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

Part 5: Peer Support presented by Amina Donna Kruck and April Reed on September 4, 2012

>> Operator: good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. And thank you for waiting. Welcome to the get to the core of it peer support conference call. All lines have been placed on listen only mode and the floor will be open for your questions and comments periodically throughout the presentation. Without further adieu, it is my pleasure to turn the floor over to your host, Mr. Fuchs. The floor is yours.

>> TIM: Hi, everyone. I'm Tim pukes with the national council of independent living here in Washington D.C. And I want to welcome to you today's presentation on peer support. This SILC-NET final presentation ind I'll get to the core of it series in the four core services. It is presented by CIL-NET, a program of the training and assistant project for CIL and SILCs. It is operated through a partnership of ILC in Houston. The national council in Washington and the association of programs for role independent living in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Support is provided by RSA in the U.S. Department of Education. Today's call is being recorded so we can archive it. That will be up within a day or two at most. We will break several times during the call to take your questions. For those of you that are on the webinar, you can ask questions in the public chat. You can type your question in the text box under the Emoticons. I will voice those during our Q&A breaks to our presenters. Also, if you're on the C.A.R.T. captioning screen today, I'm logged into the chat.

You can ask your questions with me and I'll do the same. For those of out phone, you can hit 7 and we'll repeat those instructions when we take our breaks.

If you're on the teleconference and you haven't opened the PowerPoint yet, you'll want to do that.

It will make today's want information much easier to follow along. A Powerpoint are located in the training web page that was sent to you in the confirmation e-mail. If you don't have that link, and you don't have the PowerPoint for any reason, you can spend me an e-mail at TIM@NCIL.org. For those of out webinar, the PowerPoint will display automatically. So let me introduce our Prince for today so we can get started.

I want to welcome back Amina Crook and April Reed, they're with the Arizona bridge to independent living, the center for independent living in Phoenix, Arizona. Amina is director of advocacy and April is volunteer coordinator.

I've had the pleasure of working with Amina and April in this training a number of times both in person and on the webinar in 2010. They always do an excellent job. I know you're going to enjoy it. I want to thank them for putting today's presentation. With that, I guess we'll get started. Let me turn it over to Amina to get us going.

>> Thank you, Tim. I am happy to be here.

Yes. April has had a program for -- well, I've been with them for 21 years. So for 22 years. We're happy to show other centers how to do this because we found it is such an efficient way to help us and you can turn the slide, Tim, too. Peerment earringd is heard of independent living movement. I like to think about sweet rock oat rock talking about we list as we climb and so there is different ways to do it.

A lot of centers do it through having staff with people with disabilities. When you figure the large number of people with all kinds of disabilities compared to the few staff that we all can afford to have, it's pretty hard to really meet the need without going into a volunteer program. So, mentors work with anyone who is adapting to disability or seeking to increase their independence and they use their own experience with living a disability to empower others to research their independent -- to reach their independent living goals.

You can switch slides. Really what that means is that mentor a lot of times we have reluctant mentors that turn out to be the best once. They may not think they have anything to offer and I always think about my friend who has been a quad now for almost 30 years and has never had skin break down. She feels very inadequate in a lot of ways.

She has led a some what isolated life. So that's part of being on the alert to the people that you're working with to see what do they have to offer other people they may not know they have to offer. So we began our program in 1990. I joined in the end of 1990 and they had just had their first mentor training.

Again, you know, we're in Phoenix. Phoenix has half the population of the state in the greater Phoenix area and that's what our center covers. There's no way we will ever have enough staff.

We didn't back then and we still don't. We knew consumers and community members we could tell there was a lot of untapped resource and, um, this is administrative staff. Several of us had experience with mentoring. I've had a long time background in peer counseling or reevaluation counseling.

Our executive director shortly after I came in had, ah, had experience peer mentoring. When she was first disabled, the guy who actually started our program, Jerry Dowrum pell didn't have a peer mentor he started the program. He thought why does everyone have to reinvent the wheel all the time.

They had ament organization program. He had that vision for able and that's how I came. I had that long background of peer counseling. I also have a counseling degree, but I very much believe in that peer relationship. So, next slide. So that's how it came about.

