IMPLEMENTING OR STRENGTHENING EFFECTIVE CORE SERVICES IN PEER SUPPORT: ABILITY 360’S EXAMPLE. PRESENTERS: AMINA DONNA KRUCK AND APRIL REED

AMINA DONNA KRUCK: THANK YOU GOOD MORNING EVERYBODY.

AUDIENCE: GOOD MORNING.

AMINA: I WANTED TO GIVE A LITTLE ADVERTISEMENT

FOR THESE TRAININGS AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

TO SEND YOUR STAFF TO THEM.

BECAUSE WE ALL -- I FEEL LIKE IT'S IMPORTANT

THAT OUR STAFF BECOME PART OF THE MOVEMENT.

AND SOMETIMES THEY CAN KIND OF GET INTO

SERVICE PROVISION. AND I LOVE THE IDEA

THAT BRUCE HAD ABOUT GIVING LEAVE TO PEOPLE

TO PARTICIPATE AT ADVOCACY EVENTS. WE USED TO HAVE

 HAVE A PEER MENTOR WHO -- HE WOULD MEET PEOPLE

AT THE BUS STOP, BECAUSE HE WAS A BUS USER

AND INVITE THEM TO THE CENTER. BUT HE WOULD ALSO TAKE

PEOPLE RIGHT OUT OF REHAB TO TRANSIT ACTIONS

AND MEETINGS -- WHO WAS GOING TO BE A BUS USER.

AND SO, I THINK A LOT OF TIMES WE THINK PEOPLE

HAVE TO GO THROUGH THEIR SKILLS

BEFORE THEY GET INVOLVED WITH ADVOCACY.

BUT I WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE THOSE SKILLS

TO DO ADVOCACY WITH YOUR STAFF AS WELL AS WITH YOUR

CONSUMERS. AND FOR STAFF WHAT I FEEL LIKE -- I KNOW IT'S

AN EXPENSE BUT THEY WORK IN SUCH ISOLATION. EVEN

IF YOUR CENTER IS BIG, THEY ARE DOING THEIR PIECE. AND IT'S

SO POWERFUL, AS YOU ARE EXPERIENCING, TO BE IN A ROOM TO A

LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THE MOVEMENT. IT

 HELPS THEM GET CONNECTED TO THE MOVEMENT. AND THAT'S WHAT

 WE WANT. WE WANT THEM ALL TO BE LEADERS IN THE MOVEMENT.

 AND SO, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO BE GENEROUS WITH GETTING YOUR

 STAFF TO THESE KINDS OF TRAININGS WHENEVER YOU CAN. TO

 HAVE THAT WIDER NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE. IT WILL RAISE THEIR

 SELF-ESTEEM ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE DOING, WHEN WHAT THEY ARE

 DOING A LOT OF TIMES IS HARD AND LONELY. SO THAT'S MY

 SERMON FOR THE DAY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

 APRIL REED: DO YOU WANT ME TO START OUT? I WILL JUMP RIGHT

 IN? SO, AMINA AND I ARE REALLY HAPPY TO BE HERE WITH YOU

 TODAY TO TALK ABOUT A PROGRAM THAT NOT ONLY WE FEEL LIKE

 MADE OUR CENTER A KINDER, SAFER PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO COME

 AND SHARE. BUT ALSO, THAT RUNNING AND ADMINISTERING

 THIS PROGRAM HAS BEEN ONE OF THE GREAT

 PRIVILEGES OF BOTH OF OUR CAREERS. JUST TO BE ABLE TO WORK

 WITH SO MANY AMAZING VOLUNTEERS WHO CARE ABOUT WHAT THEY

 ARE DOING AND CARE ABOUT PEER SUPPORT AND BELIEVE IN IL

 AND BELIEVE IN THE MOVEMENT. SO, WE ARE EXCITED TO SHARE

 THAT WITH YOU TODAY AND HAVE A BRIEF CONVERSATION ABOUT

 PEER SUPPORT AND PEER MENTORING. AND WE ARE GOING TO

 START OFF WITH KIND OF A DEFINITION. SO, WHEN WE TALK

 ABOUT PEER SUPPORT, OFTEN IN CENTERS WE TALK ABOUT AS STAFF,

 BOTH AMINA AND I HAVE DISABILITIES. WE ARE GOING TO SIT

 DOWN WITH SOMEBODY AND DO PEER SUPPORT THAT ONE-ON-ONE

 WHERE I SHARE ABOUT MY DISABILITY, WHAT I HAVE LEARNED.

 AND I SHARE WITH THEM AND OFFER INFORMATION, OFFER

 INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS, RIGHT? SO, ALL OF US DO THAT

AS STAFF WITH DISABILITIES AT CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING.

BUT WHAT WE ARE GOING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT FOR THE NEXT FEW

MINUTES IS A STEP THAT WE TOOK BEYOND THAT, WHICH IS WHERE WE

REALLY CREATED AN ORGANIZED PEER MENTOR PROGRAM. WHERE WE

COULD TRAIN AND SUPERVISE VOLUNTEERS WHO WOULD ACT AS

ROLE MODELS AND COACHES FOR OTHER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

SO, WE ARE TALKING SOMETHING SEPARATE FROM WHAT YOU DO

WHEN YOU USE YOUR IL SKILLS SPECIALIST OR YOU AS STAFF

ARE OFFERING PEER SUPPORT. OKAY?

A FEW YEARS AGO IN 2008, CIL-NET DID A SURVEY AND

THEY FOUND THAT ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF US STATED THAT WE

OFFERED AN ORGANIZED PEER MENTOR PROGRAM. A LITTLE OVER

53 PERCENT OF US STATED THAT WE HAD A FORMAL TRAINING OR

CURRICULUM. SO THAT WE DID SOMETHING THAT SAID HEY PEER

MENTORS COME IN AND GET TRAINED AND HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED

TO KNOW ABOUT IL AND HOW TO WORK WITH PEOPLE WITH

DISABILITIES. ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF US INDICATED THAT WE

DIDN'T HAVE A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM THAT WAS ORGANIZED OR

FORMALIZED. AND ABOUT HALF OF US IN THAT GROUP SAID WELL,

WE ONCE DID, BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON, WE HAVE STOPPED

OFFERING THAT OR WE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN.

SO, THAT WAS OVER TEN YEARS AGO -- AMINA AND I DEFINITELY FEEL

LIKE THOSE NUMBERS HAVE IMPROVED, BECAUSE WE HEAR FROM

PEOPLE ALL OVER -- AT CENTERS ALL OVER THE NATION -- WHO

SAY WE ARE DOING THIS, WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT IT.

THANK YOU TO CIL-NET WHO HAS OFFERED A LOT OF TRAINING

AND SUPPORT TO CENTERS OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS

TO IMPROVE THEIR PROGRAMS.

SO JUST AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT WE THINK OF WHEN WE

THINK OF PEER MENTORING. WE THINK OF THIS AS THE HEART OF

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT. WE THINK OF THIS AS JUST

A CORE TO OUR IL PHILOSOPHY AND OUR VALUES.

MENTORS WORK WITH ANYONE WHO IS ADAPTING TO A DISABILITY OR

SEEKING TO INCREASE THEIR INDEPENDENCE. AND THE GREAT

PART ABOUT PEER MENTORING IS MENTORS CAN FEEL EMPOWERED AND

USE THEIR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. ALL THOSE THINGS WE

HAVE LEARNED THE HARD WAY. WE GET TO PAY THAT FORWARD AND

MAKE SOMEBODY ELSE'S JOURNEY A LITTLE BIT EASIER. AND

FINALLY, WE KNOW THIS WORKS. THERE IS MORE STATISTICAL

INFORMATION ABOUT PEER MENTORING AND VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS.

IT'S BEEN STUDIED EXTENSIVELY. WE KNOW PEER SUPPORT WORKS.

AND BRUCE MENTIONED YESTERDAY OR THE DAY BEFORE ABOUT AA, RIGHT?

THAT'S A PEER SUPPORT EXAMPLE. RIGHT?

CAN ANYBODY ELSE THINK OF ONE?

LARGE NATIONAL GROUPS.

AUDIENCE: WEIGHT WATCHERS.

APRIL: WEIGHT WATCHERS. YEAH, ABSOLUTELY, RIGHT. WE GO INTO

A GROUP, WE TALK, WE SHARE, WE SUPPORT EACH OTHER.

SO, WE KNOW THAT PEER SUPPORT WORKS. AND WE WILL TALK

A LITTLE YOU BIT -- OUR PROGRAM, WHEN WE CREATED IT,

WE REALLY RELIED ON OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES

IN THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY. MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY --

INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES HAVE DONE THIS

FOR MANY, MANY YEARS AND HAVE BEEN REALLY SUCCESSFUL USING

THE PEER SUPPORT MODEL.

SO, OUR PROGRAM STARTED IN 1990. AT THAT TIME WE HAD A

LARGE SERVICE AREA, WHICH WE STILL DO, AND WE HAD A

FEW STAFF. AND SO, WE WERE TRYING TO GET CREATIVE ABOUT

HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY. AT ABILITY 360

WE SERVE A VERY METROPOLITAN AREA OF PHOENIX AND OUR

SURROUNDING VALLEY AREAS, BUT PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE WE ALSO

SERVE VERY RURAL COMMUNITIES. SO, ONE OF MY STAFF WHO WAS

HERE YESTERDAY, ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES, SHE IS OUT IN THE MIDDLE

OF THE DESERT ON RESERVATION LAND TO GO TO MEET WITH

PEOPLE. AND HER AND I FOR YEARS HAVE WORKED TO CONNECT

WITH THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH PEER SUPPORT AND PEER MENTORS

AND HOW DO WE DO THAT WHEN WE ARE NEVER GOING TO GET THEM

FACE-TO-FACE BECAUSE OF GEOGRAPHICAL CHALLENGES? SO, WE

REALLY LOOKED AT OUR COMMUNITY AND WE LOOKED AROUND AND WE

SAW MANY, MANY ADVOCATES IN OUR COMMUNITY -- TRANSPORTATION

ADVOCATES, LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATES, ADVOCATES THAT WERE

GOOD IN HOSPITALS. AND WE SAID HOW CAN WE USE SOME OF

THESE ALLIES WE HAVE IN THE COMMUNITY, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF

THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND HELP THEM HELP US? HOW CAN WE REACH

MORE PEOPLE? OUR STAFF ISN'T GOING TO GROW RIGHT NOW, BUT

MAYBE WE CAN USE VOLUNTEERS TO BROADEN OUR REACH. AND WE

WERE VERY LUCKY. ONE OF OUR LEADERS HAD UTILIZED A PEER

MENTOR IN THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE AFTER A SPINAL CORD INJURY

AND SO, WE HAD A LOT OF SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM HER

AS OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR THAT THIS COULD BE A BENEFICIAL

EXPERIENCE.

