Get to the Core of It: Best Practices in the Four Core Services - A Five Part Series

Part 3: Individual Advocacy Presented by Marsha Sweet on May 9, 2012

>> FEMALE VOICE: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. And thank you for waiting. Welcome to the Get to the Core of It individual advocacy Conference Call. All lines have been placed on listen-only mode and the floor will be open for your questions following the presentation. Without further adieu it is my pleasure to turn the floor over to your host, Mr. Tim Fuchs. Mr. Fuchs -- the floor is yours.

>> TIM FUCHS: Good afternoon, Jean, thank you, everybody, I'm Tim Fuchs with the council on independent living, and I want to welcome you back. Today's session, of course, is individual advocacy. This sear res is being presented by the CIL-NET, a program of the IL net for centers for independent living and statewide independent living councils, operated through a partnership in Houston, Texas, NI KL in Washington, DC and ape in Little Rock, Arkansas, and support is provided by Department of Education. Today's call is being recorded so that we may archive it on the website. And we will break during the call, and again at the end to answer your questions.

For our webinar participants, you can ask questions by using the TextBox under the icons in the webinar platform or in the chat on the CART screen if you are participating on that today. If you're over the telephone you will do it as Jean described. The materials for today's call include a PowerPoint evaluation and presentation are located on a webinar page sent to you in the confirmation email. If you don't have the PowerPoint open in front of you and you're on the telephone, you'll want to do that now. If you're on the webinar, of course, it will display automatically. If you need the PowerPoint or the connection to the training page, you can email me. I'm at Tim at Ncil.org.

That's TIM at NCI L dot ORG. And again if you don't have the PowerPoint and you need that URL, just shoot me an email so I can respond to you and you can open that up. It will make today's presentation a lot easier to follow along with. Of course at that link is the evaluation form. Please do fill that out for us. If you're participating in a group today, that's great, we encourage it, but please do try to get each individual to fill out the evaluation. If you've been participating in the series, you've seen that I've been telling the truth, it's a very short evaluation, but we take them really seriously. They're a big help to us and we want to know what you think. So with that let's get started. I want to introduce our presenter for today, Marsha sweet. She is the assistant director in Rochester New York. She has been in the movement for over 20 years and she's a great advocate and we're thrilled to have her with us today. So let's get started. Marsha.

>> MARSHA SWEET: Thank you, Tim, and thank you, too, sponsors for this great webinar series. I want to welcome everybody out there. I'm going to tell you to go ahead and sit back, grab your midday caffeine or chocolate or whatever your choice is, and enjoy. I'm going to try to share some of my 24 plus years of experience from working at centers for independent living -- oh, wait. I only have less than 90 minutes. Well, here goes, we'll see what we can do here.

Individual advocacy. Four main objectives. Explain the philosophy and role of individual advocacy as a core service that changes people's lives to empowerment and choice.

Explain the skills and strategies for building relationships with consumers that nurture trust and accountability. Describe elements of an effective advocacy model, and describe effective methods for assisting consumers in dealing with the many bureaucracies they face. Next slide?

Individual advocacy. This workshop will be helpful for consumers, self-advocates and advocates. The slides that are directed to consumers are an example of how you may orient them as their role as self-advocates. It will give you some steps for teaching and coaching the consumers towards their own self-advocacy skills.

Next slide, please? Independent living centers, the philosophy. Philosophy of independent living centers, it means controlling and directing your own life. It means taking risk and being allowed to succeed and fail on your own terms.

It means participating, actual participation in community life and pursuing activities of your own choosing. Independent living centers are consumer-directed. They're mandated to have 51% that afford individuals with disabilities as well as a percentage of their staff with disabilities. They're community based. Non-residential. Nobody lives there. Although my staff will kid and say sometimes they think I never leave, but nobody lives therement.

They're nonprofit. They're open to all ages. We provide services from birth to death for individuals. We're the one agency that can follow a person all the way through their life.

They're open to all disabilities. Whether it's a permanent disability, whether it's a temporary disability, they cover services for all disabilities.

Independent living. That's knowing what choices are available. Selecting what is right for you, and taking responsibility for your own choices. Independent living means being as self-sufficient as possible.

Exercising the choices in where you want to live, with whom you want to live. How to live. Where you work, and with whom you work, and how to use your time. How to use your leisure time.

Controlling and directing your own life. That includes taking risks. Being allowed to succeed and allowed to fail.

Are pace pating in community life. Peer consumer directed. Often individuals with disabilities have never been given the opportunity or support to direct their own lives.

Yeah, they're alive, but they've never truly had the experience of having a life. They may need to be supported in learning how to make choices and decisions to provide them with a full and productive life.

They may also -- this may also entail supporting and communicating with their care-givers and other community-based agencies, legislature, and families on how to let them reach their full potential. This will include allowing them to fail.

Remember, it's never a failure to fall down, but it's a failure if you stay down.

We all learn our best lessons from our unsuccessful attempts.

Life is not meant to be safe. It's meant -- or just observed, it's meant to be experienced. And a lot of times, individuals with disabilities aren't allowed or don't feel that they have the right to have those experiences.

The four core services from an independent living center.

The basic information and referral, answering the phone calls, getting the information out to individuals. Independent living skills, training and teaching individuals on how to be independent in the community, could be basic skills, could be more complicated skills for individuals. It depends on what they need.

Peer counseling, again, we're an independent living center. So we provide our services as peers.

We are individuals with disabilities, providing services to individuals with disabilities. We walk it and talk it every day.

Many of us have been through the same systems, the same barriers that the individuals that we meet and greet every day are experiencing.

Individual and systems advocacy. Providing and addressing the access to equal opportunities in social, economic, educational and legal rights.

Independent living centers work with individuals, community organizations, national networks, to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities.

And to improve the implementation of existing laws, state, Federal and local.

We assist the individuals to be their own voice, to be able to advocate for themselves.

Next slide. Available supports in the community allow individuals to attain their personal goals and visions.

These available supports must be accessible to people with disabilities. Each person can take responsibility for the outcome of their choices.

Independent living, making resources available. Many individuals could do this on their own. They could advocate for themselves, if they can get in the building.

The physical access is something that we deal with every day to get individuals in, but it doesn't do any good to have the physical access, if, once they get in there -- once they get inside the door, they're not respected, they're not listened to. They may as well be standing out on the sidewalk.

So the biggest barrier, again, is attitudinal. So we're always working to break the attitudinal barriers so that individuals can get in and do the services and find the services themselves.