Today, we have 41 active peer mentors that have donated nearly 1800 hours for last year. That's like October to September of last year. And I looked it up and that's, um, twice as many hours as we have five years before. So our program continues to grow. Although, the number of active peer mentors stayed about the same, but they had gotten involved in a lot of new ways.

Some of of the mentors have provide an additional 51,000 or 5100. Sorry. Hours of technical and clerical support. We moved into the disability and empowerment center and our center was really not ever a meeting place before.

We worked out a lot in the community, but this place is so fabulous. It is fill accessible and it is such a great model people really like to come here.

We have a [INAUDIBLE]. We can't take more volunteers. So they do presentations with us, disability related presentations. They helps when you we have conferences and workshops staff those, big events and we have a peer mentor group along with the individual peer mentors that. Number of hours is quite large T. also has more than doubled in the last five years since we moved to this center.

There's been a lot of activity here and it does include we usually have an intern for two semester and that does include intern hours and it includes our volunteers that are part of our probable theatre company. We have a lot of things going on where people offer their valuable time to us. Next slide. Can -- thank you.

So, the program goals are to have qualified peer mentors help with independent living skills and you could say adjustment to disability sometimes too F. because Phoenix, people move to Phoenix and sometime its is adjusting to Phoenix.

And, you know, so they've left what was home to have a new life here. It's more accessible than a lot of other places, but it's a big area to get to know your way around.

Also, they support the able consumers in reaching their goals whatever that might be and in order to work with a peer mentor, a consumer does need have a goal that they want to achieve with the help of that peer mentor. And they support able staff and programs. Next slide.

So everybody does work with a staff person first. They all have a full-time staff person that works with them and, ah, then that person when they think they're ready will refer them back to peer mentoring particularly with a goal. Sometimes more than one mentor works with the people on goals and often they will work with more than one consumer at a time. So we decided way early on after I went around town and interviewed some of the larger volunteer programs that the mental health clinics had to get an idea of what did we need really make our program successful.

We started out with somebody that was part time doing the job and we had trouble really getting it off the ground and, um, that person was kind of the staff person for the consumer and the person for the mentor. And what I learned from some very successful programs in the value at time is that it really -- one person convinced me. This job is for a human resource type of a person. And it needs to be a full-time position you really dedicate to that role. And that was a little hard to sell at first.

So we -- I worked with our director. She was really wanting to have this program be successful and convinced her that it was worth taking see funds for one person to be a coordinator. It you can get them is to bring back enough hours to at least make up the hours they're not working with consumers directly. So that's like 2,0 gone through that first training.

And, um, and then we hired somebody to be a full-time volunteer coordinator to really dedicate themselves and that person needed to be somebody, um, who either had coordinated people before in that kind of a role or had that kind of skills that would be good at that because they would be responsible for recruiting, orienting, training the mentors, making the matches. That's kind of like being a matchmaker. So it has to be somebody who has some good understanding of counseling and social works were very helpful to know people, to know how to get ton people and to have that kind of good ethical judgment and I will say I noticed that the people that have that training, um, are better at being volunteer coordinators that. I have better judgment with the conassumers that they work with and the volunteers for the matches.

And they also have better -- how to say this. There are certain ethical bound Reese you really need to maintain on this job and it has been very helpful to have people that have that kind of training. I think anybody who had been a resource coordinator potentially can do that Los Angeles and our volunteer coordinator does have a disability and I always have volunteer coordinators that always did have disabilities.

They conduct programs evaluations and supports the volunteers and provides recognition types of experiences for the volunteers. And that, ah, support is very, very important. Um, because those volunteers have disabilities themselves and they've got things going on in their life too. So we really -- next slide.

So the volunteer coordinators are the ones that work with the volunteers and the staff member is the one that works with thementees to divide that role up so volunteers feel comfortable going to them for support when they feel stuck or disconnected. And it's really important that you have somebody who's good at working independently that will check up and follow through with those volunteers and check in with them and see how things are going.