AMINA: HOW MANY PEOPLE HERE FEEL LIKE YOU

HAVE HAD A PEER MENTOR IN YOUR WORK THAT YOU DO? AND

HOW MANY OF THOSE OF YOU THAT DID, DO YOU THINK THAT MAY

HAVE REALLY MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE FOR YOU TO HAVE THAT?

RIGHT. SO, LEADERSHIP MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE IN WHETHER

THIS IS A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM. THE PERSON THAT STARTED

THE PROGRAM HAD QUADRIPLEGIA FROM A CAR ACCIDENT, HAD

BEEN A POLICE OFFICER IN HIS PREVIOUS LIFE AND HE

DIDN'T WANT PEOPLE TO HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL THE WAY

HE DID. HE HAD SOME PEER SUPPORT THROUGH THE P B.A.,

BUT AT THAT TIME OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DIDN'T SUPPORT

THE PROGRAM MUCH. SO THEREFORE, WASN'T WILLING TO GIVE IT

RESOURCE. SO THEN WHEN WE HAD A CHANGE OF EXECUTIVE

DIRECTORS, THAT'S WHEN THE PROGRAM REALLY GOT THE SUPPORT

IT NEEDED TO TAKE OFF. SO, I AM JUST MENTIONING THAT

BECAUSE THERE ARE SOME DECISION MAKERS HERE.

APRIL: SO JUST A QUICK SNAPSHOT OF OUR PROGRAM TODAY.

WE TRY TO MAINTAIN ABOUT BETWEEN 50 AND 60 ACTIVE PEER

MENTORS. THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY ARE MATCHED ALL THAT

TIME, BUT THEY ARE AVAILABLE TO US TO MENTOR. AND THEY

DO ABOUT 1500 HOURS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE FOR US. SOME OF

THE MENTORS ALONG WITH OTHER VOLUNTEERS ARE AT THE CENTER

AND DO CLERICAL, TECHNICAL SUPPORT, VOLUNTEERING AT

EVENTS. WE HAD A HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR OVER THE

WEEKEND AND SO THEY ARE A HUGE SUPPORT TEAM TO COME OUT AND

HELP US AS STAFF AT THOSE LARGE COMMUNITY EVENTS.

OUR GOAL INITIALLY WAS JUST TO PROVIDE PEER MENTORS

THAT COULD TEACH INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS AND OFFER PEER SUPPORT.

WE WANTED TO SUPPORT OUR CONSUMERS AT REACHING THEIR IL GOALS,

BUT WE ALSO WANTED OUR STAFF TO HAVE SUPPORT. A LOT OF TIMES

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS ARE CREATED AND WE DON'T REALLY THINK A

BOUT HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS WE CAN MANAGE.

I HAVE HAD CENTERS THAT I HAVE WORKED WITH THAT MAYBE

THEY HAD FIVE STAFF. SO, I HAVE SAID HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS

CAN YOU MANAGE? AND THEY ARE LIKE, OH 25. AND I’M THINKING,

NO, YOU NEED TWO. YOU HAVE GOT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU CAN MANAGE

WITH YOUR WORKLOAD. AND SO, WE DON'T WANT A VOLUNTEER

PROGRAM TO BE A DRAIN ON STAFF’S TIME. WE WANT IT TO BE AN

ENHANCEMENT. AND WE REALLY WANTED OUR VOLUNTEERS TO

UNDERSTAND OUR CENTER, UNDERSTAND THE PROGRAMS, AND BE

ABLE TO SUPPORT THE STAFF AND THE WORK THAT THEY DO. AND

FINALLY, WE WANTED TO INCREASE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE

DISABILITY COMMUNITY. THAT WAS A HUGE GOAL FOR US, IS TO

HAVE A PROGRAM WHERE WE COULD USE THESE PEER MENTORS AND

THAT THEY WOULD GO ON TO A THOUSAND OTHER THINGS, WORK,

AND VOLUNTEERISM AND GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AND BECOMING

ADVOCATES AND LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATES AND WE HAVE HAD THE

PRIVILEGE OF SEEING THEM DO THAT. THIS IS YOU.

AMINA: SO, WHAT I DID -- I HAD A STRONG BACKGROUND

WITH PEER SUPPORT -- BUT TO FIND OUT, I WENT AROUND

AND TALKED TO SOME SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS IN

THE COMMUNITY ABOUT HOW THEY DID IT. AND WHAT I REALIZED

WAS REALLY IT'S A HUMAN RESOURCE ROLE. IT'S QUITE A

SKILL. AND KIND OF A MATCH MAKING ROLE. AND THAT IT—

SO, WE STARTED OUT WITH A PART TIME PERSON BECAUSE WE WERE A

SMALL CENTER. WE ONLY HAD ABOUT 13 STAFF TO START OUT

WITH. BUT OVER TIME IT BECAME CLEAR THAT WE REALLY NEEDED

A FULL TIME PERSON TO MANAGE THIS PROGRAM. AND SO, I

CONVINCED THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE TIME, SUSAN WEBB,

TO USE PART C MONIES FOR THIS. AND SHE SAID OKAY.

AS LONG AS THEY ARE AT LEAST VOLUNTEERING AS MANY HOURS AS

ONE STAFF PERSON WOULD BE DOING. SO THAT WE ARE NOT

THROWING AWAY MONEY THAT'S NOT PRODUCTIVE. SO, I AGREED.

OK, THAT'S WHAT WE WILL DO AND BEGAN BUILDING THE PROGRAM.

THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECRUITMENT AND ORIENTATION

AND TRAINING OF THE MENTORS

AND THEY MAKE THE MATCHES. THEY CONDUCT PROGRAM

EVALUATION AND THE VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION. ALL

OF THOSE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT PARTS OF A GOOD PROGRAM.

AND ALL OF THIS IS DOCUMENTED ON THE ILRU WEBSITE, SO THE

MATERIALS ARE FREELY GIVEN AND WE PROBABLY GET CALLS

FROM TWO TO FOUR CENTERS EVERY MONTH TO GET SOME TECHNICAL

ASSISTANCE ON THEIR PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BEEN THROUGH SOME OF

THE TRAININGS THAT WE HAVE DONE.

SO, I WILL LET YOU GO ON WITH THE NEXT PART.

APRIL: SO, WHO ARE THE MENTORS? THESE ARE

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE PRACTICING

INDEPENDENT LIVING IN THEIR OWN LIVES, ARE INTEGRATED INTO

THE COMMUNITY AND HAVE A DESIRE TO HELP SOMEBODY ELSE DO

THAT SAME THING. THEY HAVE THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES

THAT THEY WANT TO SHARE. THEY HAVE EXPERTISE THAT THEY

WANT TO SHARE. BUT A BIG POINT FOR US IS THAT MENTORS

SHOULD NEVER BE ACTING AS COUNSELORS OR THERAPISTS. WE

NEVER PUT OUR MENTORS IN THAT ROLE AND THAT'S A HUGE PIECE

THAT WE TRAIN THEM ON. THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING

A VOLUNTEER AND BEING A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL. AND THAT IS

A CLEAR BOUNDARY THAT WE CREATE FOR THEM.

AMINA: I WILL SAY, THOUGH, THAT OFTEN THE

BEST LEADERS ARE RELUCTANT LEADERS AND NOT THE ONES WITH

BIG EGOS WANTING TO BE LEADERS. I HAVE RECRUITED PEOPLE

FOR PEER MENTORS THAT IT DIDN’T OCCUR TO THEM TO BE A PEER

MENTOR BUT I SAW THAT CLEARLY, THEY WORKED THINGS OUT IN THEIR LIFE

THAT THEY COULD SHARE WITH OTHERS AND OFTEN THEY ARE

SURPRISED BECAUSE THEY HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT. LIKE

SOMEBODY WHO IS USING CAREGIVERS ON A REGULAR BASIS MAY

NOT REALIZE WHAT A SKILL THEY HAVE DEVELOPED TO LEARN HOW

TO MANAGE THOSE CAREGIVERS. THAT'S A MANAGEMENT SKILL

THAT OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW TO THAT -- HAVING TO DO THAT --

MAY NOT KNOW HOW TO DO. SO, THE PERSON MAY NOT BE LIKE

100 PERCENT INDEPENDENT, BUT YOU MAY SEE THAT THEY HAVE

REALLY WORKED THEIR WAY THROUGH SOMETHING THAT YOU KNOW

OTHERS ARE TRYING TO WORK THEIR WAY THROUGH AND THEY CAN

BE HELPFUL.

APRIL: ACROSS CILS THERE HAS BEEN A REAL DEBATE ABOUT THE

ISSUE OF PAID VERSUS VOLUNTEER.

AND SO, AMINA AND I REALLY WILL SAY RIGHT OFF THE BAT

THAT WE SEE BOTH SIDES OF THIS. IN ARIZONA, WE DON'T

HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO -- PEER SUPPORT, PEER

MENTORING IS NOT A REIMBURSABLE SERVICE THROUGH THE

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES OR THROUGH OUR

STATE MEDICAID PROGRAM. SO WE DON'T HAVE OPPORTUNITIES LIKE

OTHER STATES MIGHT. I HAVE BEEN TO PENNSYLVANIA AND

WORKED WITH SOME OF THE CILS THERE. THEY CAN USE WAIVERS

SO, WE REALLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO INVESTIGATE WHAT YOUR STATE

HAS AVAILABLE. SOME STATES HAVE A DEFINITION OF PEER

SUPPORT OR PEER MENTORING AND SO THAT OPENS UP FUNDING.

IN ARIZONA WE DON'T AND SO WE HAD TO STICK WITH VOLUNTEERS.