So they can remain independent in the community. And, again, that goes, as well, as centers for independent living. Yes, we're physically accessible, but centers for independent living also have to offer communications, accessibility, accommodations, so that individuals can communicate and receive the services they need, as well as we need to be the model for the attitudinal communication and breaking down of the barriers.

Next slide, please. Independent living philosophy. Having choices to build relationships.

Rooted in the philosophy that people with disabilities have the right to make their own choices, have their own dreams, take their own risk. Life is all about having choices. We don't always make the right one the first time. But that's what makes it a life. Having those experiences. Building relationships, true relationships built on honesty and communication.

I don't set out to be their best friend, but I do want to be their peer, a resource that they can trust and come to.

I'm not the expert on everything, but I want them to use me to get to the experts.

Having dreams is fine, but a dream is just that, a dream.

Having a goal is having a dream with a plan and a deadline.

Know what you want as the end result is a great skill and helps a person to live their life. It may be just knowing that today I want to accomplish this one little step; but that is what is needed to open up our ideas and visions of the future and changes we wish to make.

Taking risks and being allowed to try something out to be given options and choices is what the independent living philosophy is all about.

They need to know their options, and that is what an independent living center can provide to individuals. And we give it to them as a perspective as a peer. Individuals that have been there themselves and have -- know the pitfalls and the experiences.

We can provide as little or as much support as the individual needs. That support is always going to change from day-to-day.

Today maybe they just need the phone number. Tomorrow, maybe, they need us to help them to make the call. Maybe they need help filling out the form.

If they need us sitting next to them at the department of Social Services or Human Resources or the school meeting or the meeting with the employer, a lot of times, just having us there, with our name and our agency backing us up makes the total difference on the way the meeting is going to go.

It's sad and true and very unfortunate, but that's the way it happens, a lot of times.

As the consumer gains more self-confidence they'll be able to under- -- take on more and have more self-responsibility.

I'm personally most -- the most satisfied when the consumer takes it upon themselves to make the call and expresses concerns over the services. To me, that's the best empowerment step, and the one that I provide the most.

Next slide, please. Independent living is knowing what choices are available. And then selecting what is right for you and taking responsibility for your own actions.

Independent living centers are there to assist the individual with the choices. A lot of times they have no idea, all of the services that are out there.

All of the options and the choices. And most important, they don't know the loop holes. Independent living centers know what the eligibility is for individuals and how to get them eligible for the services.

We're here to support them as much as they need us to support them, and as much as we can teach them and train them to do it on their own for the next time. Next slide, please. Objective number two. Building relationships.

Every person has the right to make choices affecting their own lives. It should be Slide Number eight. Yeah. There we go.

Every person has the right to make choices affecting their own life. Every person has the right to pursue their choices. Every person can communicate in some mode their choices and preferences. Every person can create their own goals and choose how to reach those goals.

By building partnerships with the consumers that come into the independent living centers for services, we help them toward those goals that they have chosen.

We are supporting them to have informed choices and options and letting them know that we are here to help.

Being supportive means being honest and trustworthy. They know we are willing to take on the big guys, if necessary.

I always tell them the pitfalls to whatever they're attempting so they can make an informed decision as to how they wish to proceed. It may not always be something that I would have chosen, that path, but, again, it's their choice, it's their life, it's their path.

I'm open and honest with them in how far I can support them in the process, and when I may have back off in the process.

I don't do anything illegal. Nor fill out any false information on forms. I mean, I set the limits at those.

I tell them to tell me the truth. I can work with the truth but cannot fix a lie.

A lot of times, it's hard for consumers to give you the whole truth, but, again, that's what we need, in order to be able to help them.

That's where building up that trust in a relationship helps you to get that information from them. Plus I always tell them: It's always much easier to remember the truth than it is to remember a lie. So...

You must also be prepared that you may not get the whole story the first time you meet with them. Fear, stress, memory problems, and learned behaviors may prevent them from disclosing all of the facts. Always be prepared for a few surprises.

They -- they know I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty or support them at whatever level they need, because I've established the trust with them.

Often, they need the independent living staff to attend a meeting with them and to help to interpret what's being said at the meetings.

A lot of times I'm there just to reassure them that, yeah, they're doing what they're supposed to be doing, just hang on, we'll get there. We'll get there. Just hang on. Or sometimes they're there to say: Excuse me? What did you say? So that we can clarify and bring the meeting back around to where it needs to be.

I'm a professional advocate, but there are also times when I'm dealing with my own personal life and family and children that I take an advocate with me because of the barriers that are thereof.

You often need another set of ears and eyes there. And that's what we represent, and that's how we can provide to the consumers when we go out to meetings with them. And, again, helping them to create their own goals and how to choose how they want to reach those goals.

We do it all non-judgmental. We're open. We're honest. And we share with them anything that we can share from our own personal aspects to help them to understand and to achieve their goals.

Next slide, please. Building relationships continues. It's a partnership. They are here because we have a skill that they can use. We are the experts that are on their side.

They are looking to us to have the steps, the so-called tool kit that will enable them towards their chosen goals.

I do this by doing the three steps. Of targeting, influencing and evaluating.

Next slide. Targeting. Why you target, when you target, what you target.

Narrowing all of that down for them. Are you satisfied? First question: Are you satisfied with whatever the issue is that they have out there in their current situation, the progress?

Do you know what you need to change? A lot of times, they don't know what they need -- what needs to be changed. We're there to help them with that process.

They also need to know what is needed now, and what they -- may be needed in the future. A lot of times a change is a process. The steps that need to be done.

Also, they need to know: Do you need outside help? Again, independent living centers can't do it all by ourselves. Sometimes we may -- we may -- we may need to bring in the experts to help us along with -- with the process.

It may need to be a team effort. Not all targets are reached by just one person.

Next slide. Targeting with them will help them to point out what changes are important to them.

Once you've identified the main target, then you need to work at helping yourself to go toward that goal.

Helping them with the choices, the options, showing them what paperwork needs to be done, what forms, what steps, the process to get it done is how we assist in that. This is them at the next step of helping themselves.

We're a team. We're working on the goal that's only obtainable when you coordinate with others in the community. So together we'll help them through that process. We'll help them through those barriers.

Next slide? All right. How are we going to help them out in the community? We're going to help them by influencing. That means getting others to pay attention to your needs. Not always an easy process. But in order to reach the desired goal, you need the assistance of others. You may need to win them over to your side. You will need to influence them. Have you ever recalled any time that you've ever influence the others?

