Training Events

Train the Trainer to Train Staff in Therapeutic Intervention:
April 5, 2006: 9:00am-4:00pm
with follow-up on May 3, 2006: 9:00am-Noon
in Bismarck @ the Comfort Inn
Featured Speakers: Al Condeluci, Margaret Gould, VJ Smith, Thomas Flamboe, Tammara Geary.
To register please contact Mary Mercer or Cheryl Rystedt at 1-800-233-1737.

The Collaborator
North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State University
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North Dakota Association of Community Facilities Conference:
Realizing Dreams through Individualized Supports
May 3-5: at the Doublewood Inn in Bismarck
See website for more information or to register:

Building Community by Sharing Responsibility
By Cathy Haarstad, Consumer Liaison, NDCPD

North Dakota is a frontier state. When ND families are concerned about health problems, disability, addictions or stress, they often rely on family connections to achieve a solution. That is our unique tradition and for the most part it works well. But sometimes leaning on extended family and friends is not enough.

ND state and local tax dollars fund multiple supports for diverse families at the regional level. Community needs for specialized services such as therapy, respite care, foster care, in-home support or case management may always be greater than the available resources. Finding the dollars to support children and family services, education and adult services has been a legislative challenge.

ND families who have children with special needs are told that they should raise their children in the family home as best they can. They are also told that they must work if at all possible and should provide their children with opportunities to help them become productive citizens of good character. Further, they are told that they should not rely solely on the government to help with this challenging job. Funding for appropriate child care, respite care, behavior intervention and technology is likely to remain limited. What are families to do?

The North Dakota Family Connections Conference is one forum for addressing this emerging challenge from the family perspective. The conference was created to empower families and professionals to collaborate in supporting families who have children with disabilities and chronic mental or physical healthcare needs. This year the conference will be held June 13-16 at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The theme is: Building Communities by Sharing Responsibilities. The intent is to strengthen the ability of ND families to create caring communities that welcome and support diverse children and families through a focus on leadership development, best-practice information and opportunities for networking and collaboration. Families and professionals who attend the conference will have a unique opportunity to meet with state policy makers, professionals and families and bring up topics that are most important to them.

At the Open Space forum, families will be able to pose thought-provoking questions for a group to discuss, seek help in brainstorming a dilemma, share an approach that has been successful in improving services or connect with partners and tackle a specific issue relevant to supporting their family and children. Participants can move from sharing information and resources to crafting action steps that will lead to the results they envision.

Families and professionals will be able to attend workshops on best-practice approaches to building community by learning about conflict resolution in families when children have special needs, taking a look at models such as self-directed supports or summer recreational programs for youth with special needs, learning how to
Bob Rutten, State Director of Special Education. Bob is a warm, caring and effective leader who is committed to family involvement in education and working to address Special Education challenges in rural communities. Bob will be addressing family involvement in the state improvement plan and changes in Special Education law and practice.

Kathleen Osta of Vita Clarity. Kathleen specializes in designing and facilitating highly participatory planning processes that help organizations strengthen their ability to function productively, in teams or work groups, and make the most of their changes. Her work encompasses the application of and training in consensus-driven facilitation methods, managing change and leadership models. She will facilitate the Open Space forum.

Patti Hackett, the National Director of the Healthy and Ready to Work Project. Patti will provide information on how to identify and describe health care funding and community resources available to children, youth and young adults and discuss strategies for preparing children, youth and their families for successful health care transition.

Pat Rydell, Ed.D., Owner and Director of Rocky Mountain Autism Center. Pat is a national expert on the SCERTS model which addresses the Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Supports for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and related social-communicative disabilities.

Phillip Schweigert, Co-Director of Design to Learn. Phillip specializes in developing effective assessment and teaching strategies for children and adults with low-incidence disabilities. His approaches and materials are very practical in nature and are supported by 18 years of research in real life settings. He and his partner have conducted extensive research and demonstration projects on the development of communication and cognitive skills in individuals with severe disabilities.