Individuals -- the mentors are people with disabilities is who are already living independently. They are integrated into the community. Typically they have a desire to help others do the same. So, they want to share what they've learned, what they know and like I sacred sometimes they're reluck ant. We have to invite them in because we see they have skills they haven't really thought of to share. They are not nor do they try to be medical professionals. They're not counselor. We don't call them pericones less.

We call them peer mentors. They're not therapist. Able doesn't offer counseling services from staff or mentors. So we refer out if people need professional counseling. Next slide.

There this was big dilemma and there's been quite a controversy about, you know, do you pay mentors or not and I actually called around the different centers to find out what they were doing and some do pay their mentors. We decided not pay our mentors because consumers have so many people in their life that are already paid professionals. Care givers, medical professionals, rehabilitation, VR professionals and it really

Also for the volunteers, have somebody there because they want, to but because they're available other than business hours. You know? They're available in the evening or in the weekend s and con assumers are more likely to turn around and become a volunteer when they receive mentoring from a volunteer. They -- they want to play it forward so to speak. Next slide.-for-

So I'm gonna let April take over about, um -- Li'll do who are mentors and she's going to do who are thementees. What we've been talking about this, variable consumer work one on one with an abled staff person. Thementees do. Anybody who is getting peer mentoring from a staff person is possible to do mentoring, but they have to be at that place where they're ready to take mutual responsibility for their goals and so that's why not just everybody gets referred over. What we found was staff could want to seat peer mentors as a dumping ground for people they didn't know what to do with or it's taken some while to teach the staff how to work with mentors too. We don't want to give them more responsibility than a staff person has.

That's for sure. We need to make surementee has stability in their life. We've had one pure mentallor. He used to take people, one of the things he was really proinitiate in was the bus system. He would bring able cards to the bus stops and pass them out. He would get hismentees and take them to transit advocacy meetings and stuff. So, um, thatmentee is just one example that got that opportunity to see somebody who was really comfortable with the public transit system and help them gain a lot of comfort right from the get go.

Some have a lot of things they need to work O. so like I said, sometimees there is more than one mentor that works with them on more goals. Next slide. I will let April take over and talk to you more about the mentors because she's our volunteer ordinary coordinator and our expert.

>> April: Thank you, everyone. I am glad to be here with you today to share a little bit about our program what we do. Ah, what do the able peer mentors do? They work with any consumer who's adapting to a disability or really has independent living goals where they need additional support that a mentor can provide.

Mentors will also work with somebody who may be as new to their disability and really needs a lot of assistance just learning about their disability and is really in that beginning phase of adapting, adjusting to living with a disability. The mentors agree to have regular contact with do some sort of maybe occasional in person and then a lot by phone or e-mail. It also can, um, really be just about what the mentor andmentee are comfortable with.

Recently, I have a young match -- a young youth mentor and mentee and the mentor had called and said you know, I am really having a hard time reach think her and I just wanted to give you a heads up. I will try another e-mail. And later in the day, got a call back said connected some are she respond back right away. And so for that mentee because of their age and young people use a lost different technologies to stay in touch, um, texting was the way to get had touch with her and get in contact.

So we really leave up that to the mentor and mentee of what type of contact will work best for them. Our only requirement is they be in touch with each other at least two times amont and, um, that can be again by any means of contact, but at least two times a month because wean they're keeping up with each other. They're staying in touch. Most of our mentors andment ease will do much more than that, but that's the minimum. Next slide.

So what do the peer mentors do as far as what they are they teaching? They can teach any independent living skill from budgeting, public transportation, maybe it's someone saying I need is get more proficient in computerrings and I'd like someone to help me do that. The consumer is going to identify what that goal is they're needing help with. Um, and the peer mentors and we'll get to this more later on, but the peer mentors really identify for us in their application what goals do they feel like they could share with somebody? Of course, they're always helping people connecting the community, connect to resources, um, connect to support groups and support networks.

Peer mentors finding that right number for somebody, urge finding the number for social security, finding the number for the medicated program, those are thing that's peer mentors will do a lot of, helping them connect thementees to resource. Providing support encouragement, that's huge. Listening. Um, encourages, helping somebody brainstorm and think out solutions, that's a big part of what the mentors do. Of course role modeling and teaching selfadvocacy skills. We really want to providers.