BUT WE CAN TELL YOU THAT WE HAVE SEEN SOME BENEFIT

IN USING VOLUNTEERS. WE HAVE CERTAINLY HAD MENTEES

COME BACK AND TELL US THAT IT FELT REALLY DIFFERENT TO

THEM TO HAVE A VOLUNTEER THERE. TO KNOW THAT SOMEBODY WAS

GIVING THEIR TIME AND THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO BE THERE. IT WASN'T

ANOTHER PAID STAFF AND THAT MEANT SOMETHING MORE TO THEM.

IT HELPS CONTRADICT THAT PATIENT ROLE THAT PEOPLE --.

AMINA: THE HIERARCHY THING.

APRIL: RIGHT. POWER. WE TALK ABOUT POWER IN RELATIONSHIPS.

THIS IS AN EQUAL RELATIONSHIP. AND FOR US IT'S BEEN

REALLY IMPORTANT THAT MENTORS COULD BE THERE, WHEN WE AS

PAID STAFF COULDN'T BE, IN THE EVENINGS OR IN THE WEEKENDS

AND THAT THERE'S THAT FLEXIBILITY FOR OUR MENTORS AS

VOLUNTEERS. OUR AVERAGE MENTOR IS WORKING MAYBE FIVE TO

TEN HOURS A MONTH. SO, WE ARE NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THEM

AS VOLUNTEERS. THEY ARE NOT DOING A PART-TIME JOB. WE

WANTED IT TO BE FLEXIBLE FOR THEM TO BE ABLE TO

INCORPORATE VOLUNTEERING AS PART OF THEIR LIVES BUT IT

SHOULD NEVER BE SOMETHING THAT'S ALL CONSUMING AND

DEMANDING -- THAT THIS SHOULD FIT INTO THE SCHEDULE

THAT THEY ALREADY HAVE.

AMINA: WE DO HELP PAY FOR TRANSPORTATION.

SO, THEY CAN TURN IN MILEAGE SHEETS FOR THE TIME THAT THEY

ARE CONNECTING, OR EVEN WHAT THEIR DIAL-A-RIDE, THEIR PARATRANSIT

OR BUS EXPENSES ARE, AND WE WILL REIMBURSE.

PROBABLY ONLY, MAYBE HALF AT THE MOST, OF OUR MENTORS

ACTUALLY REQUEST THAT. THE REST OF THEM JUST DO IT.

APRIL: SO, WHO ARE THE MENTEES?

AGAIN, THESE ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

THEY ARE ALREADY OPEN CONSUMERS UNDER OUR PROGRAM.

SO, THEY HAVE ALREADY STARTED WORKING ONE-ON-ONE

WITH AN ABILITY 360 STAFF ON THEIR GOALS

AND THEY HAVE A CONSUMER SERVICE RECORD.

WE ACTUALLY ASK OUR STAFF IN THE INDEPENDENT LIVING

SKILLS PROGRAM TO WORK WITH SOMEONE FOR ONE MONTH

OR FOUR APPOINTMENTS, SO THAT THEY CAN GET TO KNOW

THAT PERSON AND UNDERSTAND THE GOAL PLAN BEFORE

THEY SEND THEM OVER FOR A VOLUNTEER PEER MENTOR.

AMINA: SO, THIS PREVENTS STAFF FROM DUMPING

PEOPLE THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH

ON US AND ALSO HELPS THE CONSUMER GET TO A PLACE

WHERE THEY ARE READY TO CLARIFY THEIR GOALS.

BECAUSE AS YOU KNOW, THEY ARE NOT EXACTLY,

IN THE BEGINNING. SO, WE KEEP IT REALLY SEPARATE.

THE CONSUMER, ALL THE TIME THEY ARE WORKING WITH A MENTOR,

CONTINUE TO HAVE A STAFF PERSON WORKING WITH THEM. THIS

IS JUST PART OF WHAT THEY ARE GETTING. AND SO THE

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR IS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING THE

PEER MENTORS, NOT THE CONSUMER ISSUES. THE OTHER STAFF

ARE DOING THAT.

APRIL: AND NOT EVERY CONSUMER IS REFERRED TO PARTICIPATE.

NOT EVERYONE WOULD WANT A PEER MENTOR OR NEED A PEER MENTOR.

IF YOU ARE COMING FOR A HOME MOD, YOU JUST MIGHT NEED THAT.

AND CONSUMERS MUST BE READY TO FULLY PARTICIPATE.

WE THINK OF THIS AS A TEAM. I KNOW THE LAST

COUPLE OF DAYS WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT HOW DO WE

INTEGRATE CORE SERVICES AND HOW DO WE WORK WELL TOGETHER.

AND I THINK THIS PROGRAM -- DOING THIS WOULD NOT SURVIVE IF

OUR STAFF WERE NOT COMMUNICATING CONSTANTLY ABOUT

REFERRALS. AND SO, WHEN OUR IL SKILLS STAFF COME TO US AND

SAY I HAVE A REFERRAL, THE PEER MENTOR COORDINATOR IS

REALLY WORKING WITH THEM. IT'S A DISCUSSION. IT'S A

CONVERSATION. THE CONSUMER IS IN ON THESE

CONVERSATIONS AND IS PART OF THE TEAM. THEN WE BRING IN

THE MENTOR. EVERYBODY HAS TO BE ON THE SAME PAGE ABOUT

WHAT THE GOALS ARE AND WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE GOING TO TAKE

PLACE. SO, IT REALLY IS AN IMPORTANT PROCESS THAT OUR

STAFF HAVE REALLY GOOD COMMUNICATION AND THEY ARE

SUPPORTING THE CONSUMER AND THE MENTOR IN THE BEST WAY.

AMINA: BECAUSE WE HAVE A BIG CENTER -- SO WE

HAVE A HUGE STAFF. OVER HALF OF OUR STAFF IS WORKING IN

THE HOME CARE SERVICES AREA NONMEDICAL. AND THEN WE HAVE

A COMMUNITY INTEGRATION UNIT. DARRELL IS THE ONE WHO

SUPERVISES THAT UNIT AND THEN THERE'S AN ADVOCACY UNIT.

THAT'S WHAT APRIL DOES AND THERE'S A BUNCH OF PROGRAMS.

EACH ONE HAS LIKE SIX TO TEN PROGRAMS. THE TWO PEOPLE WHO

REALLY CROSS AND HELP THE SEAMLESSNESS PIECE ARE THE I&R

COORDINATOR AND THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR. BECAUSE THEY ARE THE TWO

PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING BACK AND FORTH AND HAVE TO KNOW ALL THE STAFF

AND ALL THE PROGRAMS FOR APPROPRIATE REFERRALS AND

SUPPORT.

APRIL: SO, WHAT DO THE ABILITY 360 MENTORS DO?

THEY ARE WORKING WITH CONSUMERS WHO ARE ADAPTING TO A DISABILITY,

LEARNING NEW SKILLS THAT WILL INCREASE THEIR INDEPENDENCE

AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

THEY HAVE TO HAVE REGULAR CONTACT WITH A MENTEE. WE

DIDN'T WANT TO TELL PEOPLE WHEN TO MEET OR HOW TO MEET, BUT

WE DID ASK THEM TO BE IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER AT LEAST

TWO TIMES A MONTH. THAT CAN BE PHONE, IN PERSON, E-MAIL,

FACEBOOK SKYPE. IF WE KNOW THEY ARE IN TOUCH AT LEAST

TWO TIMES A MONTH, WE KNOW THE MENTOR UNDERSTANDS THE GOALS

AND THAT THERE'S SOME ACTIVE WORK GOING ON.

NOW, A LOT OF THEM WILL DO MORE THAN THAT

DEPENDING ON WHAT THEY ARE WORKING ON OR MAYBE

IF THE MENTEE IS HAVING A ROUGH TIME, THEY MAY NEED TO MEET MORE

OFTEN TO SUPPORT. BUT WE REALLY LET THEM DECIDE HOW OFTEN

AFTER THAT AND WHEN AND WHERE.

MENTORS ARE TEACHING INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

SO THIS CAN BE ANYTHING FROM BUDGETING,

USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, WORKING WITH SOMEBODY ON

SELF-ESTEEM. WE WILL TALK A LITTLE BIT LATER ON ABOUT ALL

THE EVALUATIONS WE DO WITH THE MENTORS AND THE CONSUMERS

TO MAKE SURE THAT THINGS ARE WORKING AND THAT GOALS ARE

BEING ACCOMPLISHED. WE KNOW FROM THESE EVALUATIONS THAT

THE MOST REQUESTED GOALS WE STILL GET AFTER ALL OF THESE

YEARS OF DOING IT, IT'S ALWAYS ADVOCACY AND IT'S ALWAYS

SUPPORTING ME IN SELF-ESTEEM. SO THOSE ARE ALWAYS TOP

GOALS.

MENTORS ARE ROLE MODELS AND THEY ARE TEACHING

SELF ADVOCACY SKILLS, ASSISTING IN FINDING AND CONNECTING

TO COMMUNITY RESOURCE. THEY ARE PROVIDING SUPPORT, AND

ENCOURAGEMENT AND THEY ARE ADVOCATING WITH SERVICE

PROVIDERS.

ONE OF THE THINGS WE HAVE BEEN REALLY EXCITED

ABOUT IN THE LAST FEW YEARS IS SEEING OUR MENTORS KIND OF

FIND OTHER WAYS TO VOLUNTEER. AND AMINA AND I HAVE ALWAYS

DONE DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAININGS WHERE WE TALK TO

CORPORATIONS AND BUSINESSES ABOUT LANGUAGE AND ETIQUETTE.

AMINA: AND NONPROFITS.

APRIL: AND NONPROFITS, YES. SO, WE INCORPORATED

OUR PEER MENTORS INTO THIS. AND SO, WE WORKED AND

DEVELOPED A LITTLE SPEAKERS TRAINING FOR OUR MENTORS. AND

WE HAVE A GROUP OF ABOUT TEN TO 15 PEER MENTORS -- PEOPLE OF

ALL DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITIES, DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES --

THAT ARE WILLING TO COME AND SIT ON PANELS FOR US AND

ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT -- WE HAVE KIND OF A SCRIPT A

FORMULA THAT AMINA USES.

AMINA: A RECIPE. I HAVE A RECIPE FOR PANEL DISCUSSIONS THAT

I LEARNED YEARS AGO THAT ALWAYS WORKS, SO WE USE THAT

RECIPE A LOT. BUT ALSO, OUT TO THE SCHOOLS. WE GO OUT TO

THE SCHOOLS AND DO THAT AS WELL.