I know we've all Benin influenced by others, whether it's the commercials on TV, we had it's the peer pressure, whether it's the neighbor next door, we've Benin influenced by others throughout our life. Have we influenced others? Yes.

Next slide. We're all natural-born influence. From the first cry that we gave, we have influenced individuals in our lifS lives. It's a natural skill that we were born with. Some will even argue that from the first time the mothers feel the baby's movement in the womb, we started influencing.

We are all natural-born influencers, from our first cry, our first COO, our first smile, our first words, our first messy diaper, all the way up, we have continued to influence individuals.

This continues throughout our life. We still influence others today. Some of us still cry and pout and smile to get our way with individuals many of the people we have worked with may be influencers and may need to work with others, it is to enforce positive behaviors and not for negative behaviors. It's all on how we present it to them and how we support them through the process of what needs to be done.

So reinforcement for positive behaviors is a great motivator, and it helps to build the self-assurance and the responsibility that they need to take as they become their own advocates.

Modeling these behaviors is our best way of influencing the consumers towards self-advocacy and independence. Next slide, please.

Be aware that when you're influencing individuals out in the community that you need to be prepared.

You need to know the details, so you need to be aware if you have paperwork, documentation, if there's a need for photo IDs, birth certificates, Social Security cards, what forms are required, and that you take them with you to your interviews or appointments.

You maintain records of all of your appointments, your phone calls, your letters.

Make sure you keep all your memos, notes, letters with dates on them. You can put all your papers and notes in a notebook, a folder, a box, wherever it is that you can keep track of these.

We need to be also modeling and showing this to the consumers, too, so they're in control in keeping track of their life, that they are in control when they go out to do the influencing out in the community.

It's much more easier to influence somebody when you go out there and you act as a professional and you're prepared, and you've got your -- all of your details and applications and everything all filled out and all ready to go.

Being prepared is essential as well as being flexible. There will be times you find an unknown detail or requirement at the last moment that all of a sudden springs up on you, but showing that you are willing to be prepared and willing to go with the flow is also part of influencing individuals out there.

Next slide, please. Influencing is an open, fluid conversation. You need to develop good communication skills by thinking out clearly what your expectations are.

And remember, that's all part of the targeting that we were talking about with the consumers, getting them to pinpoint what we're going after, so we're not going out there without a direct goal in life.

Be clear and specific about what you want or what you're requesting.

Know what the possible consequences may be. I'm a firm believer in giving all of the options and choices and educating the consumers of what the consequences may be.

If you're asking for thirst, you may be opening up several other steps that have to be explored, too. Do not be unreasonable. You need to give as well as take. Not every success is 100% success. It may be that everybody gives a little bit on the end result. See the other side of the situation, keep your sense of humor. Sense of humor has won a lot of individuals' goals that they're looking for.

Influencing is a planned event. It's okay to script beforehand what you want to say and what your points are.

You should have an outline of this is where -- what we want. This is what we're asking for. This is what we know that we're eligible to get. And assisting and helping through the process.

Next Slide, please contact people in agencies for help and information. We don't know it all here, unfortunately, at independent living centers. There are other expertise out there that we need to use. Other networks.

Keeping the notebook of whom we've called, what we've talked about or wrote to them about, and when you talked or wrote to them is essential, so that you have a track and a trail.

I prefer a lot of this communication to be done fantastically over the Internet now, because I've gotten my written requests and the written response. I will sit with consumers and show them how to set up an email so that they can do the correspondence back and forth over the Internet, too, so that they have their written responses. Texts work good, you can get your written response back, I always insist that the response comes back to me in writing so I know what -- for clarification.

So if worse comes to worse, you can do a phone call, but I do like the modern technology nowadays, it does help us to keep everything on track. A lot of influencing is doing and repeating or going to the next level or to a different source.

A lot of times you can call an agency, and use them as a sounding board, and they'll let you know where within their agency you need to go for the information, or where else out in the community that you need to go for the information.

So use all the little steps that you can use out there to get you to see the right team. Next slide, please.

Building and maintaining good relationships with others who work directly with you.

Be positive. Even when you have a complaint. Present it in a polite, constructive, assertive manner. Get to know people who work in agencies, such as secretaries, service providers and administrative assistants and administrators.

You can often get it -- get your answers from individuals at different levels throughout the organizations and agencies.

Know the expertise and who's connected with your own agency, as well as the community agency's.

I know that my staff know which doors they can go to, say, got a quick question, got a quick question, to get clarification on many issues or come in and say: Well, what would you do in this situation? So use the own expertise within your agency and allow yourself to be used as one of those experts within your agency.

A lot of times, administrative secretaries can get faster results than waiting for the CEO to return a personal call to you. They know what their boss does, who reports to them, so they know where you should actually be sending your request.

Know the difference between assertive and aggressive and passive.

You need to be persuasive to make an impression on others, to get them to see your side of the position. Again, that's the influencing.

They need to recognize that you are here for an answer, and that you will continue until you get an answer, not just a response, but an answer.

Next slide, please. Sometimes, as I said, we can't do it all on our own. Sometimes we need a mediator out there, a person who works between two people for parties to reach an agreement. When your trying and influence is not successful you may need the assistance of a mediator that could be an experienced community ally or a community supervisor advocate to act as a mediator between yourself and the established agencies. I'm -- I'm pretty good at being a mediator, because I'm not the top person in the agency, and I'm not the bottom person in the agency. I can be very neutral and in between so it's nice to come and use other staff that are able to do that for you, to bridge the gap out there for individuals. Individual advocacy also means knowing your limits and knowing when to ask for help.

When you've gone as far as you can with influencing, you will determine if you've been successful or if you need to evaluate.

Next slide, please? Evaluating. It means thinking about your situation after you've done the targeting and influencing and deciding if more needs to be done.

Evaluating can happen at any stage of the process. If the goals or steps need to be redefined or revised, somebody's given you a piece of information that you need to act on that takes you in a totally different direction, you can evaluate it, any time. If you find yourself just spinning your wheels, you need to evaluate your process. Maybe you haven't finalized your targeting. Maybe you haven't narrowed it down to exactly what needs to be done, or the goal needs to be changed.

Evaluating should always happen at the end of a successful goal even. So you know where to start if this comes up again. And knowing who was helpful and who wasn't will help you to shorten your next attempt when you go through the process.

Next slide, please. Evaluating. Again, are you and others satisfied with the services received? Were others supportive and cooperative? And what was the quality of the -- was the quality of the services add Kate for your needs?