A mentor thereby toasted down with them and say what are the questions you want to get answered.

What sort of resolution are you looking for? Brainstorming those questions or, um, maybe it's something like helping them, um, call in to. We have a dial right service here. Call in to make that first contact to apply for public transportation services. They can help that person navigate thes and hopefully interact more successfully with providers. Next slide.

As Amina touchd on, the volunteers are doing a lost different things for us. As she mention, helping us with events and clerical work, they do awareness presentations. I coordinate go our youth program to go out to schools. So we have a core group of mentors that are really comfortable with presentations and enjoy that.

So they'll go and give panel presentations with me. We also do a once amont mental organization group because we than not everybody is going to be good mentoring one on one. But the group session is, um, several mentors, severalment ease getting together. We have presentations and it's a chance for them to share information or stories or network in that group setting.

They'll do there are on their one on one mentoring matches and it's a great way to connect with other mentallors. It is great for theme connect with others in similar situations and that are reaching out for resources. We also again try to encourage all of our volunteers to get involved in community advocacy of place is willing to get involved that way, they will bring that mentee along with them. And it's really a great way to help people again role model those advocacy skills and get involved in the community.

Mentors will equationally do community outreach events with us. Maybe a business contacts you and says we like top and what you guys do. And so a mentallor is just a natural person to talk about some of the services and maybe describing how they have used abled services and benefits.

Next slide. I think we're going to have questions. Any questions we'll take those at this point.

>> TIM: Okay. Amanda, go ahead.

>> Amanda. The floor is now open for questions. Please press the number 7 on your telephone key pad. Questions will be taken in the order they are received. If at any point your question has been answered -- you pickum your handset to provide a favorable sound of quality.

>> TIM: Okay. Thanks. And, ah, I'll just remind folks I don't see any questions yet on the public chat. But if you have questions on the webinar, you can type them in the text box under emitticons. Also, if you're on the C.A.R.T. screen, ask your question there in the chat screen and I will voice the questions. Go ahead.

>> Operator: the disability resource center. Go ahead, Angel.

>> Thank you. I don't believe I caught what is a, um -- let's see. ABIL.

>> That's our name, Arizona bridge to independent living is what is it stands is for is the center name.

>> Thank you Ryan who's wondering where you can view the archive of the webinar and we'll post that link up to that public chat in just a moment. That will be available in IRUs web page let's see if we get any more contact questions on the phone.

> OPERATOR: We have a question from Angel Harris.

>> I am trying to get out back into listening mode.

>> TIM: Okay. I've got a question from the web now. First question is it was indicated more than one mentallor may be utilize per consumer. Do you suggest a primary to coordinate needs?

>> This is April. I would -- I would say that's really the job of the volunteer coordinator. That's really my job is to coordinate between those two mentors. For example, perhaps we have a peer mentor who is going to be working on the bus system with somebody while another mentor is maybe working on the computer with somebody. I'm going to know kind of where the status is each goal is at. I'm going to help communicate between the two mentors any information that needs to be shared or updated and then it's really my role to update the staff as well so they have an update on what is the progress that the mentee is making their consumer, what's the progress, what's the status on both those matches.

Um, we also will talk about this a little later on, but we do evaluations. So that helps me know how are things going from the mentors perspective and how are things going from the mentees perspective, what's the progress on the goals. So really, um, typically it's not that complicated. A lot of our peer mentallors know each other.

So that's always really helpful and they're really -- the peer mentors are typically pretty good at communication.

It is important that I'm able to keep everybody on the same page and it's usually not that hard to do as long as we're just doing those regular check ins with people and making sure that there's progress towards the goals.

>> Precious also, you might explain a little bit. We do have a shared database that the staff person ask working with them and April can see. And so in that database Fthere's any significant something going onme being able to enter the mentor's time sheet.

