

Regional Community, Agency, and School Alliance (RCASA) Minutes- May 14, 2021

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Presentations:

Stephanie McLean-Beathley, LMSW
OPWDD/ Transition Coordinator
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West Seneca, NY 14224
716-608-2732
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Stephanie discussed housing options offered through OPWDD and the process to obtain services. Stephanie mentioned the importance of students leaving school with OPWDD eligibility determined and she recommends this is done by the middle school years. Assistance with OPWDD eligibility can be obtained thorough Parent Network, Person Centered Services, and Prime Care Admissions departments. Stephanie also mentioned that the transition survey is necessary before looking into housing options.

She discussed process of certified housing and non-certified housing, which depends on many factors. Such as how independent the individual can live and interact with different people. The Certified Residential Opportunity Protocol is used to determine which level of housing is most appropriate.

OPWDD can provide a subsidy to go towards non-certified housing.

More information about Non-Certified Housing Coordinator, Tim Gorny at 716-608-2465.

Family Care is also an option, where an individual can live with a family in their home. The family receives intensive training and their home is considered a certified site. Family Care accepts referrals from CRO department. To start this process, contact the Front Door: 800-487-6310.

Tonia Weichmann
Parent Network/ Transition Coordinator
1021 Broadway Street
Buffalo, NY 14212
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Tonia spoke about guardianship and Supported Decision Making and the differences between these options. The guardianship process, which the court appoints a guardian of the person, the property, or both.

For families interested in pursuing guardianship, the process should start six months before their child turns 18. Guardianship forms are available on the County Surrogate Court websites. There is a \$15 to \$30 filing fee, depending on which Surrogate Court. Tonia said there is a list of lawyers that handle guardianship on Schoology.

Supported Decision Making is a well-recognized practice in NYS. Although this practice has not been legalized in NYS yet, interest groups are working towards legislative approval in this state. This is a least restrictive alternative compared to guardianship. This process can utilize a variety of options: durable power of attorney, health care surrogacy, living wills, trusts, community advocacy system, joint checking accounts, and health care proxy. For more information, SDMNY.org.

Deb Clouser

Intandem

Community Hab and Rec Programs

DClouser@Intandem.org

Deb discussed Intandem's Community Hab, Recreation, and In-Home Respite programs. Community Hab is for individuals who plan to live in their own apartment or on their own. Staff works with individuals in their homes and community to prepare them on life skills which will be needed. Care Coordinators refer into these programs. Community hab services offered:

- Cooking
- Home maintenance
- Shopping (comparison shopping)
- Organization skills
- Laundry
- Banking and paying bills
- Travel training, Medicaid cab
- Assistance with medical appointments and forms
- Follow up with medical labs and prescriptions
- Assistance with exercise
- Community Safety skills
- Help with fire drill planning

Intandem offers In-home respite services to give caretakers and offers a break from care giving. This program promotes independence, work on ADL skills, meals, and leisure activities such as reading, puzzles, and games. Caregivers can be home or go out to get a break during this service.

The recreation program is not currently running due to COVID. The recreation program offers a variety of activities that participants can choose from. This program sends out two month calendar of activities that participants can choose from. (This depends on the units OPWDD approves for this program).

Individuals can be dropped off at in Lockport or Niagara Falls Blvd locations for the outing and staff drop them off home after the event. This program teaches social aspects, teach safety and how to interact with others in the community. This program is for individuals 18 and above.

Updates:

- Parent Network- Tonia Weichmann spoke about staff shortages which are closing group homes and affecting programs in NYS. Emails to promote legislation funding will be coming out soon.
Events are planned for families at Parent Network's 1021 Broadway Buffalo location on May 22nd and May 26th.
- CSPOA from Kari Stadmeuller spoke about waitlists due to staff shortages. Parents are looking for respite services in Niagara County.
- Person Centered Services, Alan Venesky spoke about vaccinations opening up for ages 12-15 year olds. Care Coordinators can assist individuals with scheduling, transportation challenges, and speaking to a doctor about concerns regarding vaccinations.
- PCS is offering a webinar offered on May 19, 2021: "Can Medicare Be Right For You?" Sometimes younger people can qualify for Medicare, this webinar will offer information regarding this topic.
This can also be found in archived webinars on the PCS website.
- West Regional Partnership, Julia Duerr spoke about June WBL training, which includes school based enterprise, rules and regulations.

Next meeting: Fall 2021