Evaluating, again, as I said, is even done for successes. There are many levels and types of success. It could be a complete success if a goal is met. Yea.

It could be a partial win but still be a success. It could be a success because a valuable lesson on self-is there vocation was learned by the consumer. It could be a success because of the follow through and the honest sharing that took place. There's many degrees of success.

I also inform and will congratulate other agencies if they've been supportive and cooperative, I have no problem doing a thank you letter off to a supervisor, or off to the individual themself or even my own staff members. If something has been successful where I see where they've gone the extra on it, and sometime to me it doesn't really seem like they've gone the extra, I think they really have just done their job, but if I want to be able to use them the next time, it doesn't hurt to put a little sugar out there every once in a while.

Because they're going to know that I'm willing to put the sugar out as much as I am willing to put the fight out there.

Next slide, please. Return to targeting. This is an advocacy cycle. There's no end to the process. However, it does get easier, the more that you do it. This could be an ongoing cycle that blossoms into a Great Adventure and life building experiences for the consumer. That's what we're hoping for. 'Cause even, again, as we expressed before, having the right to fail is still their right.

And the best lessons a lot of time are lessons that we've learned from our failures. Learning to do individual advocacy is extremely empowering. Watching someone else learn it is extremely rewarding for all parties involved.

Next slide. Being a good consumer. Being a good consumer does not mean that you always have to do what other people want you to do. That's not life.

It means negotiating and sometimes compromising to get what you want or need. It could be negotiating, targeting, communication. Give and take.

I may always shoot for the moon, but I'm actually willing to settle much closer, most times. Some issues, there are no other solutions, but most have some wiggle-room.

You need to know which battles to pick. This is also determined by your conversations with the consumer and the directions they want to take. This may lead you back to targeting, again, to redefine the goal. And now we'll take a short break for any questions and answers. Thank you. (Pause.)

>> TIM FUCHS: Jean, could you help us take questions from the audience, please.

>> FEMALE VOICE: Certainly. The floor is now open for questions. If you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad.

Questions will be taken in the order they are received. If at any point your question has been answered you may press seven again to disable your request. If you're using a speaker-phone, while also posing your question you pick up your handset to provide favorable sound quality. Please hold while we wait for the first question. (Pause.) Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.) For Fuse, there appear to be no questions at this time.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay, I've got a question from the web, so let's start there. All right. Marsha, Janice asks what if the person you are working with gets upset whenever you work with them. Do you have any tips for Janice.

>> MARSHA SWEET: That can be common for some individuals, and a lot of times they come in here upset, because they have programmed themselves that everything is a crisis, everything is out of control, everything is, you know, without their reach. So a lot of times I'll sit down with them to see if we can narrow it down to what is the process, what is the actual problem, and see if we can get some small wins in there, some small successes, to see what we can do.

Some individuals just are upset all the time. There's nothing that you can really do to help with it, but if I can try to find out what the underlying -- what they're upset about, to see if we can get that fixed. Again, the baby steps, the small step it is to get it fixed.

A lot of times it's because the individual comes in here with a recurring problem, over and over again, and they may just be getting Band-Aid solutions to it. And you need to find out and fix the major problem that's causing all of the little ones.

So that it all depends, and again, if I've established a relationship with them, they know that they're going to come in, and I know, too, that the first 10 minutes, 15 minutes, sometimes longer, I'm just going to be sitting and nodding my head and, yes, yes, yes while they get it out.

And then, once it's out, we all take our breath and say: Okay, what would you like me to help you with today? But sometimes they just need to get it out. There's no place else they can go to get it out. I hope that helps.

>> TIM FUCHS: Thanks. All right. Another question from Bob. And Bob asked: How many times should you contact a consumer who isn't following up on their agreed upon part advocacy strategies?

>> MARSHA SWEET: I, at times, will get the consumer decide that in the first meeting. When we're sitting here, and we've made the agreed upon strategy, I say: Okay. How many times I'm going to do three calls -- you know, whatever it is with them and let them set it. Again, we're consumer-directed. Again, let them set. I want two calls, one email, you know, one whatever, you know, within reason and then, again, it's in their ballpark. And I'll always try to make sure that I do it in alternate formats for them.

I know in the middle of the month and the end of the month they done have any minutes on their cell phone. So calling them isn't going to get anything. So maybe a letter works then. It all depends again on the individual. And what we agree upon together.

>> TIM FUCHS: Good. That's the only questions I see right now from the web. Let's go back to Jean and see if any questions have come in on the phone. Jean.

>> FEMALE VOICE: There are no questions in the queue at this time. Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.) Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: Mr. FuckS, there appear to be no questions at this time.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Well, back to the web, a couple more have come in. Marsha Michelle asks: What if you've been working with someone who is trying to retaliate against a county agency?

>> MARSHA SWEET: Okay. First question is, is it justifiable? Has the County provided a service that it is not eligible for. That's why I always express to the individual and educate the individual on what their rights are and what their responsibilities are, so that okay, yes, we know they were eligible for this program. Well, no, they weren't eligible for this program. You didn't follow through. You didn't do what you needed to do, you didn't ask for additional supports, so I have people that do that all the time. That's all what advocacy is about and again we sit and meet to see if it's justifiable or not.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great. And a similar question from Janice. What if the problem isn't the person you are advocating for, what if it's the people that are supposed to help? So how do you advocate with other service providers that are supposed to be helping the consumer?

>> MARSHA SWEET: And that's very much what an independent living center does, is to be there to support the individual when they're at the meetings, when they're at the fair hearings, when they're setting up their coordinator meetings or whatever, so that we're there to like, I see you've got like Band-Aids all the time. Stop that, because a lot of times other agency's will do the very bare minimum but the individual is eligible for much more than that. So that's why -- that's where advocacy comes in. We're advocating with the individual to get the full amount that they're eligible for. For all of the services and supports that they're eligible for.

As long as they are being responsible and doing their parts and pieces that make them eligible, too. So that's very much what we do as an independent living center.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Good tips. Let's check in with Jean one more time and if there aren't any questions on the phone we'll go back to the presentation.

>> FEMALE VOICE: It actually looks like we do have a question from Erin. You may state your question.

>> FEMALE VOICE: Hello. Hello.

>> MARSHA SWEET: Hello.

>> MALE VOICE: My question is you were talking about advocacy. And I would like to know what the basic skills of a good advocate should be, to be a real good advocate. That's the question.

>> MARSHA SWEET: How to be an effective advocate?

>> MALE VOICE: Exactly. Yes.

