

Autism Plan Advisory Committee
Skylight Conference Room
Waterbury State Office Complex
10:00am - Noon
March 18, 2009

MINUTES

WELCOME

The purpose of this first meeting is to determine how the group will operate and advise the persons completing the work.

INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members:

Jackie Rogers, Lamoille County Mental Health; Judith Masson, Early Essential Education Teacher; Rhoda Butler, Rutland Northeast S.U. Head Teacher – Blue House; Erin O’Hearne, parent; Laurie Mumley, Department of Corrections and parent, vice-president of Autism Support Daily, Karen Hayes, parent; Harold Frost, individual with ASD; Amy Caffry, parent, retired elementary teacher; Amy Cohen, Director of Autism Program, Howard Center; Susan Ryan, Executive Director, CDCI from UVM; Liz Jordan Shook, Family, Infant and Toddler Developmental Educator and parent; Gretchen Platt, Autism Program Coordinator, FITP

VIA PHONE: Cherie Maynard, Case Manager, Flexible Family Funding Coordinator at Community Access Program and parent; Linda Chaim, Special Education Director, representing Vermont Council of Special Education Directors and parent

UNABLE TO ATTEND: Stephen Contompasis, MD, UVM ILEHP Program; Claudia Pringles, Vermont Family Network and parent

State representatives to committee:

Clare McFadden, Autism Specialist, Disability of Aging and Independent Living
Claire Bruno, Autism Consultant, Department of Education
Monica Hutt, Department for Children and Families

ROLES

Facilitator – Clare McFadden

Minute taker – Claire Bruno and Rhoda Butler

Equalizer – Jackie Rogers

Timekeeper – Amy Cohen

Keeper of the Rudder - This role was added during our discussion about norms; this person will help keep us focused and on-task

NORMS

The committee agreed to the following norms:

- We work hard to start the meeting on time, people come as soon as they can & they will inform the group at the beginning of the meeting if they need to leave early
- We allow people to finish speaking
- We are respectful of one another in discussions of children, adolescents & adults with ASD, their families, & the professionals, programs & agencies that work with them
 - *Discussion about confidentiality: these are open meetings; therefore, the discussion and comments are not confidential; we agree to speak positively and not negatively about specific people, programs, etc., e.g. it is OK to talk about a program as an example of challenges and gaps in the system, but not personalize.*
- We actively solicit diverse ways of looking at things
- We use first person language (e.g., child with autism, versus autistic child)
 - *Our emphasis is the “personhood” of the individual*
- We recognize when more information is needed before a discussion can proceed
- We clarify actions that need to be taken, by whom and when
- We collaboratively determine agenda items for a meeting and important topics that should be discussed as a group
- We revisit our norms periodically and make changes as needed

We can add additional norms when we need them

ROLES OF AHS AND DOE REPRESENTATIVES

Explanation of the roles of Clare McFadden and Claire Bruno

Provide technical support;

help to find locations for the meeting;

arrange phone conference capability;

Send agendas, minutes and other information

Pay stipends and mileage

Not voting members but the advisory committee will be advising us and other state representatives in our work as we move forward

A BIT OF HISTORY

Claire gave a brief history of how we arrived here:

ACT 62, signed by Governor Douglas, May 2008

Report to the Legislature to Address Services for Individuals with Autism

Spectrum Disorders presented to the Legislature in January 2008

Autism plan and priorities developed

Advisory Committee formed to advise the work

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A brief overview of the contents of the MOU, which was handed out to everyone, was provided.

UPDATES ON PRIORITIES SEE HANDOUT: Goal A: lots of activity; Dept of Health had been working on primary care practices to use standardized tools; contracting with VCHIP to go into all pediatric practices and finding out what they need and then train them on the screening tools and follow-up; money allocated in last year's budget for this; ILEHP program developing training materials to be used by VCHIP for training on autism tools; DAIL convened 12 clinicians in the state to (psychologists, psychiatrists, developmental pediatricians) come up with best practices to develop some standard practice in this state for diagnoses; need to train more diagnosticians; Vermont school psychologists will be addressing training of school psychologists; Clare and Claire will research this further; there has been some discussion at the committee of practitioners about school psychologists diagnosing;

GOAL B: Based upon national resource council: 25 hours/week; not started on this yet; group meeting representing FITP, EEE and autism consultant, Claire and Clare will join that group for an initial meeting; how to blend resources to create a system to address the needs;

GOAL C: MOU written and signed:

