

THE PARTNERSHIP

THE PENNSYLVANIA TRAINING PARTNERSHIP FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND FAMILIES



**FREE TRAININGS
FOR FAMILIES AND SELF-ADVOCATES**



AVAILABLE TOPICS

—IN THIS ISSUE—

NEW TRAINING TOPICS FOR FAMILIES

**How Do I Choose a Provider for the
Supports I Need?**

Participant-Directed Services

NEW TRAINING TOPICS FOR SELF-ADVOCATES

(ISP) Individual Support Plan

Self-Advocacy

TURNING KNOWLEDGE INTO POWER

Analicia's Story

Summer 2009

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership provides coordinated, consistent training and technical assistance across the state for people with disabilities and their families.

Training materials are developed and presented by families and self-advocates and approved by the Office of Developmental Programs, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

**TO SCHEDULE A FREE TRAINING IN
YOUR AREA FOR FAMILY MEMBERS
AND/OR SELF-ADVOCATES**

CALL TOLL FREE
1-866-865-6170

OR EMAIL
training@temple.edu



Core training topics are designed to provide basic information about the Mental Retardation system in Pennsylvania. These trainings are the foundations for all other Partnership trainings.

Mental Retardation System Basics

Are you new to the Mental Retardation system? Are you or a family member considering applying for services through the MR system? If you are new to this system, then this training is for you!

This training is a very basic introduction to the Mental Retardation (MR) system in Pennsylvania. We will cover how the system is organized, who should register, how to register for services and what kind of services are available. Additionally, we will discuss the types of assessments and planning used in the MR system as well as other resources that may be helpful. The training wraps up with a discussion of your rights in the MR system and some tips about how to advocate for yourself or your family member. *(3 hours)*

An Overview of the Mental Retardation System in Pennsylvania

This training is a more in depth introduction to the Mental Retardation (MR) system in Pennsylvania. It offers a brief history of the MR system, an overview of what the system looks like and how to register. We discuss eligibility determination, the types of supports and services the system offers, and how they are funded. We also address what you can do if you have problems accessing needed support. *(2 hours)*

What is a Mental Retardation Waiver and How Do I Get One?

This training offers an overview of the Mental Retardation Waivers and is designed for people who have not applied for a Waiver or have applied and are not yet receiving waiver services. Discussions during the session include a brief history; a description of Waivers and why they are important; who is eligible and how to apply; how to think about improving your family member's quality of life; how your Individual Support Plan (ISP) relates to waiver services; and your rights in the process of applying, including your right to disagree. *(2 hours)*

What I Do Once I Have a Mental Retardation Waiver

This training is for people who are enrolled in either the Consolidated or Person/Family Directed Support (PFDS) Waiver and need further information on what services and supports are available. We discuss the Individual Support Plan (ISP) and how it is related to coordination of and funding for services. This training will provide a brief history of Waivers and continue with the importance of planning and how to begin; specifics about the various services offered through the MR Waivers; and your rights in the process, including your right to disagree. *(3 hours)*

Developing a Good ISP

This training looks closely at the Individual Support Plan (ISP) as a person-centered planning tool and contract for supports and services. The ISP is a document that captures the vision of how a person wants to live his or her life; identifies areas in which he or she needs support; identifies the services and supports that will help a person live the life he or she wants; and develops action plans to move into a desired future. An

TOPICS FOR FAMILIES CORE TRAININGS

ISP encourages self-advocacy and person-centered thinking. We discuss how the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)[™] and PA Plus inform the planning process. This training will help you create a comprehensive ISP that addresses medical concerns, finances, services and supports in the context of personal preferences, desired outcomes, a vision for the future and achieving success. *(2 hours)*

TOPICS FOR FAMILIES MORE TRAININGS

Beyond core trainings, you can explore specific areas of interest through a variety of other training topics currently available.

Participant-Directed Services

NEW TOPIC

Based upon the principles of self-determination, Participant-Directed Services (PDS) offer an alternative to how supports are traditionally provided in the MR system. You and your family member(s) gain more control over services and supports when you are directly involved in hiring and managing your support people. In this session we describe the models of support and services available through the MR system for people who choose to self-direct. We cover both models of Financial Management Services – Agency With Choice and Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent. We also outline the rights and responsibilities involved in Participant-Direction. *(3 hours)*

TOPICS FOR FAMILIES MORE TRAININGS

How Do I Choose a Provider for the Supports I Need?