>> MARSHA SWEET: Right. That's the next objective.

>> MALE VOICE: Okay.

>> MARSHA SWEET: Great segue. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: Again, there are no questions at this time. Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: There appear to be no questions at this time.

>> TIM FUCHS: He okay, well, let's use this segue while we got it. Let's learn how to be an effective advocate. Go ahead, Marsha.

>> MARSHA SWEET: All right, and thank you, Aaron, for the segue, that's beautiful here. Objective Number three, effective advocacy, and that is Slide Number 24. Advocacy is a planned action to support an issue, interest, cause or idea.

Advocacy occurs on behalf of the powerless. Advocacy is about justice and equality for the disposed. It's about personal rights. Advocates must be aware of the constitutional rights of people with disabilities. And they must use these powerful constitutional rights and assert them.

Effective advocacy actions may include speaking for an individual or with an individual. That's what advocacy means is to speak.

Persuading, influencing, persuading individuals to see it from your side, to share the little tricks that they've got, to share the information, the insider information that maybe they haven't shared before.

Advocacy may include even up to organizing or bringing a lawsuit or a fair hearing so an individual gets their rights. Advocacy may also include mass media campaigns. If we're working toward the systems advocacy for individuals. It may be a collective action and other confrontations.

Advocacy is a planned action. You need to plan out what you're going to do. Again, being prepared makes an effective advocate.

Know what you're asking for, and sometimes I know what the end results are supposed to be. Even more sometimes than the other agency's do. I've done my homework. I can go in there and say: This person is eligible for this, this, this, because of their own policy or their own regulation of this, this, this. Okay?

I list on here to be aware of the constitutional rights of people with disabilities. And I put aware, I don't put on here that you have to be an expert.

But what you do have to know is where to go where the experts are so that you can use them as resources to assist you through the process.

That -- I'll be the first to say: I don't know everything, but better than that, I know who I can go to that can help me out when I'm stuck on different processes. Being aware of a person's constitutional rights. They have the right to live in the community.

They have the right to be treated fairly. They have the right to receive services in a timely and respectful manner and fashion. We are responsible to make sure that happens for them and with them. Knowing their personal rights. Everybody has the personal rights and responsibility, too, here.

Everybody is an individual, Margaret Mead, I'll quote her: She said: Always remember, you're absolutely unique, just like everybody else. But we treat every individual as an individual here. Because there's going to be nuances of each individual that are different from everybody else.

Next slide, please. Advocacy. Action steps. Listen to the consumer. Hear what is being said and not said. Be willing to listen more than once. Don't be surprised if different information is given each time you listen.

And absolutely, forever, never make promises. All right? As my staff will tell you, I will say, the only constant that we have is change. Listen to the consumer. Hear what's being said. Hear what's not being said.

I know if a person tells me that they have this issue, they may also have this, this, this, this with it, too. I've done it long enough to know that a lot of issues are clumped together. So listen to what's being said and what's not being said.

Be willing to listen more than once. Again, we've got to build up the trust and the relationship with them. They're not always going to be forthcoming with the information that we need.

We may spend a half an hour with them, and they haven't stopped talking, but they haven't given me the information that I need to assist them.

So being able to listen and acknowledge, not judgmental, and pull it out of them, is what we need to do. That's what makes us a strong, great advocate. They may not know that they have options or steps to take to get their desired results. It's our responsibility to share that with them.

But to also, to assure them that we're going to be there to help them through that process, to help them with those steps, to help them to decipher all of the options and choices that they've got out there.

And again, never, ever make a promise. You don't have control over every variable of the situations. I never, ever make promises. I said, well, as of today, this is what it's supposed to be. We'll go out and see if it still is.

Because I can train, and I can share information about rules and regulations, and policies, and turn around and walk back to my desk and have an email of a policy that's just changed that day or overnight. So, again, I always tell them that this is what I know as of today and this time and date. So we never make promises. We always say we will work as hard and as well as we can to help them achieve it, but we don't make promises. Next slide. Advocacy.

Again, identifying the issues to be addressed. Targeting and narrowing it down. They're going to come in here with five, six, seven, 20, 100 issues. So narrowing it down to what can be addressed and what can be addressed, setting a priority, what needs to be addressed now.

Identify where you would address the issues, what agency or level at the agency.

Again, who you're going to go out to influence. Is this something that can be addressed by an email, by a phone call? Is this something that's addressed by filling out the correct application and submitting it in a professional and timely manner? It all depends on what the issues are that they've targeted.

Implement the plan. Influencing. Going out there and getting the information done and implementing the steps with the consumer, and, again, that may be including steps that they've got to do.

All right. I'm going to do this, this, this. We're going to meet back next week, you're going to bring me back this, this, this.

And supporting them through that process. Observe the results. And to see, you're going to learn through the evaluation process that, okay, this person's not so good at making follow-up phone calls. This person's not so good at keeping the information or bringing me the letters.

So I'm going to make an accommodation for that. I'm going to -- we're going to -- he's going to give me permission to contact the agency. The letters are going to be sent to me so that I can help him and assist him through the process.

Or I'm going to go to the apartment. I'm going to help this person organize and sort out and decides what needs to be done.

And, again, always assessing. Evaluating and targeting and figuring out what needs to be done. Identifying the issues will come from listening to what is actually the need and concern of the consumer. Some concerns are easily addressed by completing the application process or simple clarification email or phone call. A lot of times individuals come in here with -- upset over a denial or a letter that they received from the Federal Government or the state government. And it's just because they are not able to read it and interpret or decipher what it says.

A lot of times it's a positive letter, but because they're not capable of doing that, or they have been so systemized that everything that they ever received in the mail is a negative, they're reading between the lines, when there's nothing between the lines to read. So being patient and sitting and helping and assisting through that process is what we do as advocates.

Consumers may come right in and request that you immediately jump to a hearing. They want to sue everybody. But the issues can be easily remedied by staff making the connection, by educating the consumer, by calling for clarification from the agency.

It doesn't always have to escalate to a hearing or suing everybody. It's not always fair, but it may -- often, you may need for the staff to do the communication with the consumers. Barriers and fears and projections of past interactions will often cloud the situation.

A fresh -- a fresh person, and approach, may be all that's needed. Community bridge burning is a common occurrence with consumers. Again, that's that negative influencing that they may have learned and need to unlearn. So by us showing how we can build that bridge back up, and believe -- believe you, I'm not beyond cinching a bridge here and there or even burning down a bridge if need be, but most of the bridges just need to be crossed over and open up the communication.