APRIL: AND THEN ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I

KNOW A LOT OF CENTERS HAVE BECOME EXCITED ABOUT IN MORE

RECENT YEARS IS DOING SOME SORT OF PEER SUPPORT GROUP.

AND SO WE DO THOSE AS WELL. WE HAVE A MONTHLY MENTORING

GROUP. AND WE DEVELOPED THAT BECAUSE MENTORS CAME TO US

AND SAID YOU KNOW I TOOK MY MENTEE TO THE STROKE SURVIVORS

SUPPORT GROUP OR THE SPINAL CORD INJURY GROUP AT THE HOSPITAL

AND IT WAS REALLY DEPRESSING. AND THERE WASN'T ANY IL TALK THERE.

WON’T YOU GUYS CREATE SOMETHING WHERE I CAN TAKE MY MENTEE

AND I KNOW THEY ARE GOING TO GET AROUND OTHER MENTORS

AND IT’S GOING TO BE REALLY POSITIVE AND ENCOURAGING AND

TALK ABOUT IL. AND SO, WE STARTED A MONTHLY DISABILITY DISCUSSION

MENTORING GROUP WHERE MENTORS WILL BRING THEIR MENTEES. A LOT

OF OUR VOLUNTEERS ATTEND AND SUPPORT THIS GROUP.

AMINA: AND ALSO, WE HAD A REQUEST COMING IN

FROM ONE OF OUR REINTEGRATION STAFF WHO WERE HELPING

PEOPLE MOVE OUT OF NURSING HOMES AND THEY WANTED A BEGINNING PLACE

THEY COULD START BRINGING PEOPLE. BECAUSE YOU KNOW HOW HARD

IT IS TIMEWISE AND STUFF TO COORDINATE THAT. THAT THEY

COULD BRING THE PEOPLE THEY WERE WORKING WITH AS CONSUMERS

THAT WERE IN THE NURSING HOMES OUT SOMEPLACE TO START

MEETING OTHER PEOPLE. AND WE HAD SOME PEER MENTORS THAT

WENT THROUGH THE TRAINING BUT THEY WOULD ONLY DO PEER

MENTORING WITH PEOPLE WITH THE SAME DISABILITY AS THEM.

WE HAD THIS COUPLE AND THEY ONLY WANTED TO WORK WITH PEOPLE

WHO WERE AMPUTEES, BECAUSE SHE WAS AN AMPUTEE, AND SO WE --

APRIL: BUT THEY WERE REALLY GOOD.

AMINA: BUT THEY WERE REALLY GOOD, SO YEAH. SO, WE

WANTED TO GET THEM INVOLVED, SO IT'S ALSO A WAY FOR

THE MENTORS WHO DON'T HAVE A MATCH TO STAY INVOLVED

AND THEY REALLY CREATE WHAT THEY WANT THAT GROUP TO BE.

DO THEY WANT US TO BRING IN SPEAKERS; ARE

THERE TOPICS THEY WANT TO LEARN? SO, IT'S REALLY EVOLVED

AND THEY HAVE BECOME SOME OF OUR BEST GRASS ROOTS

ADVOCATES, BECAUSE THROUGH THAT THEY HAVE GOTTEN TRAINING

ON VOTING AND HOW THE LEGISLATURE WORKS AND THINGS LIKE

THAT. AND THEY SHARED WITH EACH OTHER. I WALKED IN ONE

TIME AND THEY WERE ALL TALKING ABOUT WHAT THEIR OTHER

PASSION WAS. AND WE HAD NO IDEA THAT THEY WERE ARTISTS

AND THEY WERE CROCHET EXPERTS AND THEY WERE ANIMAL RIGHTS

ACTIVISTS GOING AND VOLUNTEERING AT THE HUMANE SOCIETY.

WE DIDN'T KNOW THIS STUFF ABOUT THEM, NOR DID THEY ABOUT

EACH OTHER AND THEY WERE ABLE TO CONNECT ON A DEEPER LEVEL

AND FIND OTHER FRIENDSHIPS IN A WAY THAT WE DIDN'T KNOW.

SO, THESE MENTORS OFTEN BECOME FRIENDS. BOTH WITH THEIR MENTEE.

SOMETIMES IT'S A FRIENDSHIP AND SOMETIMES IT'S NOT.

SOMETIMES IT'S GET THE SKILL LEARNED AND WE ARE OFF. BUT

SOME PEOPLE SAY WE DON'T WANT TO BE ON YOUR LIST ANYMORE.

AND THEN THEY GO ACROSS-COUNTRY TOGETHER BECAUSE THEY

BECOME LIFELONG FRIENDS.

APRIL: SOME OF THE BARRIERS TO WRITING A

PEER MENTOR PROGRAM OR A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ARE: INAPPROPRIATE

REFERRALS. WE HAVE TO HAVE REALLY GOOD BOUNDARIES ABOUT

WHAT KIND OF REFERRALS WE CAN TAKE. AND SO, WE ARE VERY

CLEAR AND VERY FIRM ABOUT WHEN SOMEONE NEEDS TO GO TO

ANOTHER PROGRAM AT THE CENTER. THIS CAN'T BE A PLACE

WHERE YOU PUT YOUR HARDEST CONSUMERS OR THOSE THAT NEED

THE MOST WORK. YOU WILL BURN VOLUNTEERS OUT AND IT'S NOT

FAIR TO THEM AND THEY DON'T HAVE THE EXPERTISE TO WORK ON

THE HARDEST CASES, A LOT OF THEM, ALTHOUGH SOME OF THEM DO.

SO INAPPROPRIATE REFERRALS THAT CAN BE A BARRIER. MAKING

EFFECTIVE MATCHES. THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE

REALLY HAVE OUR IL SKILLS PEOPLE SO INVOLVED IN WORKING

WITH THEM. BECAUSE THE MORE INFORMATION OUR PEER MENTOR

COORDINATOR GETS, THE BETTER MATCH THEY CAN MAKE.

AMINA: FOUR OF OUR REALLY MOST DEDICATED STAFF ARE PEOPLE

WHO CAME THROUGH OUR AGENCY STARTING OUT AS MENTORS.

APRIL: ROLE OF THE MENTOR. SO, WE TALK A

LOT IN THE PEER MENTOR TRAINING – WE’LL GET TO THAT IN

JUST A MINUTE – WE TALK A LOT WITH THE MENTORS ABOUT BOUNDARIES AND

SETTING BOUNDARIES. IT'S REALLY INTERESTING, THE SAME

THINGS WE STRUGGLE WITH AS STAFF -- HOW I DO KNOW IF I AM

HELPING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE -- THOSE KIND OF BOUNDARIES,

THEY STRUGGLE WITH THAT TOO. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR OF

MENTORS OR MENTEES. HONESTLY, THIS HASN'T COME UP AS MUCH

AS YOU MIGHT THINK.

AMINA: VERY RARE. SO, PEOPLE ARE REALLY SURPRISED ABOUT THIS.

PEOPLE ARE MOST AFRAID WHEN STARTING A

PROGRAM ABOUT THE LIABILITY. I HAVE GOT TO TELL YOU I

HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THIS PROGRAM FOR 27 YEARS. WE

HAVE HAD VERY LITTLE ISSUES. WE HAVE HAD PEOPLE GO

THROUGH CANCER, WE’VE HAD PEOPLE DIE. WE HAVE HAD PEOPLE GO

THROUGH DIVORCES AND LOTS OF UPHEAVAL IN THEIR LIVES AS

MENTORS OR MENTORS SUPPORTING MENTEES. BUT VERY LITTLE

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR. AND SOME OF THAT HAS TO DO WITH

HAVING -- APRIL DID THIS PROGRAM FOR MANY YEARS. AND, SHE IS

SOFT SPOKEN, BUT SHE CARRIES A REALLY BIG STICK. SHE

HAS VERY CLEAR ETHICAL BOUNDARIES AND MADE THAT

VERY CLEAR ON A REGULAR BASIS WHEN THINGS CAME UP FOR PEOPLE.

APRIL: AND THEN FINALLY, I THINK YOU KNOW, FOR

ANY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM, THE ONGOING NEED FOR NEW MENTORS.

AND SO, ONE OF THE THINGS YOU COULD DO IS REALLY JUST

HAVING A WELL-ORGANIZED TRAINING SO THAT YOU ARE NOT

HAVING TO START FROM SCRATCH EVERY TIME YOU HAVE TO TRAIN

NEW MENTORS.

ADDITIONAL BARRIERS. MANY CENTERS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO

SECURE FUNDING FOR THIS PROGRAM AND WE GET THAT.

WE KNOW AND HAVE WORKED WITH CENTERS THAT ARE

DOING THIS -- THEY ARE USING A VOLUNTEER THAT THEY REALLY

TRAINED AND THE VOLUNTEER WITH SUPPORT FROM STAFF IS

HELPING COORDINATE THE PROGRAM. WE HAD

TO DO THAT ONE TIME WHEN WE LOST OUR COORDINATOR.

I HAVE SEEN CENTERS WHERE THERE WERE THREE

STAFF THERE WHO WERE REALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT PEER SUPPORT

AND VOLUNTEERS AND THEY WANTED TO RUN THIS PROGRAM.

ONE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRAINING, ONE

WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND ONE WAS

RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISING THE MENTORS. THEY MADE THAT

WORK. SO, WE UNDERSTAND THAT NOT EVERY CENTER HAS THE

LUXURY OF HAVING A FULL-TIME COORDINATOR. BUT WE CAN TELL

YOU THAT'S WHEN WE GOT REALLY SUCCESSFUL IS WHEN WE HAD

SOMEBODY FULL TIME.

AMINA: WE HAD REALLY GOOD GROWTH THEN.

APRIL: THE OTHER CHALLENGE IS OUR SERVICE AREA. LIKE I

MENTIONED A LOT OF US ARE SERVING RURAL AREAS AND THAT CAN

BE A REAL CHALLENGE. I WORKED WITH A CENTER IN RURAL

MONTANA WHO WENT AFTER SOME FUNDING. THIS WAS BACK IN THE

DAY WHERE WE HAD WEB CAMS. RIGHT YOU COULD CLIP IT ON YOUR

COMPUTER AND THEY WENT AFTER FUNDING TO BUY WEB CAMS

BECAUSE THAT WAS HOW THEY WERE GOING TO

GET PEOPLE CONNECTED. TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP. WE DO USE

SKYPE. WE DO USE FACEBOOK. AND TRANSPORTATION CAN BE A

BARRIER. HOW YOU CONNECT PEOPLE IN A PEER SUPPORT

RELATIONSHIP IF WE CAN'T GET THEM TO A GROUP PHYSICALLY OR WE

CAN'T GET THEM TO A MENTOR.

