



**Autism Services Initiative for Adults
Autism Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes**

April 29, 2016

1:00 p.m.

Decatur Recreation Center, 211 Sycamore Street, Decatur, Georgia 30030

- Facilitators:** Scott Bales and April Umstead (Co-Chairs)
- Minutes Secretary:** Katherine Roeder
- Advisory Committee Attendees:** Scott Bales, Tim Cartledge, Deborah Conway, Rena Harris, Theresa Heard, Stacey Lane, Eren Kyle Niederhoffer, Laura Owen, Julie Prescott, Stacey Ramirez, Pauline Shaw (telephone), April Umstead
- Absent:** Jennifer Briggs, Ray Johnson, Kim Lucker-Greene, Emily Myers, Greta O'Dell, Michelle Robison, Michelle Schwartz
- DBHDD Staff:** Darlene Meador
- Emory Staff:** Joseph Cubells, Silke Von Esenwein, Katherine Roeder, Danielle Belva, Nassira Bougrab
- Visitors:** None

Agenda

Introduction

- The meeting was called to order by April Umstead at 1:15 p.m.

Approval/Discussion of Minutes of February Meeting

- Co-chair April Umstead asked for discussion of the minutes. Given no discussion, she then asked for approval.
- Joseph Cubells moved that the minutes be approved, and Rena Harris seconded the motion.

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- The agreement to approve the minutes of February 26, 2016, was unanimous.

Topic: Autism Services Initiative for Adults Presentation

- April Umstead and Darlene Meador provided an overview of a presentation on the Autism Services Initiative for Adults that was presented at the 2016 Autism Conference & Expo of Georgia on April 14.
- The overview was given to obtain feedback from the group and initialize a breakout discussion of measures of success for adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- The presentation provided an overview of the need for the initiative, the role of the advisory committee, a summary of progress and findings to date, and planned next steps.
- This presentation is available on the DBHDD website.

Topic: Conference Feedback on Presentation

Feedback from participants at the 2016 Autism Conference & Expo of Georgia on the presentation on the initiative included:

- The meeting minutes of the DBHDD Regional Advisory Committees and Regional Quality Improvement (QI) Councils are a source for provider input on services for adults with ASD.
- There is a lack of knowledge on the part of teachers in the school districts about what resources are available.
- Parent mentors are a great resource for families in the local schools.
- Certain needs may not be exposed until challenges are encountered. Knowledge acquisition goes from specific to abstract, and individuals with ASD may have challenges with abstract content.
- Transition is a big area. The Department of Education has extensive program data on students transitioning from schools to adulthood, and needs to be “at the table” to work on this area.

Topic: Priority Outcomes – Breakout into Working Groups

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Three breakout groups were organized to explore the question, “What does success look like for an adult with ASD?” Each group selected a priority area to explore in depth. Their recommendations follow.

Group A: Stacey L., Theresa, Scott, Eren, April, Darlene

Group B: Rena, Laura, Stacey R, Julie, Nassira, Silke

Group C: Joe, Danielle, Tim, Deborah, Katherine

Group Reporting: Key Measures of Success

Group A – Employment

Premise: Employment and volunteer work give meaning/adds value to life.

- Considerations: Employment and volunteer work provide opportunities for meaningful contributions and integration into the community, empowerment, and countering stigma. Adults with ASD often demonstrate a work ethic and can be productive with a job created around their unique abilities. Transportation and identification of “champion” (ASD-friendly) employers are key.
- Measures: Possible measures are number of people with ASD employed, number satisfied with employment, and number with reliable access to transportation; and satisfaction surveys before and after employment/volunteer work.

Group B – Housing and Daily Activities

Premise: Independent living and day programs provide sustainable housing and a place in the community.

- Considerations: Challenge/improve the current system by incentivizing providers in independent living situations to emphasize skill building. Evaluate alignment with policy and incentives at regular intervals. Reward good outcomes, and do not penalize providers who take tougher cases.
- Measures: A measure is the number of individuals moved to independent living and day programs. Note that as employment numbers increase, the numbers in day programs will decrease. Include these benchmark improvements.

Group C – People with ASD and the Larger Community

Premise: The community needs to be made ready, in many aspects and on many levels, to include individuals with ASD in ways that maintain their comfort, safety, and dignity.

- **Considerations:** Sustainability of housing is critical for aging adults with ASD. Host homes for families and aging family members should be explored. Residential services should include engagement with the local community, such as having a contact with the local police and/or hospital. Other considerations include the development of natural supports – with the consent and education of those being served – and educating the community about ASD and community members with ASD.
- **Measures:** Possible measures are number of different living arrangements, number of contacts/outreach activities with local communities, and number of trainings for the local communities.

Topic: Emory Team Personnel Update

Silke von Esenwein announced that Emily Deubler has resigned from her position at Emory, and a new data analyst, Dr. Nicholas Bounamia, has been hired to continue the work on the project. Dr. Bounamia works as an adjunct professor at Kennesaw State University.

Topic: Videotaping for Self-Advocates

Eren Kyle Niederhoffer reminded the group of his involvement with a project which seeks to give self-advocates a means of introducing themselves to the community to build awareness. The project consists of a series of YouTube videos which are recorded by professional video producers. Eren indicated that he will make a list of these videos available to interested organizations. He suggested that this would be an ideal way for many persons on the spectrum to relate experiences/success stories in the areas of employment, housing and advocacy.

Topic: Preliminary Data on Crisis Intervention Services

Darlene Meador shared initial Crisis Center call data prepared by the Emory data team. The group gave feedback on the number, origin, and other characteristics of the calls.

Next Steps

The next meeting will be held on June 24, 2016 at 10.00 a.m. The main topic for the June meeting will be data analysis.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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