But the I -- independent living staff, advocates can model how to approach this situation in an appropriate manner. This will prepare the consumers to do it correctly the next time and to not burn her bridges.

Evaluating and targeting. Modify, if necessary, revise and go through all the previous steps until the goal is achieved or the goal is changed.

Next slide, please. Provide services directly to assist the consumer. And advocates do not do crisis work. All right? Doing whatever is needed to get the services requested, doesn't mean we do have everything needed. We just can't know all of the necessary resources all of the time. And a lot of times we don't have access to all of the necessary resources, so we'll assist the consumer to find those resources out in the agency and assist them to access them.

One of my biggest sayings here is I always say: We don't have any money. Sorry. We don't have any money.

But more importantly, I know who, in the community, may have the money, and may be able to help you to see if you meet the eligibility for it. To me that's much more powerful than sitting here, handing money out to individuals for projects and needs every day. By teaching them how to access it in the community is a far more better skill for them.

Again, we're not a crisis center, as an independent living center. Even though some consumers will always come to us when they're in crisis we, again, help them to hook up and get the services that can help them when they are in crisis. We know where to point them to out in the community. We know the food pant trees, we know the homeless shelters, we know the mental health services, we know all of the areas out there that we can assist the individuals to get there.

A lot of times they don't feel that they're in control enough of their life to make the calls or to get there on their own, but with our guidance and support, they get there.

We do help to prevent the reoccurrence of the crisis, that's what we're all about. We may assist with the immediate need and then assist with individual advocacy to get them the supports and services, to stop that cycle of crisis.

Again, for a lot of them, that's the learned, influenced behavior that they've learned but we're here to try to get them to break that cycle and to be able to become a self-sufficient, self- -- um -- advocate independent. Next slide, please.

Okay. The self-advocacy to an individual or a group. Learning self-add vo case, providing information and supporting the consumer towards empower: Listen to the concerns and issues, gather all the facts from all parties involved, non-judgmental. These are advocates roles. The best way to teach self-advocacy is to model it in every action, communication and contact we have with the consumer.

Providing the information and support needs to be in a style and a level that the consumer can use. In their native language. In common terms and examples.

Forget the Alphabet Soup and all the jargon, they need the real words and options that includes their responsibilities and the consequences of their actions, as well as the consequence -- consequences of their inactivity. They need to know all of that. We need to be up front and honest with that. Listening is a 2 Way Street. Be aware of what is said and what is not said.

Watch your own body language. When I think, when I'm sitting here, concentrating with a consumer I have a habit of rolling my eyes upwards and at times it gives the wrong impression to the consumers, they think that I'm rolling my eyes at them and really it's me, thinking, and I wasn't aware of that until a consumer brought it to my attention.

So now I'm very much aware of it when I'm meeting with consumers to make sure that when I think I don't roll my eyes up as I'm thinking or trying to focus or concentrate on what they're saying, because they're going to read that as something else. They're not used to going to an agency that's actually going to sit and listen to them.

And let them air out their issues. They're so used to being cut off or not even acknowledged or not even allowed in the agency. So this is something that we both have to work onto learn together.

Remember to get a release, so that you can gather all of the facts and information that you need. Gathering all the facts and information from all the parties involved, so that you can present that to the consumer, showing what the party has and what they havement doing all that is a major, major part of being an advocate. All right. Next slide, please.

>> MALE VOICE: It might be. (Someone is speaking in the background.)

>> MARSHA SWEET: Assisting with sorting through the options, provide referral and linkages to other options and expertise. Follow the consumer's lead as to how much assistance is needed. Provide an objective insight to the situation. Once you have all the information, then you can start to format and provide the options available and start on your own actions that you need to do, as well as the actions that the consumer needs to do.

Remember, you may not be the best option to assist the consumers toward their goals. You can provide other options and offer to assist them at arranging the meeting and even attending the meeting with them.

Follow the consumer's lead on how much or how little support may be needed. Remember that it may change with each request. Some need a little, others may need more support. At different times of their lives.

Individuals with disabilities have good days and bad days as well as the rest of us. So there are times when they need to have more assistance. There's other times, they're extremely independent and don't want our assistance, which is fantastic.

And the more that we support them and model to them how to become their own individual advocate, the more situations we're going to see where they just need to have us steer them in the right direction, give them the materials to use, and they can go off on their own. Some individuals never reach that spot, but it's okay. That's okay. We also provide an objective insight to the situation. We stick to the facts. We acknowledge the feelings, but the facts are what you have to work with.

Yes. I understand you're upset with this issue, but this is what the regulations are. This is what the process is. This is what we need to do.

Okay? Next slide, please. Again, providing remediation resources and you may negotiate on the consumer's behalf if requested. Assist with the accountability of the consumer and others involved. Create a partnership so the consumer never feels alone in the process.

Again, as you evaluate the process, remember, it is okay if you're not the best resource, and you assist the consumer to find and hook up within the best resources out there.

Accountability means meeting deadlines, follow through and being open about the process and information provided. We expect that from the consumer, and we're teaching them how to do that. But we need to do it, too. We need to be responsible.

We need to do our own deadlines and follow through and be open with the process with the consumer.

Again, that's the best way to model it, and that's the best way to become a strong advocate, and to have the individual be a strong advocate. Working together on every step of the process builds a partnership, especially if you run into a barrier. If the consumer feels confident in the partnership, the consumer will trust you to continue to move forward.

Everything we do, we run into barriers. Everything the consumer experiences, they run into barriers. Showing them that -- that just because there's a barrier there, we're not going to stop. We're going to break down that barrier. We're going to go around the side. We're going to do whatever needs to be done to get them to the goal and get through the process. Again, the consumer also needs to learn that barriers don't mean the process stops. It just may need to take a detour.

Next slide, please. Bureaucracy, oh, I love bureaucracy. All right. Number one, don't take no as the answer. Two, document everything. Three, and my staff will tell you I say this constantly: Policy versus procedures. Okay.

You may have knock on doors to get someone to respond to you. Manners are important. Okay. You can always say thank you and maintain your manners. Saying thank you doesn't mean you're happy or satisfied with the result, but acknowledges the interaction. The person you are communicating with may not be the one who will give you the response you're looking for. So you may need to be persistent and move on to the next level or the next agency.

Again, not taking no. Keep looking, keep going, keep moving until we can find out what we need to do.

Again, as I stated before, I prefer written correspondence over phone conversations, but I do whichever is appropriate for the time and the need. If it's a phone conversation or a face-to-face meeting, I'm very good at writing down the conversation points. Who said what. So it's easier to refer back to.