Can I enter that into the database. The staff person can click on that consumers file, that mentees's file and see how many hours of mentoring did they receive this month. When was their last evaluation? When die need is to do another evaluation? When did April do her last evaluation with the peer mentor? So that really helps facilitate the communication and everybody staying on the same page.

>> TIM: Good. Thanks. Have a couple more questions. Let me do a few of these before we go back to the phones. On average, how many of your consumers meet with mentors?

>> I guess you can say how many active mentors mentoring do you have going on right now?

>> April: SWRAOEZ 24 active matches right now. That's one on one matches. So that means a peermentor matched with one mentee working with them on a one on one basis during this month. We also do kind of a little bit more informal as I mentioned, we have ourment organization group. So people can come in to that group and get mentoring that way.

So we track how manimentees and how many consumers came to that group. That, of course, various month by month.

>> What we can't tell you because we never stop to look is how many people, you know, are working open with the staff at this time to see what percentages of them are getting mentoring. We actually don't know that question.

>> TIM: Okay. And then the same person asked Amina, you mentioned the rationale not to pay their mentors and they're wondering if you think that decision will be revisit. Do you think ABIL will ever pay their mentors?

>> No. I think the program has been very successful. We do reimburse for mileage or bus tickets if people are needing that assistance. A lot of our mentors don't ask for it, but we do do that. We provide free transportation if they're coming in to council tear with us with our van if they're needing that assistance. It's a pretty firm decision. Anything can change in the future, but, um, the council tears seem to be fine with way it is. The consumers, it make a big difference for them. So at this point, there isn't any reason to change it.

>> TIM: Thanks. I do have one more question, but I want to get back to the phones. Let's go back to the phones and I will finish up before we return to the presentation. Operate operate if do you have as quirk please press the number 7 on your telephone key pad. We have a question from Ruth Johnson of arc tick access.

>> Ruth: Yeah. My question is: What do you do about the confidentiality stuff that everybody seems to think that we have to do and my bias is that as a consumer, um, I'm not a secret and those people that are providing this participating working with me, I'm not a secret. And I don't like secrets I guess is because of my background with being a volunteer with domestic violence and sexual assault and having dealt that on a personal level and being a mentor of people going through that. So I just want ton how you guys deal with that. Thank you.

>> I'll let April go first.

>> April: Sure. Thank you. We definitely train our peer mentors and we'll get into our training in just a bit. We talked to them about confidentiality and what our policy is as an agency and as a peer mentor program. And so what we train our mentors is that, um, than what they talk about with their mentee does need to remainum, you know, it's our with ethical behavior and clear boundaries makes a big difference.

This is not the role that somebody who's kind of got co-dependent type behavior is going to be good at. And I've had both kinds of staff. You need somebody clear boundaries and make sure the menders andment ease understand those clear boundaries there would is not confidentiality between staff and, you know, we have to explain that sometimes to people as staff if more than one of us is working with somebody.

They do crab separate they do share with each other what's going on, if it's relevant to the situation. But both staff and council tears we make it very clear and they find policies that acknowledge that they know there is that need for confidentiality. So we're lucky we haven't had too much trouble with that.

>> April: Interestingly enough, we haven't had trouble with that. Most of the volunteers think about the providers or, you know, that they're worked with in the cast is how they would have expected those individual toss problemtective of their information of their disclose us to that provider.

And so most of the mentors this is a really obvious policy to them and, you know, I think most of them would expect that we would have this. It's really not something we get very many questions on. I think, ah, the peermentors understand that if they were in the mend ease position, they would want somebody look out for them and being protective of what we shared and respecting confidentiality. So it's really not an issue that we've really encountered very often with the mentors.

>> I notice there is a question about liability and we'll talk about that a little bit when we get into the training and the requirements to be a peer mentor. So we will answer it at that time.

>> TIM: Okay. Good. There maybe couple people on the west indictment get back to the presentation. That was our 10 minutes for that Q&A break. We'll break again during the call. If you have a question, just remember it or jot it down and we'll take it during our next break. Thanks.