NEW TOPIC

This training is designed to help people who receive services through the Mental Retardation system choose the provider(s) that best matches their needs and priorities. This interactive session explores your rights in selecting a provider, different models of support, resources for locating providers and tips for gauging quality and decision-making. This program relies on exercises to help you identify and use your individual priorities to guide you when interviewing potential providers. *(3 hours)*

Introduction to Person-Centered Thinking

In this overview, we cover a brief history and the principles of person-centered thinking including details of the shift from system-centered thinking to person-centered thinking. The presentation also describes how to incorporate person-centered thinking into Individual Support Plans (ISPs) and other formal plans like Individual Education Plans (IEPs). This module relies heavily on exercises to illustrate different aspects of person-centered thinking and to emphasize the importance of thoughtful individualized support. *(3 hours)*

Planning for Life after High School

This training offers guidance to families and people with disabilities on how to design a successful transition process for students moving from high school to adulthood. We focus on employment, recreational activities, friendships, communication, continuing education, transportation and rights and responsibilities, among other topics.

We use personal stories of successful and unsuccessful transitions to illustrate the steps necessary for an effective, productive transition to adult life. We describe the roles of the Social Security Administration, Office of Vocational

Rehabilitation, the Office of Developmental Programs, and the Housing Authority in providing resources and support. Throughout the presentation, we emphasize the importance of developing a vision and using person-centered planning along with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and an Individual Support Plan (ISP). *(3 hours)*

SIS™ and the PA Plus

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) and the Pennsylvania Plus is the standardized assessment for people with mental retardation in Pennsylvania. Everyone (ages 16-72) who receives waiver services through the MR system will be required to have a SIS and the PA Plus interview to evaluate the frequency, intensity and type of supports a person with intellectual disabilities (mental retardation) needs.

This training explains the purpose of SIS and the PA Plus, describes what a SIS and the PA Plus interview is like and explains how the information is used. The discussion focuses on how the assessment is done, the format and process for the assessment and the assessment's connection to the development of the Individual Support Plan (ISP). Everyone's role in completing the assessments is described so that you and your family member will be prepared for the SIS and the PA Plus interview. *(2 hours)*

**Prioritization of the Urgency of Need
for Services (PUNS)**

This training offers information on the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) form. We review the entire form to ensure that families understand each category: Emergency, Critical and Planning. We describe how the PUNS form should be completed, how the PUNS relates to the Waiting List for

services and supports, how the County/Administrative Entity and the state use PUNS information and how families can use the PUNS process to help them understand the supports and services available to them. We define individual, transportation, vocational and residential supports as outlined on the form. We also address what to do if you disagree with the information on your PUNS form. *(2 hours)*

**Long Term Planning
for Your Family Member**

In this training, we cover different types of trusts that can be used to meet the needs of a person with a long term disability. Estate planning helps ensure a person has financial resources to meet his/her needs beyond the capacity of her/his guardian or parent to provide care, or after the death of the guardian or parent. We discuss how resources can be arranged to protect an individual's access to his/her needed government benefits. *(2 hours)*

Everyone Can Communicate

In this training, we describe the many ways we communicate—not just through speech and not just through language. When someone cannot communicate through spoken words, there are many augmentative or alternative ways to communicate. Some people require aids such as a communication book or a speech generating device. Others require no aid—they use gestures or sign language. In this session, you will learn about different ways to improve the ability to communicate with any person and in any situation. You will also get a hands-on opportunity to look at devices. *(2 hours)*

Turning Knowledge Into Power:

Analicia's Story

“If it wasn't for the rain...”

by Michael Farsace
Partnership Trainer
Achieva

It was raining that evening—a blowing, torrential downpour that forced me to question why I was going out in the first place. Among several things I wanted to do that evening, one was a training

I had signed up for but was not enthusiastic to attend. Even with the poor weather, there were no excuses for not going, so I headed out to find the small dark church on the west side of town.

If it wasn't for the rain that evening two years ago, I would not be able to tell this story.

When I arrived, there were only two cars in the unlit wet parking lot. I was discouraged that even this task wasn't going to pan out. I entered the building and walked the corridors to find a small room with two women seated inside, Linda Rose and Jeanine Schultz of the Partnership. I asked, was this the training? Was I in the right place? No one else had shown up. Much to my surprise, they began the training for just me.

The first part of the training was an “Overview of the MR system in PA.” I could tell by the numbers on the PowerPoint slide that it was going to be a long evening. I had no idea it would be part of the rest of my life.

I sat as they explained the past, the present, and all the challenges for the future of this very complex system. I listened to acronyms and buzz words, to descriptions of interesting services and, of course, to the power of uniting in a common cause to make a difference.