It's also okay to announce that you're taping the conversation at a face-to-face as a reasonable accommodation.

As long as the tape is the 0 table in front of everyone, you should be okay. It always amazes me how conversations change when a tape-recorder's on the table. Hm, I don't know what that magic little box does, but it seems to change conversations quite often. So, I've been known to have one ready, in case I need it. So ...

I do a lot of emailing for information when seeking the right person to contact, it's nice to have that chain to know who to go up or down. When I'm emailing a staff at another agency I have no problem at all emailing the supervisor, CCing them in on the conversations if I feel there's a need for it. I have even advised agency's when they are emailing my staff that it's fine to CC me in on it. They thought I would be upset about it. I said, no, I encourage that. I'm very supportive of what my staff are doing.

That's a way, also, to keep all the parties involved apprised of the situation and the progress. Confidentiality is always maintained and needed but you can do hypothetical inquiries to most any situation.

I'm the Queen of Hypotheticals, I can do hypotheticals out there, to most agencies to find out what the rule or the regulation or the policy is.

I don't want to know what the procedure is. A procedure is just something that they've done from year-to-year to year but it's not a written down policy. Procedures, you can't fight procedures. They don't exist. They don't have any weight.

Policies and regulations have weight. You can fight policies and regulations and possibly get them changed and overturned. So I'm always telling my staff: Ask for the policy in writing.

Oh. Okay. Because you're talking over the phone, you know, you can do the head much scratcher and say, oh, by the way, could you send me a copy of that policy so I can have it here so I can refer back to it? Again, policies are in writing. Procedures are things that maybe they've done for years and years, but like I said, they don't have any weight. So I've always instructed my staff: Get a copy of the policy in writing, so that you know what you're doing.

Next slide, please. Here's a quote from Gandhi. Probably some generations don't even know who Gandhi is. But Gandhi: We must become the change we wish to create. If we don't do it, who will?

We need to be the Pioneer to cross the lands and to bring up the ideas and the changes of the future. Always remember, we do this with the consumer. Again, independent living says nothing about me without me. Also, ten little words: If it is to be, it is up to me.

We need to walk it and talk it. We need to push for change from all sides. This includes local, in our cities, in our villages, in our towns, in our state, the Federal Government, everywhere, we're always pushing for changes. If we don't recognize the issues and bring them forth, then nothing will ever change. So, again, we must become the change we wish to create.

Next slide, please. Best practices. Remember all individuals have the right to live in the community of their choice. Take the time and initiate, to develop information about community-based services for your consumer, staff, and provider agencies. Talk and meet with community agencies in order to create the best network and support them for your consumers. Networking is a phenomenal opportunity. Don't waste it.

A strong advocate has a strong network. Going to workshops, trainings, being on community boards, volunteering, being on state committees is a great way to build networks and to add to your arsenal of information and resources.

Furthering your education, doing webinars, like today. Sharing with your fellow co-workers are always positive ways to build your individual advocacy skills and resources. You should be a sponge. Always absorbing information, absorbing, absorbing, absorbing.

Next slide, please. Best practices.

Educate the consumer, the family and the friends, the parents and Guardians about all the options and supports. Use your own internal experts and share your expertise with them. Educate the consumers and families about your roles and responsibilities. Be sure consumers know their rights to fair hearings and appeals.

Educating the consumers and the family about the options and supports, again, they may not know all of the option and supports that are available out in the community. And which ones they may be eligible for. Unfortunately, the other agencies out there, state, Federal, County, don't tell everybody everything that they've got, that individuals are eligible for.

They assist them with a Band-Aid for whatever service they've blocked in for, for that day, but don't tell them: Oh, by the way, you're also eligible for these six other services here. Or we send you over to this agency, you'll be eligible for these services.

Knowing those options and services and providing that information to the family and the consumer is what we do here as an advocate.

Use your own internal expert. Share your expertise with them. Each one of you should be sharing what you have and know about, because we all have our own little niches and our own personal experiences that we can use to share with the other staff out there. Tell the consumers and others about all of the experts in your agency as well as the other agencies.

Use the Internet. There are many invaluable resources at your fingertips. Get other agencies' newsletters, subscribe to their training mailings, all of that so that you have that information. Educate consumers and families about your roles and responsibilities.

Often, family members have heard the word social worker, case manager, service coordinator, advocate. But they've heard it from different agency's that have different roles and responsibilities from what our roles and responsibilities are.

So sharing with them, okay, I can do this, this, this, if you need this type of service, I'm going to help you to go to that agency that provides that type of service. Being able to help them through that process. Be sure they know their rights to fair hearings and appeals.

Most every decision out there, there's a right to have a fair hearing or to appeal the decision. You can even have a fair hearing and appeal favorable decisions. I don't recommend that. But you have the right to do that. I've had some consumers ask for that. But, again, then I've shared with them what the consequences may be if we open this all back up again. Okay?

Next slide, please. They may not remember what you said, but they will remember how you made them feel. They may not even remember what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel.

This goes for staff, including your own staff, your own agency, the consumer, and for other community agencies you interact with. The impression that you leave on them is -- goes a long way for the next time that you call them for assistance or help or services, or go smiling for an appointment at their door.

The best referrals come from word-of-mouth. We often get referrals from neighbors, family members or individuals who came to us for services.

Some, we were not even successful in helping, but they were treated with dignity and respect, so they refer others here to get that same type of service.

Next slide, please. Respect is earned and acknowledged for a job well done. That includes timely and professionally. You don't have to agree with what you are asking. They don't have to agree with what you were asking but they will respect your right to ask it.

Many agencies themselves will refer the consumers to the center for independent livings, because they know they will advocate with the consumer and they themselves may not be able to rock their own internal boats but they know that we can and we will.

I have had agencies staff send their own family members to us to advocate on their behalf. I have had them send them to us to advocate against their own agency, their family members.

Whether it's for a school, whether it's for Social Security, department of Social Services, whatever it is out there, they respect that we're going to do it respectfully. They also respect and continue with the battle and the fight and not let the individual just hang out there.

They respect that we come prepared. And assist consumers and to often say what is needed that they cannot say for themselves.

Well, thank you. That's pretty much the end of my slides. We'll open it up for questions and answers.

>> FEMALE VOICE: Certainly. The floor is open for questions. If you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. Questions will be taken in the order they are received.