Friendship, Inc. was selected as one of five providers across the nation to receive technical assistance (TA) grants to enhance community employment, focus upon customized employment and commitment to the eventual elimination of congregate employment settings and use of sub-minimum wages. The grants are through the Institute for Community Inclusion, Virginia Commonwealth University and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. In addition to TA, the grant assigns two mentor agencies with skills and experiences relating to rural employment and organizational transition to community-based employment services. The mentor agencies will make multiple site visits to our services in both Fargo and Grand Forks, ND.

Some interesting revelations have occurred through the TA we received. Friendship serves about 110 people in vocational day support services in Fargo and Grand Forks, yet few staff are actually dedicated exclusively to placement or job development activities. These responsibilities have always been additional duties for the day support director and managers. We identified that our commitment to community-based employment was not in alignment with our staffing patterns. We revised our organizational structure and hired day support job developers in both communities. We also flattened the day supports managerial structure to create more direct service employees that can job coach at community employment sites.

Several barriers have arisen, some new and some shared by all ND vocational day support providers. Traditional staffing ratios for day support services are insufficient for individualized community placements. Even with a good job match, effective training, and creative use of natural supports, considerable up front training is still necessary for many people with significant disabilities to succeed in community employment. Community day support providers across ND need enhanced access to state waivered dollars and VR dollars to assist in up front training costs for people with the most significant disabilities.

Other barriers for many people with significant disabilities also relate to funding. Access to long-term dollars for extended supports is only available for the most able employees, currently served through traditional supported employment. Service providers are extremely challenged to facilitate individualized, community-based employment for people receiving day supports funding. This funding does have great flexibility to support people in community activity. Concurrent programming, defined as utilizing day support and supported employment services concurrently, is a partial answer. However, the barriers lie in the inability to access true concurrent services and meeting the definition of “health & safety” as defined in day supports policy. When people cannot access 40 hours of concurrent services they are automatically sidelined to more traditional congregate employment approaches. These are only a few of the barriers when striving to ensure that all people have access to community employment. We have seen amazing success despite the funding barriers. Providers and the Department of Human Services need to work collaboratively to continue to break down barriers to community employment for people with significant disabilities.
State Employment System to be Evaluated
By Tom Alexander, NDCPD Project Director

The North Dakota Comprehensive Employment Systems (NDCES) grant will engage in a strategic planning process driven by consumers, disability service providers, and the business and economic development community. The project will evaluate and assess the state’s employment system and then implement recommendations to enhance the coordination of employment related services and supports.

The NDCES will follow and make adaptations as needed to the following process:

► Conduct Assessment – Throughout the planning process information will be gathered through a variety of assessments. The purpose will be to define strengths, developmental needs, external opportunities, and external threats.

► Conduct Environmental Scan – The process will include state agencies (employment and non employment related) and private employment agencies. The purpose of this scan is to gather pertinent information such as funding sources, population served, collaborations, strengths, opportunities and threats related to employment of people with disabilities. Input from existing workgroups will be obtained by engaging stakeholders in a dialogue about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the current system. The membership of these existing workgroups represents a variety of organizations and the full spectrum of stakeholders in the disability and employment system.

► Analyze Information – It is important to record and analyze information as it happens in order to solidify a foundation for strategic planning decisions. This analysis will show how ND disability and employment systems are doing and where improvements are needed.

► Develop a Mission and Vision – The NDCES project will work with the planning team and leadership council to develop a mission and vision that will guide the strategic planning process and overall work plan of the NDCES project in 2007-2011. The basis of this information will come from internal and external assessment.

► Define and Prioritize Goals & Objectives – The planning team, leadership council, and vendors will work together to identify strategic priorities over the 5-year CES timeline. These priorities, goals, and objectives will be the primary focus areas that will advance the process into a comprehensive working document.

► Identify Issues and Define Strategies – When the priorities, goals, and objectives have been identified, the NDCES project will work with the planning team, vendors, and leadership council to develop an outline to design the specifics of how the strategic plan will be successful. These entities will identify issues that will need to be addressed in order to meet the goals and objectives. The next step will be to define the strategies that will move North Dakota towards a comprehensive employment system for people with disabilities.

► Develop Operational Plan and Outcome Measurement Plan – After strategies have been identified and defined the NDCES project will work with the planning team to determine the best system to assemble the plan.