>> Yes. Thank you. Our next slide. This is Amina again. So I'm the program director. April is the program volunteer. I know things from the administrative end. One of the things listed from the program, which is reality first barrier is the finances is to cover the funding for the volunteer coordinator. So you'll have to write that in. I mean, it took me a year to really convince my director and our board to go along with the idea of dedicating is that one full FTmerckx to be a volunteer coordinator.

And it certainly has paid off in the end, but I had to convince them that it was a human resource, if you think about it. Gosh, right now, we probably have 100 volunteer -Z because we have so many general volunteers in addition to the peer mentor volunteers and in turn that April is supervising.

That takes a lot of high skill. And so, it is a position that's more -- it has become a position that is more than just a regular independent link advocate position. It is a higher level of a manager in between management type of a position.

It takes a lot of administrative skills to track all the the numbers. We have to track all the hours ever the voling up tears and you have to get the hours from the volunteers. You have to approve the mileage, reimbursement. There's a lot of administrative responsibility.

But separate, once you get past that barrier, then there is the making of the matches, making good matches and I have had volunteer coordinators that, um, put people together, but didn't really follow through to make sure that they were getting connected. The matches were in name only. So that can be hebertier.

One thing that led us to do signature one-month evaluation which April will talk about to make sure that match is really actually functioning. The role of the mentor sometimes can be a problem for the mentor to take on too much responsibility. Um, and not understand what their role is.

As far as an ethical behavior in all these 20 something years that I've been directing over that program, we've had just very few instances of inappropriate behavior and that's because the screening is done very L. there's a meeting with the mentor before they're invited to come to the training and then part of the role of the training is not only to give them training, but it is to give the volunteer coordinator an opportunity and other staff an opportunity to seize that mentor and get to know them because it becomes clear within a couple of days of mentoring by the kinds of questions they ask and how they respond to the information about independent living and our modeling and disability awareness and stuff that some people are not really ready to mentor one on one with somebody.

They may come to that conclusion even after the training. So screening for the mentors is very, very important. Inappropriate behavior of mentor and mentees can be a problem and that has come up a little of it very rarely, but we make it clear about no dating between mentor and mentee.

We did have a mentor once many years ago that had a problem with that and we had to ask him to leave the program. Um, again, that's been very rare and there's enough interaction and enough trust in the program. If you have a volunteer coordinator that's a great listener like April Sthen they feel -- the mentors feel very safe coming to her and the mend ease feel safe going to their staff to let them know what is going to and that's very important.

There hasn't been many experiences like that. But that is because there is a lot of interaction going to on both ends. Ongoing need for new mentors. So there's always a need to get fresh mentor and somebody does it for a while and then they're either tired of it or often what happens is they move on to bigger and better things and other responsibilities in their lives.

Ongoing need -- inappropriate referrals. So occasionally, I was taught a long time ago the best leaders are often the relucteddant leaders. So sometimes the very people that are most gung ho about being mentors may not always be the best peer mentor because their alterior motives for being a peer mentor may not be -- they may not be mature enough to do that or ready in their own -- within their own development.

So, and then sometimes really big [INAUDIBLE] is inappropriate referrals ofmentees.Mentees that are all over the place and, um, not really -- they're really.Ing people to come in and take care of them. They're not really ready to work on their own goals. So they may have to work with a staff person to folk Russ in on what kind of a goal a peer mentor can help them with.

Next slide. So an affective peer support component are that recruitment, recruiting the right and we count on staff members to help douse recruiting. Every center, every staff person is [INAUDIBLE] with whatever their job. And so, April has regular meetings with the -- in particular the community integration unit which, is the unit that most refers to her to, um, connect with them and remind them if she's looking for peermentors and needs them. Right now we just decided we typically do two trainings a year and we decide -TDZ not do one because we really -- we've got a good active peer mentor base and we really don't need any right now. But there were other times when we really needed to do recruiting.

Mentor qualifications. So getting people with the right skills available. Somebody that's a big intra vert might not work out too well as a mentallor. You generally have to have people that are extrovertd that like people and like to communicate with people. Sometimes they're very good listeners and that's just what somebody needs.

