

## **Regional Community, Agency, and School Alliance (RCASA) Minutes- November 20, 2019**

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Presentations:

**Kristin Miller, LMSW**  
**Orleans Niagara BOCES**  
**Mental Health Services Counselor**  
**4124 Saunders Settlement Road**  
**Sanborn, NY 14132**  
**716-731-6800 ext 3718**

Kristin presented today on Mental Health Awareness and how this applies to new mental health laws for school districts. Kristin also addressed how to meet mental health concerns for transitioning students.

Kristin discussed four key mental health literacy components which are important for everyone's well-being and success.

- Understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health.
- Decreasing stigma related to mental health
- Enhancing help-seeking efficacy
- Understanding mental disorders and treatments

Kristin also spoke about what happens in the classroom with anxiety and depression and what this looks like for students who are facing these issues.

She also gave suggestions of ways to manage your classroom environment. Along with addressing student behaviors, mental health needs and ideas for adding support for these students in the classroom. (See attached PowerPoint for additional information).

Kristin discussed how to support students/families facing mental health issues and going through the transition process. She mentioned that is helpful to bring in families who have gone through the transition process. Kristin also mentioned that it is important to establish a relationship with the families you are working with. Kristin spoke about resources available for students. There are parent coaches available through Parent Network. Several local agencies that can assist are New Directions, Gateway, Monsignor Carr, Mental Health Association of Niagara County, and Hillside.

(See attached PowerPoint for more information and links to services).

**Carla McKenna**  
**Niagara Vision PROS/**  
**Community Missions**  
**418 Third Street**  
**Niagara Falls, NY 14302**  
**716-205-8708**

Carla spoke about Niagara Vision PROS program which provides services for individuals with a mental health diagnosis, for age 18 or above. Services offered: community rehabilitation and intensive rehabilitation, ongoing rehabilitation, and clinical treatment with a psychiatrist and RN on staff. Transportation to this program is provided. They offer art therapy, spirituality, yoga, volunteer opportunities. PROS supports goals directed by the individual. This might include improving functioning, gaining employment, attaining higher levels of education, securing preferred housing and learning about wellness management. PROS focuses on increasing rates of integrated, competitive employment among participants.

There is no waiting list for this program. PROS is a Medicaid funded program.

**Shawna Dumphrey**  
**Community Missions**  
**Housing Intake Manager**  
**1570 Buffalo Avenue**  
**Niagara Falls, NY 14303**  
**716-285-3403 ext 2275**

Community Missions provides supportive, permanent, affordable, independent housing service for adults with emotional/mental illness.

The following are the main components of this service:

- Assistance in locating quality housing
- Subsidized rent
- Assurance that the housing is furnished and appropriately equipped
- Linkage and coordination with community based services
- Tenant advocacy/landlord relations
- Planned Transportation

Supportive housing is for adults 18 years of age or older with an SPMI diagnosis who desire stable housing and supports.

Applications can be obtained by calling at 716-285-5201, or by calling the Niagara County Department of Mental Health at 716-439-7410. This services can also be accessed through Niagara Count Adult Single Point of Access (SPOA).

Shawna spoke about supported housing for individuals with licensing program/ apartments with subsidized rent. A referral to this program would need to go through SPOA.

Shawna also spoke about De Paul, they offer two sites in Niagara County for housing. (Brochure is attached).

**Shana House, LMHC**  
**Senior ACT Co-Occuring Specialist**  
**Spectrum Health and Human Services**  
**800 Main Street**  
**Niagara Falls, NY**  
**716-278-9649**

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team is a service that provides rehabilitation and support services using a person-centered, recovery-based approach for ages 18 and above. They provide mental health treatment, health, vocational, family education, wellness skills, community linkages, and peer support are provided to individuals by a mobile multi-disciplinary team in community settings.

Shana also spoke about Family Specialist and Vocational services linkage to ACCES-VR and BOCES. There is a psychiatrist, nurse practitioner, and nurse on staff and will meet individuals in the community. Referral for ACT Team is through SPOA and the individual will need Medicaid to be eligible for this service.

**Updates:**

**ACCES-VR:** Sarah Wolf spoke about changes in financial need with participation in their driving program. Driver evaluation and training will only be provided in conjunction with another ACCES-VR service. Also, ACCES-VR will only fund driving school during the last year of secondary school.

Sarah spoke about a sixty day timeframe that is needed to determine eligibility for services, from the time they receive applications. ACCES-VR will need documents during this sixty day period. If they cannot determine eligibility by this time, the student's file will be closed.

Pre-Employment Transition Program continues and there is no financial income level to participate. For more information, call Sarah at 716-848-8054.

**Independent Living:** Kim Congi mentioned that Independent Living will assist transitioning students and can provide assistance with multiple services. Individuals just have to self-report a disability at Independent Living Centers.

They also provide peer support and addict to addict programs. For more information, please call 716-284-4131.

**Parent Network:** Tonia Weichmann spoke about Parent Network now covering early intervention and adulthood. New information sheets are available (see attachment). Tonia spoke about the Family Engagement Conference on December 5, 2020 at Michael's Catering in Hamburg.

**West Regional Partnership Center-** Liz Loughran-Amorese spoke about their grant change. There will be new parameters through the State Education department and they are currently in a holding pattern until they receive direction through State Ed. Julia Duerr mentioned they are planning another Mentoring Day at Niagara Falls Memorial in March 2020. The event will be a similar format to the event last year. Julia stated that Save the Date flyers would be out soon.

**Niagara's Work Source One-** Marilyn Patterson mentioned that her department was planning a Career Exploration Event at Niagara County Fairgrounds. This event will be open to all. Marilyn explained that this will be a similar event to the Career Exploration Event that was held at O/N BOCES Center last fall. This event will be interactive with employers and vocational training, so participants can get an idea of what a certain jobs and careers would be like. If interested in planning for this event, please contact Marilyn at 716-278-1695.

**Prime Care:** Libby Bentley gave information regarding the Eligibility process for OPWDD. Prime Care can assist with families with this process. Libby mentioned that Prime Care offers families services through a Student and Family Specialist to assist students and families to navigate through the special education process. For more information, call Libby at 585-491-5836.

**Next meeting: January 15, 2020**

Topic: Everyday Tech to Support Individuals with disabilities. UB Assistive Technology will be presenting on how to use our technology devices to better equip our students.

Also, Sara Taylor from NIOGA will be presenting on technology safety. Please feel free to bring your devices to work on.