I began asking questions, jotting down notes, and asking more questions. We finished the first presentation and proceeded with “What is an MR Waiver and How Do I Get One?” This pushed me over the top.

I sat with Linda and Jeanine until well after nine o'clock that evening. We talked about our children, about being parents of children with disabilities, about our unique yet similar situations.

I felt empowered and knew I had opened a door that could change my daughter's quality of life. And, if educated, many others could change their lives, too.

Let me tell you about my daughter, Analicia, pronounced “Ana



(continued on next page)

(Analia's Story continued from page 9)

Lisa." She was born about a week early at 6 pounds and remained at that weight for five long months. She looked like a baby bird that had fallen out of the nest. She had "failure to thrive" and did not display "normal" growth patterns. When Analia laughed at three months, one of those deep guttural laughs, we knew she would be—and has been—the laughter in our home ever since. But it was pretty clear to us at a year that she was going to be different from our other three children.

When I joined the Partnership as a trainer, Analia was four-and-a-half years old. She had many traditional services from Early Intervention to physical, speech, and occupational therapies in the school she attends. As I began to attend trainings with the Partnership, I learned a new vocabulary. I met people with similar issues who gathered to acquire a better understanding. I asked many questions, heard many stories and saw how others solved problems and navigated this system.

As I studied trainer materials for the Partnership, I started asking many questions of her Supports Coordinator. I began to network in my area. I met administrators. I began to draw a mental picture of this complex system in our state and country. As a result of learning my daughter's rights and fitting her needs into my new view of the system, I was equipped to ask for services to achieve specific outcomes. Knowledge of the system has

given us the power to charge forward and make positive changes in Analia's life.

I am in the hospitality industry and had the pleasure of hosting a day with several trainings at our facility. With the goal of energizing the families of people with disabilities in our area, I pushed hard to get professionals to attend. All of the people on Analia's team, in addition to the administrators and decision-

makers in her life, were under the same roof in a positive environment. It was hugely successful with many wonderful outcomes. I cannot describe the energy I felt!

"Knowledge of the system has given us the power to charge forward and make positive changes..."

This journey has just begun and many exciting things have happened already. I have met great families and have been blessed with the many rewards of helping others in addition to my family. I am very grateful for the relationships I have developed and plan to continue growing with the Partnership.

Pennsylvania needs more leaders who are self-advocates. In these trainings you will learn from other self-advocates about what it takes to be a leader, the roles of leaders and how to take charge of your own life and help other people take charge of their lives.

Leadership Development

This training introduces you to the idea of becoming a community leader. It describes the qualities and skills you need to develop leadership. The importance of becoming a self-advocate is highlighted. The program gives you lots of opportunities to ask and answer questions about learning leadership skills. *(2 hours)*

Self-Advocacy

NEW TOPIC

In this training, we describe what self-advocacy is and what it means to be a self-advocate. Examples of famous advocates will show you how important it is to speak up for yourself and for others. You will learn that you have the same rights as every citizen in this country. You will practice when to speak up for yourself and how to speak up so you will be heard. After this session, you will know that you have the right to ask for what you need and want. *(2 hours)*

Core training topics provide basic information about the Mental Retardation system in Pennsylvania.

Mental Retardation System

This training tells the history behind the MR (Mental Retardation) system in Pennsylvania. It is a hard story to hear because people with disabilities were treated poorly through segregation and discrimination. There were families, self-advocates, and professionals who worked hard to make changes in the system. Now, people with disabilities have rights and legal support to demand fair treatment. We explain that Self-Determination and Everyday Lives are part of this civil rights movement. We encourage you to advocate for yourself and others to change the MR system. *(2 hours)*

Getting into the Mental Retardation System

This training describes how important it is to register with the Office of Developmental Programs. When you are registered, you are counted among the people with disabilities who need services. When the state knows how many people need services, it can plan better to provide the services everyone needs. You will also learn why and when to fill out a PUNS form, which helps plan how soon you need services. We explain the job of a Supports Coordinator so you will know how they can help you. *(2 hours)*

Understanding Mental Retardation Waivers

A Waiver is a funding source that allows you to live in your own community and receive Mental Retardation services. This training describes how to apply for a Waiver. You will learn what documents you must fill out, what requirements you must meet, and what information you must give to be sure you get

the benefits for which you might be eligible. We also describe the types of services available in your home and community that are paid for through Waivers. *(2 hours)*

Funding For Services

This training tells you the five main ways that services and supports for people with disabilities are funded: Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT), Family-Driven Support Services, Medical Assistance (MA), Base Funding and Waiver Funding. You will learn what services and supports you might be eligible for under these programs. We will also give you suggestions for how to be a self-advocate. With information on what supports and services you may get and how to speak up for yourself, you will be prepared to ask for the services you need. *(2 hours)*

ISP (Individual Support Plan)

NEW TOPIC

This training tells you about the ISP (Individual Support Plan), an agreement between a person who needs services in the MR system and the people who promise to provide those services. You will learn how an ISP meeting takes place and who should be there with you. A good ISP should say how you want to live your life and what you need to be healthy and safe. This training will help you understand the different parts of the ISP. After this training, you will know how to make your ISP work for you. *(2 hours)*

The Partnership offers many more trainings that so you can learn about a variety of different topics.