AND I WOULD SAY THAT THAT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A

BARRIER. ONE OF OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL MATCHES -- EVEN THOUGH

THE LADIES BOTH LIVED IN AN AREA WHERE THERE WAS TRANSPORTATION --

DUE TO THEIR HEALTH, THEY WEREN'T ABLE TO GET TOGETHER.

THEY WORKED TOGETHER FOR YEARS AS A PHONE MATCH AND WERE ONE OF

OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL MENTORING MATCHES AND HAD NEVER MET

EACH OTHER UNTIL WE GAVE THEM AN AWARD, SO IT WAS VERY

COOL.

AMINA: AND NOW WE HAVE HAD THESE NELSON MANDELA FELLOWS

COMING TO OUR CENTER AND THESE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS.

SO THEN, APRIL WENT OVER TO MADAGASCAR TO WORK WITH THEIR CENTER

TO HELP THEM START A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AND NOW WE ARE DOING

SOME PEER MENTORING OVER THE INTERNET WITH PEOPLE IN MADAGASCAR,

WHICH IS PRETTY EXCITING.

APRIL: BY THE WAY I HAVE TO SAY THIS. THE

STATE DEPARTMENT WASN'T TOO SURE THAT PEER SUPPORT WOULD

WORK IN MADAGASCAR AND WE ALL KNOW THAT COULDN'T BE

FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. THEY HAVE A REALLY GOOD GROUP

GOING, SO IT DOES WORK. IT TRANSLATES.

SO, TAKING ON BARRIERS. THESE BARRIERS ARE COMMON

ACROSS ALL CENTERS. EVERY CENTER WE EVER WORKED WITH HAVE

THE SAME BARRIERS THAT WE DO. BUT I THINK SOME OF THESE

BARRIERS WE CAN ADDRESS BY REALLY DEVELOPING OUR PROGRAM

COMPONENTS AND REALLY FOCUSING ON HOW OUR POLICIES AND

PROCEDURES CAN SUPPORT THE WORK THAT WE DO AND WORK FOR

US. SO. WE WILL TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THAT. AND THOSE

COMPONENTS ARE REALLY RECRUITMENT -- KNOWING WHAT KIND OF

MENTOR YOU WANT. WHAT ARE YOUR MENTOR QUALIFICATIONS,

MENTOR TRAINING, MENTOR SUPERVISION, MENTOR RECOGNITION

AND PROGRAM EVALUATION. SO, WE ARE GOING TO TALK A LITTLE

BIT ABOUT EACH OF THESE NEXT.

AMINA: AND I WILL ALSO SAY REALLY QUICK, MENTOR MATCHING.

AND MATCHING IS NOT NECESSARILY BY DISABILITY AT ALL.

IT'S ABOUT SKILL MOSTLY. SOMETIMES IT'S SOMEBODY MOVED

FROM CHICAGO AND THEY ARE HOME SICK AND SOMEBODY ELSE

MOVED FROM CHICAGO, BUT KNOWS THEIR WAY AROUND,

AND CAN GET THEM TO KNOW AREAS IN THE COMMUNITY.

APRIL: YEAH AND I WOULD SAY FOR MATCHING, OFTENTIMES

IT DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION. WHEN YOU

HAVE SOMEBODY COMING OUT OF A HOSPITAL OR JUST BEEN NEWLY

DIAGNOSED, THEN THE SAME DISABILITY IS GOING TO BE

REALLY IMPORTANT. WE JUST MATCHED SOMEONE A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO

THAT SHE HAD JUST BEEN DIAGNOSED AND IS GOING TO BE LOSING

SOME OF HER SIGHT. SO, I CAN'T HAVE HER WORK WITH A MENTOR

WHO HAS AN AMPUTATION. SHE HAS TO BE WITH ONE OF OUR MENTORS

WHO HAS LOW VISION, BECAUSE A LOT OF HER QUESTIONS ARE GOING TO BE

ABOUT LOW VISION AND DISABILITY ADJUSTMENT AND TECHNOLOGY.

AMINA: WHICH WAS SHOCKING BY THE WAY TO VOCATIONAL

REHABILITATION ORIENTATION TRAINERS THAT A PEER MENTOR COULD BE VALUABLE

TO A PERSON WHO HAD NEWLY LOSS OF VISION. GUESS WHAT? THEY WERE.

BECAUSE THEY WERE AVAILABLE ON WEEKENDS AND NIGHTS

TO ASK QUESTIONS AND TO TALK ABOUT IT.

APRIL: OTHERWISE WE ARE LOOKING AT GOALS. WE ARE LOOKING AT GOALS. WE

ARE LOOKING AT SIMILAR PERSONALITIES AND BACKGROUNDS AND WE HAVE TO LOOK

AT THE WHOLE PERSON. WE HAVE TALKED A LOT ABOUT THAT DURING

THE TRAINING AND WE CERTAINLY HAVE IT DO THAT AS WE LOOK AT MATCHES.

MENTOR RECRUITMENT. YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE AN ONGOING NEED

FOR NEW MENTORS AND LOOKING AT YOUR VOLUNTEER LIST AND

SAYING ARE WE MEETING THE DEMANDS, ARE WE MEETING THE REQUESTS THAT WE

HAVE? ARE WE BEING DIVERSE? ARE THE MENTORS WE HAVE ON

OUR LIST STILL ACTIVE? WE RECRUIT -- VOLUNTEERS CALL US.

WE HAVE OUR APPLICATION ON OUR WEBSITE, BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE

HEAR ABOUT US AS WE GO OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY AND GIVE

PRESENTATIONS OR FROM OUR LOCAL ARTICLES OR OUR

LIVABILITY MAGAZINE. OUR CENTER STAFF CAN ALSO GIVE US

REFERRALS AND THAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT. AND ALSO, SOMETIMES

OUR MENTORS ARE OUR BIGGEST SOURCE OF ADVERTISEMENT. THEY

MEET SOMEBODY ON THE BUS AND THEY SAY HEY, DO YOU KNOW

ABOUT ABILITY 360? I’M A MENTOR THERE AND LET ME GIVE

YOU A CARD AND GET YOU TO THAT STAFF PERSON.

SO, THEY ARE A HUGE POSITIVE PIECE OF ADVERTISING FOR US.

AMINA: AND MENTEES THAT WANT TO GIVE BACK WHAT THEY GOT.

APRIL: I WOULD SAY ONE RECRUITMENT TIP

THAT'S ALWAYS WORKED WITH US IS REALLY LOOKING INTO THE

COMMUNITY AND SAYING WHO IS ALREADY AN ADVOCATE IN OUR

COMMUNITY? WHO IS A TRANSPORTATION LEADER? AND CAN WE

TAP INTO THEM TO SHARE THOSE SKILLS AS A MENTOR?

APRIL: AS WE SAID EARLIER, FOR THE MENTEE

RECRUITMENT, MENTEES ARE ALREADY ABILITY 360 CONSUMERS. THEY

HAVE AN OPEN CSR WITH US. WE ALSO IN ADDITION, WHEN THEY WANT TO HAVE A

MENTOR WE HAVE THEM COMPLETE A PEER MENTOR REQUEST FORM.

THAT TELLS THE COORDINATOR ABOUT WHEY THEY WANT A MENTOR AND

WHEN THEY ARE AVAILABLE; WHAT GOALS ARE THEY WORKING ON? THEY

HAVE TO IDENTIFY AN INDEPENDENT LIVING GOAL THAT THEY WANT

THEIR MENTOR TO SUPPORT THEM IN.

WE ALSO HAVE THEM SIGN A CONFIDENTIALITY

RELEASE THAT IS SPECIFIC TO THE PEER MENTOR PROGRAM.

I KNOW THERE WAS A CONVERSATION EARLIER ABOUT WHAT

I FEEL IS A REALLY AN INFORMED CONSENT ISSUE.

SO, WE CAN'T BE DOING THINGS WITHOUT TALKING TO OUR CONSUMERS.

SO, WE WANT THEM TO KNOW IF THERE IS A CRISIS, WE HAVE A

SPECIFIC CRISIS POLICY THAT REQUIRES THEIR MENTOR TO

TELL US SOMEONE IS IN CRISIS. BUT WE TELL THE MENTEE

THAT RIGHT UP FRONT BEFORE THEY EVEN SIGN UP FOR THE PROGRAM.

SO, WE EXPLAIN THE RULES OF THE PROGRAM, WHAT OUR

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY IS.

THAT WHAT YOU SAY TO YOUR MENTOR IS PRIVATE AND BETWEEN

THE TWO OF YOU, EXCEPT IN CASES OF A CRISIS SITUATION. SO

WE TELL THEM RIGHT UP FRONT. WE DO THAT REALLY GOOD

INFORMED CONSENT AND THEN IT'S THEIR CHOICE WHETHER

TO PROCEED OR NOT WITH HAVING A PEER MENTOR. WE HAVE NEVER

HAD SOMEONE NOT AGREE WITH THAT. IT'S ALSO GREAT BECAUSE IT

SETS THE BOUNDARIES. THEY UNDERSTAND THAT I CAN SHARE

WITH MY MENTOR AND IT'S JUST BETWEEN US.

BUT IF I REALLY NEED SOMETHING, IF I AM IN TROUBLE,

IF I AM IN A CRISIS, I CAN SAY IT AND MY MENTOR

IS GOING TO BE THERE AND GET ME HELP AND SUPPORT.

ONE RECRUITMENT TIP IS HAVING AN APPLICATION AND A

SCREENING TOOL FOR YOUR MENTEES THAT REALLY HELPS ASSURE

THAT THE PERSON IS READY FOR PEER MENTORING, THAT THEY ARE

READY TO BE A TEAMMATE, THAT THEY ARE NOT EXPECTING THE MENTOR

TO COME CLEAN THEIR GARAGE. WE HAVE HAD THAT HAPPEN.

