

West Region Advisory Council

Minutes
Via Teleconference
4:00 p.m.
October 20, 2022

Participants:

Susan Bastien, Chuck Bergamo, Fritz Gorst, Gil Kellersman, Shannon O'Brien, Arlene Steinfeld

Guests: Melissa Kremmel, A. Ramirez (Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN),

1. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 4:14 pm

2. ROLL CALL –

Each participating member of the Regional Advisory Council introduced themselves. Ms. Kremmel also introduced herself

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETINGS MINUTES –

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the Minutes of September 15, 2022.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT –

None.

5. CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK (CTFSN) PRESENTATION

Ms. Kremmel presented a PowerPoint presentation that she indicated she would send to DDS so that we can distribute it.

The staff that work at the facility were pictured in the first slide. She said that they all have experience with the special needs population. CTFSN offers 1:1 connections and uses social media for this purpose. They offer workshops and trainings to assist families to advocate for themselves.

She shared that they have an email list that they send out informational flyers to. Anyone interested can contact CTFSN.org and their name can be added to the distribution list.

CTFSN also collaborates with other agencies to achieve inclusion and equity. She described some of the support groups that they also have. More detailed information is contained in the PowerPoint presentation.

The agency also offers summer camp open play groups. Before COVID, this was attended in person and during COVID programs were offered remotely. The hope is to reconvene to in-person activities once the weather warms up next year.

She gave a brief overview of Creative Housing and roommate supports that they also provide.

She indicated that there are Parent Leaders who become staff. There is a Parent Mentor Program designed to help families or providers work together to determine best practices amongst one another when advocating with one another.

CTFSN is committed to diversity. Ms. Kremmel explained how they have a Spanish-speaking coordinator who offers some workshops only in Spanish. This has been well received by families. She stated that if anyone on the RAC is interested in participating in diversity, equity and inclusion she welcomes them to contact her. Should the RAC members know of anyone interested, they should connect them with Ms. Kremmel who will be happy to have them join in this effort.

A question about caregiver staffing was asked. Ms. Kremmel stated that her agency offers supports to connect families to staff; however, they do not offer staffing at their agency. They are just a resource to families.

6. REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S UPDATE –

- **Elderly Caregiver Initiative- 73 and over**

37 families 5 declined, 14 have come to PRAT with a funding/plan request. Pushing for funding to be utilized in December. IF there is funding not spent, DDS is considering dropping the age.

- **Vacant positions**

ARDs, PRAT Mangers, PS in IFS/Respite and Case Managers in Danbury Stratford area

- **Supportive Housing Options**

Riverfront opened- Torrington

DOH has submitted a request for additional projects, if DDS individuals are included there are tax incentives available for contractors.

Cluster apartment project underway, 3-5 individuals in a clustered setting, plan is to develop 2 per region

- **Staffing**

Staffing in both day and res continue to be a struggle some providers report improvement where others report the same or worse

- **Age outs and Grads**

Grads: 80- were placed

58 were withdrawn – for many reasons:

59 Did not have any active Medicaid

- Were on the incorrect Medicaid so they could not be waived, most were on X02 – Husky D
- If they were on the active Medicaid Husky C, families were not responsive to CM contact
- And then there were some with staffing issues or program availability. Of the 58 withdrawn : 46 were still with the Helpline – the Helpline does average about 35 grads who are withdrawn each grad year

12 were assigned to a Traditional CM.

5 were closed out – families moved out of state within the grad year

For the FY 22 grads, DDS did grant an extension until October 1, 2022 to find a day program and be placed.

Age outs from school, BSP or DCF placements not options for residential placement.

- **Commissioner Forums**

Were held in all three regions.

The WR had two sessions, in total 70 participants- families, staff and a few providers

Theme issues were staffing and social security benefits, responses back to questions posed were responded too.

- **LFC Respite Center**

New RD visited LFC Respite Center, met staff, individuals and two families. Families extremely pleased and thankful for this support.

7. NEW BUSINESS

None

8. OLD BUSINESS

None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

10. NEXT MEETING –

- Joint statewide Developmental Council meeting. Information will be forthcoming via email.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council adjourned the meeting at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera
Executive Secretary, DDS West Region