If at any point your question has been answered you may press seven again to disable your question. If you're using a speaker-phone, or also while posing your question ask that you pick up your handset to provide favorable sound quality. Pleads hold while we wait for the first question. Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.) There appear to be no further questions at this time.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Thanks, Jean. Let's see. I have a question that just came in from Chris. And Chris asks: Would you explain what the center does when emergency does arise, since you don't do crisis work.

>> MARSHA SWEET: We assist the individuals to find the agency's out there that do crisis work. Again, like I said, a lot of our individuals come in here stating that they're in crisis or you know they're out of food today or whatever, so we will assist them to get to the agencies that do crisis work and assist them for it.

And then what I -- what we also do is once we've assisted them to get that crisis met, we have them come back in, so we can assist to see if maybe we can stop that cycle that started the crisis.

That's a relative take back onto that with the one that has about the Band-Aid for services.

Some agencies can only provide Band-Aid services. So once we've hooked the individual up in crisis to get that quick service, then we have them come back in so that we can hook them up with an agency that can help them with ongoing services, to maybe help to stop that crisis.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Thanks. You mentioned recording conversations. And recording everything, really, and FCR S asks: Is it legal to record conversations?

>> MARSHA SWEET: As I stated, I only record conversations when I'm at a face-to-face meeting, and that I have put the tape-recorder on the table, and say that I need -- it's a reasonable accommodation, because I'm not capable of always taking notes at meetings, and then everybody agrees to it.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Great.

>> MARSHA SWEET: I don't do any hidden tape-recording or anything. So... no.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Good. We've got a couple more questions, but let's go back to the phone and see if any have come in, Jean.

>> FEMALE VOICE: There are no questions in the queue at this time. Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: There appear to be no questions at this time.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Thanks. Okay, Marsha, Ken asks: If you know of a checklist that they could use to break down tasks within the consumer's goals.

>> MARSHA SWEET: I don't personally have one. I can explore to see if something else exists out there or maybe another center has one. I've just personally have done it so long that it just kind of falls into a pattern for me when I'm meeting with individuals. (Pause.)

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. And, let's see. Michelle asks: Going back to consumers and following up on their own responsibility, she says, what about consumers who do not keep in touch with you, come to their appointments or take the steps towards their goals, do you have any tips for her?

>> MARSHA SWEET: Yeah. First I will try to explore if it's something that's not one their means to do, they don't have transportation, if they're not capable of actually following the steps and through the process, maybe they needed more support from me, and then some of it always falls back to, we are consumer-directed and consumers direct you both with their communication, as well as their inactivity. So maybe it wasn't something that they really wanted to do or weren't capable of doing at this time, but I'll try to do any accommodation that I can to get them through the goal, and a lot of it's the reassurance, I'm here to help. I'm here to help, but we've got to do it by this deadline, but we've got to do it by this. And a lot of times they're directing you to their inactivity to that they're just not ready or willing to do at this time.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Great. And James, one of our participants added that at their center they use a mandatory review of consumer goals every three months and no less than

And Janice wants to know how she can become a professionally paid advocate.

>> MARSHA SWEET: Well, yes. I don't know where you live, Janice, but check your local state independent living centers. See who has an opening and what they have there would be one of the starts I would say.

There are also other ways of being a advocate. But you want to be a professionally paid advocate. So I would start with your local independent living centers and see what openings they've got and positions.

>> TIM FUCHS: A lot of times volunteer work is a great way to get your foot in the door so.

>> MARSHA SWEET: She said paid, that's why I skipped from the paid.

>> TIM FUCHS: Yeah, I know, have are true.

>> MARSHA SWEET: Volunteering is phenomenal. I started out as a volunteer. I don't have to tell you how many years ago. As a volunteer to agency and I have not left since. So.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Good. That's the last of the web questions for now. We'll keep our eye on that, but let's go back to the phone and see if any have come in there.

>> FEMALE VOICE: There are no questions in the queue at this time. Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypads. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: Again, if you do have a question, please press the number seven on your telephone keypad. (Pause.)

>> FEMALE VOICE: There appear to be no questions at this time.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. All right. Well, there aren't any questions left on the web. Although Janice does mention she has been volunteering. So... (laugh).

>> MARSHA SWEET: I see that.

>> TIM FUCHS: Check in with your local centers, Janice, and maybe you can find a job there. Let's see. We do have one more question, just came in, from Teri. And Teri asks: Do you find that the agency's you work with readily provide you with their policies?

>> MARSHA SWEET: Yes, they do. I'm very persistent. If it's a policy, a lot of times, the things that they are saying to us or stating to us are a procedure, so it doesn't exist.

That's when they have to draw back and say, oops, sorry, yeah, I guess we can do such and such. But, yes, policies are written. Policies are enforceable. So they need to provide you with the policies. Yes, I do get them.

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay.

>> MARSHA SWEET: I'll give you a hint though. Most of the time I've already got them (laugh). I'm just making sure that they're sending me what I've already got. Because you can -- a lot of the policies, you can get off the Internet and other resources so sometimes I've actually already got them in my hand. So...

>> TIM FUCHS: Okay. Great tips. Okay, so I am clicking ahead to Slide 38, Marsha has been generous enough to provide her contact information. And in addition to this, you can always contact me if you have any questions that you think of, whether it be later today or in two weeks, you can send them to me. My email address is very easy, it's just Tim at NCI L.org and if I can't answer it myself I'll pass it along to Marsha or someone else that may know the answer.

And finally, I'm going to flip to Slide 39. And for those of you that are on the webinar, this is a Live Link so you can click right on that, and it will take you to the evaluation form. So those of you that are listening on the phone or on the CART today you can get that at the training page. And again, that's the URL that we sent you in the confirmation email. The evaluation is very short. It's easy to complete. We really want to know what you think and like I said at the beginning of the call if you're in a group, that's great. But we really don't courage each individual that's participated today to fill this out and let us know what they thought.

This is a series, so there's a different evaluation for each presentation in the series. So do let us know was thought of today's presentation. So with that, we'll close today's call. Marsha, I want to thank you so much, it was an excellent presentation.

>> MARSHA SWEET: Really enjoyed it.

>> TIM FUCHS: Great. And I want to thank all of you for being here with us. We will have a short break for -- for the month of June, and we'll resume this series in July. Our next presentation will be independent living skills training on July 18th.

So, let us know if you need anything in the meantime. Thanks so much for being with us, everybody, have a great afternoon. Bye-bye.

>> FEMALE VOICE: Thank you. This does conclude today's teleconference. You may now disconnect.

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