THEY CALL AND SAY I NEED HELP ORGANIZING AND CLEANING OUT

MY GARAGE. WELL, LET'S FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT THAT

MEANS TO YOU. SO, MAKING SURE THAT THEY ARE READY TO BE A

PARTNER WITH A MENTOR AND THAT THE MENTOR HAS SOME GOOD

INFORMATION ABOUT THE MENTEE'S NEEDS AND WHAT THEY ARE

GOING TO BE THERE TO DO. OUR MENTORS MUST BE 18 YEARS OLD

OR OVER AS WELL AS OUR MENTEES. THE MENTORS HAVE TO

COMPLETE AN APPLICATION AND PROVIDE THREE CHARACTER

REFERENCES AND THEY DO HAVE TO COMPLETE A PHONE OR IN PERSON

INTERVIEW WITH THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR. OCCASIONALLY, BUT

VERY RARELY, WE WILL HAVE SOMEONE CALL AND SAY I HAVE A

DISABILITY, ISN'T THAT ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE A MENTOR? WE SAY NO.

WE WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE A GOOD LISTENER TOO, THAT YOU HAVE

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS. THIS IS A POSITION WE TAKE

SERIOUSLY. AND SO, WE DO SCREEN AND NOT EVERYBODY WHO

APPLIES IS READY TO BE A MENTOR OR IS GOING TO BE A GOOD

MENTOR BECAUSE MAYBE THEY ARE NOT A GOOD LISTENER SO WE DO

HAVE A REALLY FORMAL SERIOUS APPLICATION PROCESS.

RULES AND GUIDELINES. I HAVE WORKED

WITH MANY CENTERS WHERE THE GUIDELINES ARE IN THEIR HEAD, BUT

THEY HAVEN'T PUT IT DOWN ON PAPER. SO, YOU REALLY HAVE TO

TELL THE MENTORS WHAT THOSE GUIDELINES ARE AND AGAIN

INFORMED CONSENT. THIS IS WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU AS A

PEER MENTOR. SO, WE HAVE A FORMAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

FORM. THEY HAVE TO SIGN THIS AT THE PEER MENTOR TRAINING CLASS.

WE TALK TO THEM ABOUT HIPPA AND WE TALK TO THEM ABOUT

CONFIDENTIALITY. WE TALK TO THEM ABOUT OUR CRISIS POLICY.

WE ALSO TALK TO THEM ABOUT OTHER BOUNDARY ISSUES.

THAT THIS IS NOT MATCH.COM AND WE ARE NOT ARRANGING

DATING RELATIONSHIPS. THIS IS A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

AND THAT'S DIFFERENT. SO, WE GO THROUGH THOSE BOUNDARY --

AMINA: SO THAT IS AN ISSUE THAT HAS COME UP.

BUT OUT OF HUNDREDS ONLY A COUPLE OF TIMES. OTHERWISE

IT'S BEEN GOOD.

APRIL: WE ALSO DO A FINGERPRINT CLEARANCE.

WE STARTED DOING THIS MAYBE 11 YEARS AGO. IN

OUR STATE MENTORS -- IF YOU VOLUNTEER AT ANY NONPROFIT IN

THE STATE OF ARIZONA, YOU HAVE TO SIGN SOMETHING CALLED A

CRIMINAL SELF DISCLOSURE AFFIDAVIT. SO JUST TO INDICATE

THAT I DO NOT HAVE ANY FELONY CONVICTIONS AND THAT'S

SIGNED AND NOTARIZED. IN ADDITION TO THAT ABILITY 360 HAS GONE AHEAD

AND FINGERPRINTED ALL OF OUR PEER MENTORS AND WE REQUIRE THAT THEY HAVE

A FINGERPRINT CLEARANCE. OCCASIONALLY, WE WILL HAVE

SOMEBODY WHO COMES TO US AND BEFORE WE DO THAT PROCESS, THEY WILL

DISCLOSE THAT THEY DO HAVE A CONVICTION OF SOME SORT.

WE DO HAVE A PROCESS FOR DISCUSSING THAT. THE VP AND OUR CEO

AND THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR REALLY LOOK AT THAT

INDIVIDUAL'S SITUATION AND DECIDE IF THAT IS A BARRIER.

AMINA: SO LIKE DRUNK DRIVING TEN YEARS AGO,

THINGS THAT WERE QUITE A LONG TIME IN THE PAST AND NOTHING

SINCE. BASICALLY, NOTHING THAT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE

DANGEROUS TO ANOTHER PERSON. THOSE KIND OF THINGS.

APRIL: QUALIFICATION TIP. I WOULD SAY -- THIS SOUNDS SILLY --

BUT HAVING YOUR APPLICATION AND YOUR FORMS IN PLACE BEFORE

YOU START RECRUITING. WE HAVE WORKED WITH CENTERS

WHERE THEY ARE SO EXCITED AND THEY ARE GREAT WE HAVE PEOPLE

READY TO GO. AND I SAY WAIT. DID THEY FILL OUT AN APPLICATION?

DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THEM?

AMINA: WE HAVE MODELS FOR ALL OF THAT AND IT IS ALL UP ON THE ILRU

WEBSITE.

APRIL: IT’S ALL AVAILABLE TO YOU AND YOU ARE WELCOME TO USE THAT

IF YOU WANT TO.

REALLY SCREENING WHAT CHARACTERISTICS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU

THAT A MENTOR HAS. FOR US IL PHILOSOPHY IS HUGE.

I REMEMBER A TRAINING WE HAD THAT SOMEBODY

CAME THROUGH YEARS AND YEARS AGO. SHE MENTIONED HER

BELIEF THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SHOULD BE ABLE TO USE

ASSISTED SUICIDE. SO, WE TALKED WITH HER ABOUT HOW THAT'S

NOT AN IL BELIEF AND HOW WE LOOK AT THAT DIFFERENTLY AND

ULTIMATELY, CAME TO THE DECISION THAT OUR PHILOSOPHIES WERE

IN LINE. SO, I THINK THAT'S IMPORTANT.

AMINA: YES, THE TRAINING IS A GOOD PLACE TO GET TO KNOW

THE PEOPLE MORE AND SEE IF THEY LOOK LIKE THEY ARE

GOING TO GET IT OR NOT GET IT. WE HAD AN INTERN, A YOUNG MAN

WHO WAS QUADRIPLEGIC. HE NEVER DID GET IT AND HE ALSO DIDN'T

PASS HIS INTERNSHIP WITH US. BY THAT I MEAN, A VERY PATERNALISTIC

ATTITUDE -- TOWARDS HIMSELF.

APRIL: SO, OUR PEER MENTOR TRAINING IT'S A

TWO-DAY TRAINING. WE ARE REALLY IN A UNIQUE POSITION AS A

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM. MOST VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS YOU HAVE TO

TRAIN CONSTANTLY AND WE HAVE BEEN REALLY LUCKY TO HAVE

MENTORS STAY WITH US AND REALLY COMMIT TO DOING THIS FOR A

LONG TIME. WE JUST HAD OUR FIRST MENTOR HAVE A 20-YEAR

AWARD, WHICH KIND OF BLOWS OUR MINDS. AND SO, WE JUST DO A

TRAINING TWICE A YEAR. AND WE TRY TO TRAIN REALLY LOOKING

FOR WHAT OUR NEED IS. IN MORE RECENT YEARS WE HAVE HAD A

REAL DEMAND FOR YOUNG ADULT MENTORS WHO ARE WILLING TO

WORK WITH OTHER MALES THAT HAVE COGNITIVE LEARNING

DISABILITIES LIKE AUTISM. SO, WE SET THE GOAL THIS YEAR

THAT THAT WOULD BE A WAY THAT WE WOULD REALLY SEARCH AND

SCREEN AND TRAIN MENTORS WHO COULD MEET THAT NEED.

TRAINING IS MANDATORY FOR ALL OF OUR MENTORS.

SOME OF OUR STAFF COME IN, OUR CEO COMES IN AND HELPS

PRESENT AT THAT TRAINING. AND, WE ALSO OCCASIONALLY DO

INDIVIDUAL TRAININGS, IF A PERSON CAN'T PHYSICALLY DO THE

TWO-DAY TRAINING. WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT THE TRAINING IS THAT

PARTICIPANTS GET TO MEET EACH OTHER AND SHARE STORIES,

TALK ABOUT WHY THEY ARE INTERESTED IN MENTORING. WE ALSO

BRING IN A PANEL OF OUR EXPERT LONG-TERM MENTORS TO SHARE WHAT

THEY’VE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS AND WE GIVE THEM A REALLY GOOD

TRAINING MANUAL WHICH IS, AS AMINA SAID, IS AVAILABLE. WE

WILL SHARE ALL OF THAT WITH YOU IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

PART OF OUR TRAINING TALKS ABOUT IL

PHILOSOPHY. ALTHOUGH MANY OF OUR MENTORS, MOST OF THEM ARE

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, ALSO MANY OF THEM ARE NOT

FAMILIAR WITH IL PHILOSOPHY AND THEY DON'T KNOW ED ROBERTS

AND THEY DON’T KNOW PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE.

AMINA: AND THEY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT OTHER DISABILITIES

AND HAVE THE SAME STEREOTYPES AS EVERYBODY ELSE.

APRIL: WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THAT.

YOU HAVE TO HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS, BECAUSE IT'S

ANOTHER WAY FOR YOU TO SCREEN AND MAKE SURE THAT

PEOPLE REALLY UNDERSTAND AND BELIEVE AND ARE ABLE

TO ROLE-MODEL OUR PHILOSOPHY AS THEY WORK WITH PEOPLE.

