI would collaborate with Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) to develop "certificate" programs that complement existing degrees that are offered. Examples would be developing a "Welders Helper" certificate as opposed to a full "Welder" program/certificate; "Auto Mechanic Assistant" as opposed to an "Auto Mechanic".

As it stands now, most programs offered through KCTCS are beyond the reach of persons with more significant disabilities. The kinds of programs the Employment Group envisioned would do a several things: 1) help persons with more significant disabilities gain "certification" in a particular area which would show employers that they are qualified for whichever occupation; 2) lead to higher wages and more of a career vs. job focus for persons with disabilities; 3) provide persons with disabilities more access to post-secondary education.

Transportation Group

Firstly, our group identified three different critical issues that must be addressed if the transportation delivery system is to be improved.

1. Securing all available Money.
2. Addressing discrepancies between consumers and providers in urban areas. E.g.:
 - a. Quality/availability of timely services
 - b. Expansion of Service
 - c. Provisions for a more flexible system
3. Addressing the challenge of transportation in rural areas with varying factors, resources and needs.

In short, it was determined that Transportation solutions are not generalizable to the entire Commonwealth. Efforts must be made to address the needs of people with disabilities in rural and urban areas differently, as most rural areas have no services while urban areas struggle with service delivery. It is also difficult to accomplish anything within transportation as it is not viewed by society as a “right” like health or education. When consumers express their desire for a more flexible and timely delivery system, they may be viewed as asking for too much. We have seen this in the reaction of legislators not finding it necessary to address transportation, as it is not seen as “critical” compared to other issues and with providers who, for example, refuse to provide services on Sundays because “Churches should support people with disabilities on Sunday”. Because transportation is critical to people with disabilities as we have seen time and time again in various surveys, the group felt it of grave importance. Inclusion, self-determination, health care, employment, recreation and virtually every aspect of life are impacted by the availability of transportation services.

The group decided on a three pronged approach - all cultivated through a conference that would include providers, consumers, legislators, the Department of Transportation and all other relevant **bodies**.

Area #1 “Securing all available money”

Monetary resources are often cited as a major barrier to transportation, yet there are various grants available to states.

Council:

1. Advocate within the legislative and executive branches of government to demand that all available grants for the creation of transportation options or improvement be applied for by the appropriate government entity.

UCEDD:

1. Research available grants and the appropriate bidders for the grants. Provide up to date information to legislators on opportunities.

P&A:

2. Provide information on the impact that a lack of transportation services has on individual rights and integration, barriers to normal life activities etc. (Perhaps working with the UCEDD).

Area #2 “Addressing discrepancies between consumers and providers in urban areas”

Everyone seems to be blaming everyone else!!!

Council:

1. Become the bridge between providers and consumers. Provide a forum through collaborative meetings, brainstorming sessions and diplomatic efforts to identify the needs of both parties.

UCEDD:

1. Provide examples of promising practices to alleviate the disconnect in urban areas between providers and consumers. Research solutions to problems identified that can be accomplished with the resources currently available.

P&A:

1. Again provide real world scenarios of the impacts of transportation services to people with disabilities. Act as advocates for people with disabilities throughout the process.

Area #3 “Address the challenge of transportation in rural areas with varying factors, resources and needs”.

Starting with nothing you have nowhere to go but up.

Council:

1. Provide a model similar to the “Community Impact Model” and mini-grants to communities in rural areas to address their specific needs.

UCEDD:

1. Provide staff to assist communities to find resources, train citizens to help other communities, and oversee the efforts of community advocates.

P&A:

1. Provide data and identify possible people within communities with the most urgent needs to find solutions to transportation challenges.

Health Group

The health group decided, after reviewing the results of the needs survey that the area of emphasis should be the rising cost of prescription drugs and the need for legislation that would place a cap on prescription prices and a flat rate for various incomes. Also education was discussed, that there is a need to educate the medical professions and all others involved in finding financial assistance for other avenues to help pay for the high cost of prescription drugs.

As a group, we felt that everyone would benefit from this project, not just those with disabilities.

With IHDI completing research and P&A lending their expertise in advocacy, the KCDD's public policy group would work on a bill to make the needed changes.

Evaluation of the Day:

What the group really liked about the joint meeting were getting to vote and using the dots, lunch, making new friends and having fun.

Something's that the group would like to see changed were the voting process. They felt that it was too confusing.