



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

DRAFT Minutes of August 29, 2022 ARPA Individual and Family Engagement Transformational Committee
Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Greg McMahon, Shannon Jacovino, Denise Palladino, Kevin Arce, Kimberly Butts, Maricruz Ortiz, Joanne Malise, Geri Kogut, Dr. Cheryl Ellis, Adrianna Ramirez, Jessica Sundell, Pat Tyler, Lena Esposito

1. Call to Order by Greg McMahon. Public Meeting Requirements were reviewed. Committee members introduced themselves.

2. Review of Committee's Goals & Responsibilities

The Individual and Family Engagement transformational committee is charged with discussing and reviewing creative options and developing methods on how to inform individuals and family members of the benefits of alternative residential settings, assistive technology and self-determining one's own supports.

The Committee will review options and ideas provided by the ARPA leadership group to review, discuss, and provide detailed feedback that should incorporate recommendations and suggestions for revisions, improvements, changes, and reasons for such changes. Pros and cons of each option provided should also be discussed in the Committee meetings.

Options for review may include but are not limited to:

- Assisting the department in promoting the various opportunities that are available in Day and Residential programs for individuals, including the advances in assistive technology to assist individuals to become more independent in their communities.
- Input on the financial incentives for providers to promote movement out of both day and residential support options to a more independent alternative integrated and efficient setting that promote independence and freedom of choice.
- Work with consultants and the department to discuss, promote and emphasize the importance of participation in the provider transformational plans and how individuals can provide input into these plans.
- Provide expertise, knowledge, and participation in the development and execution of educational forums and other media forums to assist with providing information access to individuals, guardians, families, providers, and others on the various day and residential supports that are available.

- Provide discussion and direction to the department on future options of group day and residential placements and to ensure consistency in individualized, person-centered options within day and residential programs.
- Provide assistance and advice to the department on individual's choice if placement is unsuccessful and the provision of a safety net for the individual and/or other options available to the individual and the family.

The committee also discussed the importance of communicating way that is clear and understandable to individuals and families about options, and the benefits and challenges of various support options so informed decisions can be made.

The committee agreed that it is also our charge to explore ways to reach a larger number of individuals and families than DDS typically reaches, including people who live in marginalized communities and those who do not have access to technology. We must also look at sustainability and remember that we are not only responsible for finding better ways of communicating with individuals and families, but we are also representing their voice in this process.

A suggestion was made to present visual lists of options in formats that are readily understandable, and that people are used to seeing.

3. The committee will spend the next few meetings reviewing DDS support options. In this meeting Denise Palladino and Jessica Sundell gave an overview of Self-determination and Self-direction.

What is Self-determination?

Self-determination is a national movement & philosophy focused on rights and personal freedom. It is a service delivery approach that supports people with disabilities to live the lives they desire.

Self-determination helps people, their families and friends determine their future, design their own support plans, choose the assistance they need to live full lives.

Individuals may use their individual budgets to Self-direct - to hire their own staff, to purchase supports from a traditional agency or from an Agency with Choice or may select a combination of these approaches. People with or without disabilities have the right to control their lives and individuals in DDS should have the authority over the resources that support them.

Self-direction is a service delivery model that people can use to put self-determination principles into action where individuals have the freedom to develop the supports they need to live the life they want. There are many planning tools such as the individual plan, charting the life course, etc. that can assist someone in helping to identify needs, wants, dreams so to put self-determination into place.

Any DDS eligible individual with a funding allocation which is based on the Level of Need (LON) can choose self-direction. Those funds can be used to hire supports directly, budget is built based on the services outlined in IP/Plan and in alignment with cost standards which our based on the Waiver, role of FI as payroll organization, EOR responsible for hiring, firing, training and managing budget/supports, can hire support of IDGS supervisor to assist with recruitment/training, etc.

Benefits:

- 1) flexibility and choice
- 2) more individualized supports and services
- 3) opportunity for more creative options such as sharing DDS resources to stretch the current allocation to better meet needs.

4) opportunity for creating/developing a strong natural support circle both paid and unpaid
Challenges:

- 1) Lots of responsibility and on-going work for sustainability.
- 2) Require a reliable and realistic emergency back-up plan.
- 4) More reliance on natural supports
- 5) Resource sharing: roommate, live sharer, etc. could result in an unsustainable living situation and very hard to find replacement or replicate.
- 6) Recruitment concerns, can't find staff during the hours/times that are needed

A concern was raised that obstacles to self-direction are the fear that it is hard to find staff and train staff, and to find staff you can trust. It was pointed out that while staffing is an issue for everywhere right now, regarding trust, self-direction offers more flexibility to hire people who know and care about the individual including family and friends.

There was also a discussion around the confusion between Self Determination and Self Direction, including amongst DDS staff. All supports should be self-determined, and this should be part of our messaging.

4. Topics for discussion

- a. Meeting schedule going forward – The committee agreed on schedule changes due to holidays.
- b. Future topics of discussion – It was suggested that the committee look at how to make navigating the DDS website easier.

5. Announcement of next meeting- Monday, September 12, 2022 10:00 am

6. Adjournment