WE ALSO TALK ABOUT, AND I MENTIONED IT EARLIER

OUR CRISIS INTERVENTION POLICY. WE KIND OF LOVINGLY CALL

THIS OUR PASS THE BUCK POLICY. I HAVE TO TELL YOU AS A

BRAND-NEW COORDINATOR, I WAS REALLY NERVOUS ABOUT TRAINING

PEOPLE ABOUT THIS POLICY. REALLY, IT'S THE EASIEST PART OF

THE TRAINING I DO. BECAUSE PEOPLE REALLY WANT TO KNOW

VERY CLEARLY WHAT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY IF SOMEONE IS IN

CRISIS? WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO? WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS TO

MY MENTEE? AND SO, WE REALLY TRAIN THEM THAT LEGALLY,

ETHICALLY, MORALLY, IF THEY HAVE A MENTEE IN CRISIS, THEIR

ONE RESPONSIBILITY IS TO PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL US AND

TO REPORT, SO THAT WE CAN THEN MAKE SURE THAT THAT MENTEE

HAS SUPPORTS FROM STAFF OR COUNSELING OR THE CRISIS

HOTLINE NUMBER. WHATEVER THEY MIGHT NEED. SO, PEER

MENTORS ARE REQUIRED TO NOTIFY THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

IMMEDIATELY ABOUT ANY EXPRESSIONS OF THREAT TO SELF,

SUICIDE, OR THREATS TO OTHERS, HOMICIDE. IF A SUPERVISOR

CAN'T BE REACHED IMMEDIATELY, THE VOICEMAIL OF OUR

COORDINATOR DIRECTS THEM TO ANOTHER STAFF PERSON. AND WE

ALSO HAVE AN AFTER-HOURS LINE, WHERE IF SOMEONE CALLS AFTER

HOURS, THEY ARE DIRECTED TO ME. SO, WE MAKE SURE THAT AT

ANY TIME THE MENTORS CAN REACH OUT AND GET SUPPORT, IF

THEIR MENTEE IS IN CRISIS. AGAIN, PEOPLE WOULD PROBABLY BE

SURPRISED ABOUT HOW VERY RARELY THIS COMES UP FOR US. WE

HAVE ONLY HAD A HANDFUL OF TIMES WHEN SOMEONE WAS IN TRUE

CRISIS. I THINK THAT'S BECAUSE OUR IL SKILLS STAFF, THE PEER

MENTOR COORDINATOR, AND THE MENTOR ARE SO INVOLVED IN

WORKING WITH THE PERSON THAT A LOT OF TIMES WE ARE ABLE TO HEAD

THINGS OFF BEFORE THEY BECOME A CRISIS. OFTENTIMES THE MENTOR

COORDINATOR WILL GET A CALL AND SAY YOU KNOW I JUST DON'T

FEEL LIKE THEY ARE DOING WELL. THEY HAVE HAD A ROUGH

COUPLE OF WEEKS. CAN YOU GUYS GET OUT THERE AND SUPPORT

THEM? SOMETHINGS HAPPENED, OR THEY JUST LOST THEIR CAT, AND

THEY ARE REALLY STRUGGLING. SO THOSE ARE THE KIND OF

CALLS THAT WE GET AND WE ARE REALLY ABLE TO SUPPORT AND INTERVENE

BEFORE A TRUE CRISIS HAPPENS.

THE VOLUNTEER DUTY TO REPORT FORM OUTLINES

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTORS ABOUT REPORTING

SUICIDE, HOMICIDE OR ANY INCIDENTS OF

ABUSE AND VOLUNTEERS DO NEED TO SIGN THAT AT THE PEER MENTOR TRAINING.

THE TRAINING MANUAL INCLUDES INFORMATION ABOUT ABILITY 360'S

PROGRAMS, ADAPTION TO DISABILITY. WE TALK ABOUT GRIEF AND

LOSS AND RESILIENCE. AS YOU WORK WITH SOMEONE WHO IS

NEWLY INJURED OR DIAGNOSED. WE TALK ABOUT DISABILITY

LIBERATION AND DISABILITY AWARENESS. WE TALK ABOUT SELF ADVOCACY,

LANGUAGE AND ETIQUETTE, AND GOAL PLANNING. FROM WHAT OUR

MENTORS TELL US AS WE SURVEYED THEM OVER THE YEARS, THE

MOST IMPORTANT SECTION WE TRAIN THEM ON IS HELPING VERSUS

DEPENDENCY. HOW DO I SET BOUNDARIES AND REALLY KNOW WHEN

I AM HELPING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE. AND THAT'S BEEN THE

MOST HELPFUL PIECE THAT THEY HAVE REPORTED. I KNOW. I AM

WATCHING IT.

WE ALSO DO FOLLOW UP TRAINING. SO

ANY OF OUR WORKSHOPS OR CONFERENCES THAT WE CAN GET

MENTORS TO, WE DO. A LOT OF THEM HAVE GONE THROUGH OUR

DISABILITY LIBERATION AND ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS WORKSHOP

THAT AMINA DOES AND WE ALSO WILL DO ONE ON ONE TRAINING,

ESPECIALLY WHEN THE MENTOR IS WORKING WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS

A DIFFERENT DISABILITY THAN THEIRS AND THEY WANT EDUCATION

ABOUT HOW TO DO THAT APPROPRIATELY, OR IF THEY NEED EDUCATION ABOUT HOW

TO SUPPORT A MENTEE THROUGH A CHALLENGING SITUATION OR A

COMMUNITY RESOURCE.

SO, SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE TRAINING. USE

IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW THE MENTORS AND TO MAKE

SURE THEY ARE A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR PROGRAM. DEFINITELY

PROVIDE A MANUAL. THE MANUAL SETS THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MENTOR.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO HAVE HARD

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WHO WE ARE, WHAT OUR PHILOSOPHY IS,

LIABILITY, CRISIS INTERVENTION. MOST IMPORTANTLY, LET THE

VOLUNTEERS KNOW ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AS AN AGENCY AND WHAT

YOU BELIEVE. A GOOD DOSE OF IL PHILOSOPHY, DISABILITY HISTORY AND

INFORMATION ABOUT CORE SERVICES IS REALLY IMPORTANT. THIS

IS YOU.

AMINA: MENTORS NEED TO BE TREATED

INDIVIDUALLY. SOME NEED LITTLE SUPERVISION. SOME MAY

NEED MORE IN THE BEGINNING THAN AS THEY GET MORE

COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR ROLE. SOME DON'T LIKE TO REALLY

WORK ONE-ON-ONE. THEY ARE NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THAT KIND

OF RELATIONSHIP SO THEY ARE MORE INVOLVED WITH GROUP

ACTIVITIES THAT WE DO. AND WE DO HAVE THAT MONTHLY

MENTORING GROUP. AND SO, THEY HELP COORDINATE. THEY HELP

PICK TOPICS FOR THAT. THEY HELP BRING IN SPEAKERS. AND

SO, THEY REALLY -- THEY LEARN A LOT FROM EACH OTHER IN

THOSE GROUPS. AND WE ARE NOT THE ONLY ONE THAT HAS THE

INFORMATION THAT'S NEEDED. THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR IS

THE PRIMARY CONTACT AND SUPPORT FOR ALL THE MENTORS, AS I

SAID BEFORE, SO THEY REALLY GET TO KNOW THEM VERY WELL. SO

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THEY FEEL COMFORTABLE COMING TO THE

MENTOR WITH WHATEVER IS GOING ON IN THEIR LIFE. SO, THEY

GET A LOT OF SUPPORT. SOME NEED SOME SUPPORT, SOME A LOT

AND SOME NOT VERY MUCH AT ALL OR SOME ARE JUST MORE INVOLVED

I GUESS I WOULD SAY. MENTORS STAY ACTIVE LONGER IF THEY

HAVE TRUSTING, INTERACTIVE RELATIONSHIPS. AND WE HAVE DONE

A LITTLE MORE INDIVIDUAL TRAINING FOR MENTORS LATELY, JUST

BECAUSE WE HAVE SUCH A SOLID MENTOR FORCE, WE HAVEN'T

NEEDED TO GO OUT AND DO A BIG TRAINING. BUT WE HAVE BEEN

BROUGHT IN BY A HOSPITAL SYSTEM TO HELP THEM GET SOME

TRAINED. WE HAVE BEEN CALLED IN BY DIFFERENT PLACES TO

HELP THEM WITH THEIR PEER MENTORING PROGRAMS AND THEN DOING

CROSS REFERRALS FOR THEM. SO, THE DOCUMENTATION. THE

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR GETS CONTACT EVERY MONTH FROM THESE

MENTORS TO FIND OUT ABOUT WHAT KIND OF CONTACT HAVE THEY

HAD AND HOW IS IT GOING WITH THE GOALS. AND THEY TRACK

THE VOLUNTEER HOURS AND TURN THEM IN. WE USE THAT NUMBER

TO SHOW A DONATION. WE PUT A DOLLAR FIGURE ON THAT. FOR MANY YEARS WE

PUT A TEN DOLLAR FIGURE AND NOW I THINK IT'S LIKE 20 OR 25

FOR EVERY HOUR THAT THE VOLUNTEER GIVES US AS

MATCHING DOLLARS AND THAT HELPS US ON SOME OF THESE GRANTS WHERE WE HAVE

TO HAVE 25 PERCENT MATCHING. AND WE MEET REGULARLY WITH

THE REFERRING STAFF. LIKE I SAID THIS PERSON HAS TO

REALLY KNOW ALL YOUR STAFF IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT

EVERYBODY IS ON THE SAME PAGE. WE DO EVALUATION SURVEYS.

WE DO THEM AT ONE MONTH TO MAKE SURE THAT THE MATCH

IS WORKING. AN EARLY PROBLEM IN THE PROGRAM WAS THE

MATCHES WEREN'T REALLY CONNECTING. SO, WE MAKE SURE.

SOMETIMES IT'S NOT WORKING AND THE PERSON DECIDES THEY

DON'T WANT A MENTOR, BUT SOMETIMES THEY JUST -- IT'S NOT A

GOOD MATCH. YOU DO YOUR BEST. AND SO, IN A THREE-MONTH

AND THEN AT SIX MONTHS, AND WE ALWAYS DO EXIT INTERVIEWS

THAT THE MATCH IS ENDING TO JUST CONTINUALLY HAVE PROGRAM

IMPROVEMENT. SO, WE TALKED ABOUT THAT DIVISION OF

RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN WHAT THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR DOES

VERSUS WHAT THE IL STAFF DOES. AND, CONSISTENCY RELIES ON

CONSISTENT EVALUATION OF WHAT WE ARE DOING. SO THE

QUESTIONS ARE INVOLVED WITH THE QUALITY OF THE MATCH

BUT ALSO, THE EFFECTIVENESS THE PROGRAM AND THAT THEY ARE

GETTING THE SUPPORT THAT THEY NEED.

SO, CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS REALLY

IMPORTANT. WE HAVE AN ANNUAL AWARD EVENT THAT HONORS THE

VOLUNTEERS. WE HAVE A HOLIDAY PARTY FOR THE VOLUNTEERS

AND FOR THEIR MENTEES AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS AT THE CENTER.