► Finalize Strategic Plan – The NDCES project will work with the planning team, vendors, and leadership council and collaborate to create a working strategic plan for 2007-2011. This document will show the results of the planning process, environmental scan/resources mapping, mission, vision, goals, objectives, strategies, resources, participants, process used, and background information.

NDCES will use a professional strategic planning consultant to hold both regional and statewide planning meetings, bringing economic development forces, policy-makers, business leaders and workforce development entities to the table with disability support providers and consumers. At the regional level, planners will conduct assessments of employment systems infrastructure and make recommendations. Regional meetings will also identify additional representatives to the Statewide Leadership Council and Statewide Strategic Planning Team to help plan statewide meetings. The process is designed to result in a unified state strategic plan, as well as local regional recommendations.

Ten Tips for Kids: Disability Etiquette

The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities is pleased to announce the availability of a new disability awareness CD entitled, “Ten Tips for Kids: Disability Etiquette.” This 10-minute video is a great resource to teach elementary aged students to communicate and interact positively with children who have disabilities. It teaches kids about people first language, as well as people first behavior. The CD may be purchased for $10.00; each CD also comes with a 12x18 poster. A 10% discount is available for purchases of 25 or more. Please send inquiries to: kari.arrayan@minotstateu.edu.

To place an order, contact Susan at 1-800-233-1737 or by email: susan.anderson@minotstateu.edu.
NDCPD Blood Drive a Success!

NDCPD sponsored a blood drive on the MSU campus in January. Twenty-seven volunteers made donations to United Blood Services. According to Bryce Fifield, Executive Director of NDCPD, "The Minot community supports NDCPD activities in many ways, including direct donations or participation in fundraising events which increases our endowment/access scholarship funds. The blood drive was a great way for NDCPD to give back to the community."

Did you know....5% of the population provides 100% of the blood needs? Approximately 60% of the US population is eligible to donate. Eighty percent of the population will need blood at some time during their lives. Consider making a donation today!

Winners of the WE CARE Drawings!

• Laurie Fifield was the February winner; she won food certificates from Taco Johns.
• The March winner was Kimberly Witt; she received a Teddy Bear from Trade Secret.

Thanks to all who contribute to this project by bringing in MarketPlace receipts. Also, special thanks to our sponsors for donating the prizes for the monthly drawings.

Please continue to drop off your receipts at NDCPD located on the campus of Minot State University in Room 203 of Memorial Hall or mail to: Rich Berg, NDCPD, Minot State University, 500 University Ave West, Minot, ND 58707.

Watch for more information about Spring and Summer Fundraising Activities, including a bowling tournament and a trebuchet event!

For additional copies of The Collaborator contact Kari Arrayan at 1-800-233-1737.

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Reach Out and Read

By Kathy Lee
Minot Infant Development Program (MIDP)

The Center for Family Medicine in Minot has partnered with NDCPD to bring the Reach Out and Read Program to the Center. Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a program that promotes early literacy by bringing new books and advice about the importance of reading aloud into the pediatric exam room. The program is a national, non-profit organization that promotes early literacy by making books a routine part of pediatric care.

The Reach Out and Read National Center works with over 2,500 clinics and hospitals, and with 28,000 primary care medical providers to make sure that young children are introduced to books and reading aloud at an early age. ROR programs are located in all 50 states as well as Puerto Rico and Guam. ROR is affiliated with the Department of Pediatrics, Boston Medical Center, Boston University School of Medicine. The program is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

All approved ROR programs have three important components: Doctors are trained to advise parents on the importance of reading aloud to young children – including age-appropriate strategies for enjoying books with infants and toddlers. This is the "anticipatory guidance" in the ROR model.

Children receive developmentally appropriate books from the doctor or nurse in the exam room at each well child visit between six months and five years of age, along with anticipatory guidance to their parents. Volunteers read aloud to children in waiting rooms, modeling behavior for parents whenever possible, supervised by a ROR coordinator.

The grant will provide funding for staff from the ROR National Center to come to Minot and provide training to physicians and nurses at the Center for Family Medicine. The grant will also provide funding for the books that will be given out at well child visits. NDCPD has agreed to assist in recruiting and training volunteers to read aloud to children while they wait to see their physicians.

The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities is a member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). AUCD is a national network of interdisciplinary centers advancing policy and practice through research, education and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families and communities.