

Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality
Behavioral Health Committee Meeting
September 20, 2011
Independent Resources, Inc.
Wilmington, DE
1:00 pm

Present: Christy Hennessey (Chair); Loretta Sarro, DODHH; Karen Miller, Deaf Ministries; Christine Zenorini, Connections; Kyle Hodges, Staff.

Interpreter: Tevis Thompson (1st hour), Carol Stevens (2nd hour)

Approval of the Meeting Minutes

Motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the minutes of the March 15, 2011 meeting as submitted.

Additions to the Agenda

- MH Summary Results
- Membership –DSD

Chair Report

Christy stated that her Report would be covered under Business.

Business:

Invitation for Institute for Recovery and Community Integration

Kyle stated there had been discussion at the last meeting about inviting a representative from this agency to attend a future meeting. He referred to an email (handout) in the meeting packet. Kyle asked for clarification on the CPS (Certified Peer Specialist) training. Loretta explained that she received an email from the Pennsylvania Organization of the Deaf and there was a flyer regarding peer support, how it relates to mental health and offers training for those who are deaf and hard of hearing. Loretta would like to see this service provided when someone is discharged from the hospital, for example, having a peer support person teach about resources, etc.

Loretta added that we need to find out if deaf and hard of hearing people are interested in providing peer support and would need an informational session prior to training. Loretta explained that DVR and DSAMH would have to work out what is a paid or would it be a volunteer position. Loretta said that she and Christy recently attended a consumer recovery meeting and many there had done peer support, and some specialized in different areas (for example, alcohol and drug addictions). She thought it would be beneficial to have deaf/hard of hearing people do this. Loretta will check with Penny to confirm whether peer support specialists are paid or volunteer in Delaware.

Kyle will email Robert Turri to follow-up on attending an upcoming meeting and possibly doing training and provide guidance on how to recruit people who are interested in providing peer support for the deaf and hard of hearing community. Loretta will provide Kyle with any additional information she has on this. Kyle asked Christine if Connections gets involved in peer support. Christine explained they have psychiatric counselors and may have some peer support. Kyle suggested that a group like Connections would be a good place to recruit people for the CPS training and also from Delaware's Consumer Recovery Coalition of Delaware (DCRC).

Ricky van Story Conference Reflective

Christy spoke about attending this event, which included topics on mental health. There were many presentations throughout the day, with over 100 people in attendance. Loretta provided background information, saying the Resource Center is named after Ricky van Story and is utilized for gathering and activities, but nothing specific towards deaf and hard of hearing. Someone who signs fluently attends the Center and volunteers on Fridays and Saturdays. The intent of the event Christy attended was to improve people's perceptions and labeling of people with mental illness. Kyle explained that two bills (HB 91 and HB 214) were passed and sponsored by Deborah Heffernan which promoted the use of "people-first" language.

DPC Policy/Procedure - Update

Christy referred to the new DPC Policy/Procedure (handout). Kyle stated that it looked as if all or most of the recommendations were included in the final policy. Kyle stated he followed up with DSAMH asking about specific interpreters that they use and found out that individual units arrange for interpreters and contact Tevis Thompson. Tevis stepped out of her role as interpreter and explained that for the past 10 years she had been contacted by the Admissions Nurse (she would have alternate interpreters if she was not available). Tevis sold her business this summer (June 15) and all of her contracts went to Pam D'Occhio (DEAFinitions & Interpreting). Said they utilize two different agencies (DEAFinitions and Para-Plus). She added that DPC is providing interpreters. Tevis commented that she continues to get requests directly. Kyle will follow-up by email to DPC (copying Tevis and Pam) to relay this clarifying information. Christy suggested giving DPC correct contact information for DEAFinitions and Para-Plus. Tevis added that she currently works with DEAFinitions. Loretta commented that it was important that this information be filtered down to the staff that make the interpreter requests. Karen spoke about lack of interpreters made available when needed at downstate hospitals and the need to educate the hospitals. Delaware is severely lacking in this area. There was some discussion about having an advocacy workshop to get the word out to hospitals.

Warm Line

Karen spoke about Warmlines in Delaware (for deaf consumers who want to talk to a deaf person). Kyle referred to a flyer (handout), where Warmlines is available in Delaware (for non-emergency calls). Kyle commented that this may not be helpful in an emergency situation since there can be a 15-minute delay in getting assistance. While emergency calls are handled through the Relay system, Karen would like to see these handled through videophone. Contact Lifeline could provide training to deaf people who could provide this service, but they do not have resources at this time. There was some discussion on availability of videophones and to possibly have a meeting to discuss options. While 911 is known in the community, other resources are

not. Christy will contact Chris (of NAMI) to start the conversation. Christy and Karen will contact the Warmline contact. Karen will check into what Pennsylvania is doing. Kyle thanked Loretta for the information she provided on Warmlines in other states. Kyle will see if he can find out how many Relay Calls are received from 211 and/or 911.

Membership

Della Thomas sent Kyle an email regarding someone (possibly a psychologist) from Statewide Programs (DSD) attending Committee meetings. The Committee thought this would be a good idea and Kyle will follow-up with Della, adding that they may bring up issues not currently being addressed.

Mental Health Survey Results

Christy spoke about the survey results and asked how we could move forward to see what improvements could be made in services (for example, outreach, trainings). These statistics were compiled in 2010. Loretta commented that DSAMH does not involve her or Christy in ideas for workshops or presentations. Loretta commented about adherence to the new ADA revisions. Kyle stated that he will be attending the ADA Conference and updates will be discussed. Loretta commented that counselors are needed in Delaware that know ASL. Loretta said, with Marcia Schweitzer retiring soon, no one is available to provide counseling to deaf and hard of hearing clients.

Reports/Announcements

Christy stated that there will be an Emergency Preparedness training at IRI, Inc. with University of Delaware staff (Center for Disabilities Studies) this Thursday. This will include having important papers scanned and put on a flash drive or USB.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 2:45 pm.

The next meeting will be November 15, 2011 at 1:00 pm at IRI in Wilmington.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jo Singles
Administrative Specialist
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