My Choice, My Direction:**Participant-Directed Services**

Participant-Directed Services are types of services you can use to help you live a more self-determined life. In this training, you will learn about:

- Person-Centered Planning
- Circles of Support
- Financial Management Services (FMS)
- Support Brokers

You will learn how these tools help you live the life you want. *(2 hours)*

Self-Determination

This training is an introduction to Self-Determination, which is a way to think about how to live and how to get the services you need. You will learn how a civil rights movement has worked to get full civil rights for people with disabilities. You will learn about the five principles for Self-Determination—Freedom, Authority, Support, Responsibility and Self-Advocacy—and steps to take toward becoming a self-determined person. *(2 hours)*

Introduction to Person-Centered Thinking

This training explains what person-centered thinking is and how it can improve your life. You will see the difference between an old way and a new way of thinking about supports. You will identify the people who can support you as you make plans for your life. We teach you to use person-centered thinking

TOPICS FOR SELF-ADVOCATES MORE TRAININGS

and planning to be sure you get the resources you need to live the life you want. (2 hours)

Life After High School

This training explains how important it is to begin planning early for your transition from school to adulthood. We tell you why you must be responsible for what happens to you when you leave high school. We encourage you to have a vision of what you want your life to be. We outline how to build a support team that will help you make that vision become real. A support team will help you think about living, working and socializing as an adult. You will see how you must take responsibility for your vision to become a reality and how helpful it is to have support. (2 hours)

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training for Self-Advocates

Sexual abuse can happen to anyone. People with disabilities are especially at risk for sexual abuse. This training describes types of abuse, including unwanted touch, physical force and non-physical force. You will learn how to make yourself safer and how to fight against abuse if it happens to you. If you have been abused, we encourage you to tell someone who can help you deal with the feelings and effects of the abuse. (2 hours)

SIS™ and the PA Plus

Everyone (ages 16-72) who receives waiver services through the MR system must have a SIS (Supports Intensity Scale) and PA Plus interview. The questions in the SIS are the newest way of measuring the supports a person with disabilities needs. The PA Plus is what Pennsylvania added to be sure all of a person's needs are measured.

TOPICS FOR SELF-ADVOCATES MORE TRAININGS

This training explains the purpose of SIS and the PA Plus, describes what a SIS and the PA Plus interview is like, and explains how the information is used. This training includes an example of a self-advocate who needs services so you will see what SIS measures. By the end of the session, you will know how to take part in a SIS and the PA Plus interview. (2 hours)

Everyone Can Communicate

In this training, we describe the many ways we all communicate—not just through speech or language. When someone cannot speak or write words, there are other ways to communicate. Some people express what they want to say with body movements or sign language. Some use books with pictures and symbols. Others learn to use a special device that can speak for them. In this session, you will learn about different ways to improve the ability to communicate with any person and in any situation. You will also get a chance to try out communication devices. (2 hours)

ABOUT OUR TRAININGS

- Training and resource materials are provided to each participant free of charge.
- All participants receive handouts and may request a certificate of completion for each presentation.
- We offer Act 48 credits upon request.
- Some reimbursement, such as mileage and child care, is available upon request, to families and self-advocates
- All Partnership curricula are available in alternate formats upon request. Requests for alternate formats should be made at least two weeks before the scheduled training.

THE PARTNERSHIP

THE PENNSYLVANIA TRAINING PARTNERSHIP FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND FAMILIES



- **Achieva**
- **Institute on Disabilities**
- **Mentors for Self Determination**
- **Self-Advocates United as 1**
- **Vision for Equality**

PROVIDING TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

PHONE

1-866-865-6170

WEBSITE

WWW.THE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP.ORG

Visit Us to Access...

- Training Calendars
- Bulletins and Publications from ODP
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- More Information about the Partners

Para información en español: 215.204.9348
o por correo electrónico al: latino@temple.edu



Institute on Disabilities
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY[®]
College of Education