GOAL D: resource dissemination centers: lots of different places to go but we do not have a central clearing house; discussion of creating centers has been discussed in the past; (May want the committee to tackle this area of priority);

GOAL E: training; supported employment in fall; voc rehab has ongoing effort to help bring their voc rehab counselors up to speed to provide supports; 2 pilot programs: youth employment specialist hired; working out of VABIR, working with transition age youth who don't qualify for developmental services but still need support; developing how VR can accomplish this support; VR developed a curriculum of social skills needed by adults with ASD to use in work settings; curriculum is written and being piloted presently; first group started to pilot;

GOAL G: Clare has done training for DS staff; for transition counselors; HowardCenter started the SUCCEED program in September in collaboration with UVM. The transition age adults in the program live together in a house near other UVM student housing. There is support for independent living skills, career development and employment support, they take classes at UVM and are included in campus life of UVM. Initial reports indicate that it's having positive results.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Advisory committee will advise state people on the autism plan and how we are going to move forward on the work of addressing the priorities; Could we keep a side log of interventions that work or have not worked?

Operating Procedures from Developmental Services handed out by Clare as a guide.

The following decisions were made:

Term limits: present terms are for at least one year; we are hoping to create a staggered term limit; Judith proposes to table this for 6 months; Linda Chaim, representing VCSEA, agreed. There was consensus to wait 6 months.

Location of meetings: Waterbury

Frequency and length of meetings: Once a month for now, 2 hours

Sharing of e-mail addresses: The committee is Ok with sharing their e-mail with other members. Communication via e-mail should be limited to logistics of the meetings and discussion of issues will occur at the meetings.

Decision-making process: Discussion about using Fist-to-Five; do we need 100% consensus; or majority; or 2/3 of the group agree? Unanimous decisions are not possible; we are here to get something done; majority gets “iffy”; do we need a quorum? It is 2/3 of the quorum for a vote. See pages 4/5 of the procedures; minutes and concerns of the votes from people who are dissenting; more discussion might be needed for dissenting votes; record the actual votes and capture the essence of all of the votes;

Agreed to use fist-to-five as the decision making mechanism;

Agreed to: quorum is a minimum of 8 people including at least 4 parents/ individuals with ASD and 4 professionals with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the quorum (6) for a positive vote;

WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE? We are here to move the system forward and improve services for individuals with ASD and their families. Decisions may not be exactly what each of us would individually want for a child, adult, program, etc., but that we want forward momentum for movement for all folks.

Agenda setting for future meetings: The committee will set the agenda for the next meeting at the end of each meeting. Additional items can be suggested to the chairperson(s) if needed.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND CO-CHAIRPERSON

We will discuss this further at a subsequent meeting. People probably would like to get to know each other a bit more before electing chairpersons.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: We can decide how members of the public will be involved. Take part and contribute during the discussion or reserve a time for public comments; we can decide to decide when we need to have a rule; let people comment on the issues that are of relevance to them; on other boards we have had a greeter who meets the new people and explain the norms to them to understand how we as a group function.

WHAT'S NEXT

Next meeting date/location – Clare will talk to Steve Contompasis about his availability and suggest possible standing dates to the committee via an online poll. She will e-mail the group when a time/location is set.

Clare has a website set up on the DAIL website that will contain the following information regarding the autism plan advisory committee: list of committee members, meeting dates, times and locations, meeting agendas and minutes, relevant documents for review or created by the committee. The link is:

<http://www.ddas.vermont.gov/ddas-boards/autism-boards-committees/vt-autism-planning-committee>

Amy Caffry will look into technology for additional options for people to participate remotely.

It was suggested that we have name tags for meetings. Clare will bring name tags for next meeting.

Agenda for next meeting:

- Discuss role and election of chairperson(s)
- Additional discussion about how the committee will operate, including when to ask questions and bring up new issues for discussion
- Goal D on the autism plan – Clare will send relevant information on this goal
- Update on any progress on goals
- Discuss ARRA (stimulus funds) and possible uses for people with ASD. Clare will send link to website to review. The link to VT information is

http://recovery.vermont.gov/sites/stimulus/files/pdf/VFR-Detailed_Appropriations_by_Category.pdf

A link to info related to ARRA funds for education is at:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/03/03072009.html>

- Stipend and mileage

Future agenda item:

TRANSITION QUESTIONS:

Will we look at kids who are older and now in HS? Get credit for community service?

Have a more comprehensive system?