AND, WE FEATURE STORIES PERIODICALLY IN OUR PUBLICATIONS ON

MENTOR MATCHES. THAT'S ANOTHER WAY WE GET SOME

RECRUITMENT. SO, RECOGNITION TIP. IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE

EXPENSIVE. APRIL HAS BEEN AMAZING ABOUT THAT. SO PARTLY

ATTENTION AND VALUE. REALLY PROJECTING HOW MUCH YOU VALUE

THEM. I SEE SOME NODS. MAKES A HUGE DIFFERENCE FOR

VOLUNTEERS. VOLUNTEERS ARE THERE BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE,

NOT BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO BE. AND SO, THEY REALLY

APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT. SO SMALL GIFTS, SMALL

APPRECIATIONS, CARDS. SHE BUYS REAMS OF THANK YOU CARDS TO

SEND OUT FOR EVERY LITTLE THING AND THAT MAKES A

DIFFERENCE. THEY REALLY FEEL CARED ABOUT AND

VALUED AND STICK AROUND AND BRING IN OTHER REALLY

GOOD MENTORS FOR YOU BECAUSE THEY LIKE BEING HERE.

APRIL: WELL, I WOULD SAY THE BENEFIT THAT WE

HAVE SEEN TO THE MENTORS IS PEOPLE REPORT BACK THAT IT

REALLY HAS HELPED DEVELOP THEIR ADVOCACY SKILLS, THEIR

AWARENESS OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES. THEIR OWN LEADERSHIP

SKILLS TO BE A MENTOR. THEY GET A LOT OF SATISFACTION

FROM GIVING BACK. AND WE SEE A LOT OF THEM GO ON AND

LEAVE US AND GO ON TO EMPLOYMENT AND GO BACK TO SCHOOL.

AND JUST FIND NEW WAYS TO REINVENT AND CREATE THEIR LIVES

BASED ON THE ENERGY THAT THEY HAVE GOTTEN FROM AND THE

EMPOWERMENT THAT THEY HAVE GOTTEN FROM HELPING SOMEONE

ELSE.

THE BENEFITS WE HAVE SEEN TO THE MENTEES IS – IT SOUNDS OBVIOUS –

BUT THEY DON'T HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL. THEY

DON'T HAVE TO START FROM SCRATCH AND FIGURE IT OUT THE WAY

WE DID THE HARD WAY. IT OFFERS HOPE AND SUPPORT AND

RESOURCES. AND, WE REALLY DO SEE THEM ACHIEVING THEIR

INDEPENDENT LIVING GOALS AND INCREASING SELF-ESTEEM

AND CONFIDENCE. AND OFTEN WE SEE THEM MOVE ON TO MENTORING

SOMEONE ELSE AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN MENTORED THEMSELVES.

SO THAT'S REALLY AMAZING AND WONDERFUL.

AND ALSO, FINALLY, JUST THE BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY.

I THINK AS WE SAID WE SEE MENTORS AND MENTEES GO ON TO

CONTRIBUTE IN DIFFERENT WAYS WHETHER IT'S VOLUNTEERING

OR FINDING EMPLOYMENT. I THINK ALSO AT OUR CENTER

AS WE SAID, THERE'S BEEN A REAL BENEFIT TO ABILITY 360,

BECAUSE WE HAVE A CORE GROUP OF ADVOCATES; WE HAVE A CORE

GROUP OF PEER MENTORS. AND, WHEN WE HAVE EVENTS,

THEY’RE AT THE FRONT DOOR WELCOMING PEOPLE.

AND IT'S MADE US A BETTER, SAFER PLACE. IT’S MADE US

A MORE FRIENDLY PLACE. IT’S HELPED EXPAND OUR ARMS

INTO TO THE COMMUNITY AND TO BRING PEOPLE IN.

AMINA: WHEN WE HAVE BIG EVENTS, THEY OFTEN DO

THE REGISTRATIONS FOR US. SO, THEY GET TO KNOW PEOPLE WHO

THEY ARE NOT MENTORING WITH. THEY GET TO KNOW THE

OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE GETTING SERVICES FROM OUR CENTER.

SO, WE HAVE THE LIST ABOUT PEER SUPPORT RESOURCES THAT ARE

AVAILABLE TO YOU. IT IS LISTED IN YOUR HANDOUT. AND

THE TOP ONE, OF COURSE, IS THROUGH ILRU. YOU CAN HAVE

ACCESS TO ANY PART OF OUR PROGRAM ON THE ILRU WEBSITE.

YES? DARRELL WANTS TO SAY SOMETHING.

DARRELL JONES: I JUST WANTED TO MENTION THE LAST ITEM ON

THE SLIDE -- THE PEER MENTOR TRAINING MANUAL. IT IS SUCH AN

EXCELLENT RESOURCE FOR YOU, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO REINVENT

THE WHEEL. ABILITY 360 HAS PROVIDED THEIR TRAINING MANUAL THAT

THEY HAVE ALLOWED FOLKS TO BORROW FROM FOR A LONG TIME.

THE VERSION THAT WE HAVE ON OUR WEBSITE HAS THE OLD ABIL

BRANDING ON IT. YOU MAY HAVE UPDATED MORE

THAN JUST THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION, SO IF YOU WANT TO

SEND US AN UPDATED VERSION, WE WILL MAKE SURE THAT GETS UPLOADED.

AMINA: (INAUDIBLE) IS MAKING A NOTE -- OUR NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR.

APRIL: ANY QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? THINGS WE SHOULD HAVE TALKED

ABOUT THAT WE DIDN'T?

AUDIENCE: GOOD MORNING. YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU HAVE A

RECIPE FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER. I WAS JUST WONDERING IF

YOU COULD SHARE THAT WITH US.

AMINA: YEAH. WELL IT’S BASICALLY, WHAT'S THE NAME

OF YOUR DISABILITY? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN REAL

COMMON LANGUAGE? WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT IT?

APRIL: WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT HAVING A DISABILITY?

WHAT'S HARD ABOUT HAVING A DISABILITY?

AMINA: AND WHAT DON'T YOU EVER WANT TO HEAR AGAIN?

WHAT KIND OF TECHNOLOGY OR ASSISTANCE HELPS YOU

LIVE INDEPENDENTLY? AND I AM HAPPY TO SHARE THAT WITH YOU

BECAUSE I AM GOING KIND OF FAST. BUT THAT IS A REALLY

GOOD BASIC RECIPE. AND DEPENDING UPON WHO YOU ARE

PRESENTING TO, YOU MAY ADD OR SUBTRACT SOMETHING WITH YOUR

TIME FRAME. HAVE AT LEAST THREE, THREE TO FIVE PEOPLE ON

THE PANEL.

APRIL: WE FOUND THAT IT SETS REALLY GOOD BOUNDARIES

WITH THE AUDIENCE, BECAUSE SOMETIMES AUDIENCES GET NERVOUS,

ESPECIALLY IF THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN EXPOSED TO

THIS DISABILITY PIECE BEFORE. SO, IT GIVES OUR

MENTOR SOME REAL SPECIFIC THINGS TO TALK ABOUT, SO THAT THEY

DON'T HAVE TO WRITE THEIR WHOLE LIFE STORY DOWN AND READ

SOMETHING. IT STARTS THE CONVERSATION FOR THE MENTORS BUT

IT ALSO SETS BOUNDARIES FOR THE AUDIENCE ABOUT WE ARE NOT GOING

TO TALK BEING HEROES OR BEING SPECIAL OR ABOUT YOU INSPIRE ME. WE

ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT REAL PRACTICAL THINGS AND THAT’S

WHAT WE EXPECT YOU TO ASK ABOUT. WE WANT TO REALLY GIVE

YOU INFORMATION. NOT JUST HEAR SOMETHING NICE, BUT NOT SOMETHING

SUBSTANTIAL BACK FROM THE AUDIENCE.

AMINA: WHEN WE GET INVITED TO DO DISABILITY

AWARENESS/ETIQUETTE TRAININGS, WE ALWAYS TRY TO HAVE

A PANEL BECAUSE THEY WILL REMEMBER A COUPLE OF THINGS

FROM THE BLAH, BLAH, BLAH, BUT THEY ALWAYS REMEMBER

WHAT THE PEER MENTORS SAY. AND THE SECOND PART OF

THAT TRAINING -- OF THAT PANEL – IS THEN ASKING

THE AUDIENCE TO TELL THE PANEL BACK WHAT THEY

HEARD LITERALLY. AND REALLY BEING A COP HERE AND

SAYING, NO. DON'T INTERPRET WHAT -- PLEASE DON'T INTERPRET.

JUST SAY LITERALLY WHAT YOU HEARD. APRIL, I HEARD YOU SAY THIS.

AMINA, I HEARD YOU SAY THAT. THAT IS -- MAKES IT VERY

SATISFYING FOR THE PANEL THAT THEY GOT HEARD. YOU HAVE AN

OPPORTUNITY TO CLARIFY ANYTHING THAT'S MISUNDERSTOOD. AND

AGAIN, YOU START TRAINING. YOU DO THIS TRAINING TO GET

THEM AWAY FROM THIS INTERPRETING. YOU ARE SO SPECIAL, YOU

ARE SO WONDERFUL, OH, MY GOD. YOU KNOW, THAT KIND OF STUFF.

WHICH YOU ALWAYS WILL GET SOME OF. SO, WE HAVE DONE THIS WITH

COLLEGE STUDENTS, WITH SPECIAL ED STUDENTS, WITH

EVERYBODY. IT WORKS REALLY WELL. IT'S A NICE RECIPE.

AUDIENCE: IS THIS RECIPE IN YOUR TRAINING MANUAL?

AMINA: NO. BECAUSE IT'S NOT ON THIS TOPIC. BUT YOU CAN

E-MAIL US AND WE WILL GET IT TO YOU.

APRIL: YEAH.

AMINA: IT'S NOT A SECRET. I DON'T KNOW. DO YOU HAVE IT?

YOU GUYS SHOULD HAVE IT UP ON YOUR ILRU WEBSITE. WE’LL HAVE

TO WORK ON THAT.

TIM FUCHS: I DON’T BELIEVE WE DO.

AMINA: IT’S A GREAT -- I STOLE IT FROM REEVALUATION COUNSELING.

IT'S A GREAT PANEL. I HAVE BEEN DOING IT FOR 30 YEARS. AND IT

MAKES IT EASIER FOR YOU AS THE COORDINATOR.

TIM: OTHER QUESTIONS? WE HAVE TIME FOR ONE MORE.

AMINA: ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

[APPLAUSE].