

## Expanding, Engaging & Energizing Peer Support Groups

### Wyoming Independent Living Service Area

#### Perplexing Pandemic

- How do we keep any type of peer group going when we can't meet in person?
- How do we use this time to educate on disability and how our CIL can help?
- How do we get more consumers to be involved instead of losing consumers?
- How do we help consumers with social isolation?
- How are we going to get through this and not only just survive but thrive?

#### Pandemic Pluses

- IL team weekly Zoom meeting
- Cheyenne Advocacy Group into Eastern WY advocacy group WyDPAC
- Embraced Zoom
- IL Specialist to Facilitator Lead

#### Change is HARD

- No Change to Peer Groups
  - Zoom only needed for a few months to "get by"
  - Technical problems
  - Awkward silences
  - Inappropriate Conversations
  - Attendance down
- Zoom wasn't going away & needed to embrace it and learn how to navigate
- Needed to become better facilitators
- IL team needed to come together and decide what the goals of Peer Support should be
- Attendance increased with consistent message structure, engagement, and flexibility

#### Engage & Energize

- Facilitator Training
  - Healthy Community Living Facilitator Training (UMT, RTC)
  - WIL Facilitator Training
  - Evidence Based videos
  - "How to avoid death By PowerPoint" (David JP Phillips, TEDxStockholmSalon)
  - Zoom Training

- Via Hope Peer Facilitator Training
- IL Team Values
- Peer Support Groups/Workshops
  - Renamed
  - Consistent Format
    - Engaging
    - Energizing
    - Directly disability related
    - Peer involvement in all decisions
  - Two facilitators in different centers

## Expand

- 65% increase in attendance
- Average of 2-3 attendees in specific centers to 6-9 across eastern Wyoming
- Increase in referrals from other entities, case managers, transition coordinators, high schools & colleges
- Almost doubled new consumers requesting other services and completing goals
- IL Specialists are ready & trained to develop new groups

## Disability Connection

- Name change from Disability Peer Support Group
- Changed from unstructured format to peer support through structured activities
- Move it, Learn it, Do it u Share knowledge & support for adapting to and living with disabilities
- True “peer support” group creating a community of connection & acceptance

## Ammo for Advocating

- Name change from Monthly Advocacy Peer Support Group
- Moved from “talking” about change to specific educational topics on individual & systems advocacy
- Peers collaborate with WyDPAC
- Group discussions on how to move disability advocacy forward

## Moving Forward

- Hybrid Structure
  - Groups offered via Zoom and in person
  - OWL set up in all Centers
  - Flexibility increases access

- Increase outreach & public awareness
- Ongoing assessment of consumer/community needs
- Implement other Peer Groups as needed

Thank You!

Wyoming Independent

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