Everybody has something to offer. They need to have a certain level of maturity to be able to understand the boundaries in that relationship. Mentor training, all the mentors receive training and then we have ongoing workshops all the times for different skills and development and community getting familiar with other community resources and thementors can participate in that ongoing training as well. So, that's really important and as I said, that training period is really important because it does really help the volunteer coordinator get ton that mentor better during that training.

And, you know, you can really tell it's been very interesting. We have one gentleman, for instance, he really wants to be a mentor and he's really -- he really has terrible boundaries, and um, you know, so we find ways that he can participate, but he's not going to get a one on one match because he just doesn't have good boundaries. He gives people advice all the time and a peer mentor we encourage them to not give advice, to be good listeners, but to not really advise people.

That assessment haps during the training. Mentor supervision, making sure they know they have contact with a volunteer coordinator on a regular basis. So, when you think about, that your volunteer coordinator has to be an extra vert of some sort. They will have contact with all of those active mentors and matches. There is 20 something of those at least once a month. Sometimes more than once a month.

And then all the other volunteers coming in and your volunteer program can grow in many directions you want it to grow. And then mentor recognition, making sure you have a way to let the mentors know they're appreciated. The first place is having somebody is the kind of person that's courteous and presses to them gratitude on a regular basis.

That's the very first step to that and little things like sending thank you cards and we do -- we'll talk about it T. we'll do volunteer recognition activity here as well. And then program evaluation is essential. That's how we figured out how often we needed to do evaluation was find out somebody that was being the volunteer coordinator wasn't doing their job and the matches weren't really happening. So that let's you know how it is going with the mentoring.

Next slide. Thement Omentee recruitment and selection is really ongoing outreach is going all the time. If we have somebody that, up, really looks like they would know a great mentor and they feel a need we have right then for that kind of mentoring, we'll go ahead and do some one on one mentoring with them until there is an actual mentor training going on.

So somebody doesn't have to wait forever until a training if they're really ready to go and we think they would be really good. You need a a nice diverse list of skills. That one staff person, if they were working one on one, it would be April who would be female who would have a certainest is life experiences and disability. This you have mentors with different cultures and disabilities and all different ages and experiences and skills to share.

So, those volunteers sometimes people call us.Ing to council tear, they're new into town or they're in that place in their life where they're looking for new opportunities. Sometimes other local publications. We sometimes do community outreach presentation, but we don't have to do that. We're getting all the volunteers we need right now.

Referrals from staff and mentors that are viewed as good role models and like I said, we have to solicit those when we're looking for some particular traits that we're hoping to find. And then consumers who have been mentors turn around and want to be a mentor back who have been mentees an

d receive mentoring want to do that for somebody else when they get their lives in order.

Next slide. So thement ease are able and working with ABIL staff. They complete a consumer request form and they sign a confidentiality release specific to the peer mentor program. So they know that they're kind of shifting over, um, to another group -- to another staff person that's going to work with them. That's clear.

And that -- peer mentor form is where they fill out information about themselves and about what skills they think they have to offer. So the volunteer coordinate and provide character references. And then complete a phone or an in person interview with the volunteer coordinator often it is in person.

Next slide. And then they go over the mentor rules and guidelines and they must sign that at the peer mentor training and maintain confidentiality. They get to do report training and report any kind of behavior that looks like they could harm themselves or somebody else. And, um, to maintain the appropriate bound Reese as a mentor, friendship, relationship.

Now I will say some of these mentors and mentalees go off and they're friends for life. And, um, and others do their -- they get through their goal and that's it. They're off and doing other things, but we do make that clear during the training and that is part of the -- of rules and guidelines.

Next slide. So they all get a background check. We didn't do that and we do it for starve, but our liability insurance started requiring T. so now awful our staff and all of our volunteers go through that and even general volunteers. Is that true, April?

>> April: Yeah. You are.

>> So that's gotten a little bit expensive. I think it's $45 apiece or something.

>> April: It's up to 67. But it does vary by state. So there are some promise I heard can be as low as $13 in their state to do the background check.

>> Know we do a state check. There is a check through the city that some volunteer promise use and it is faster too. Um, and then with have we ever gone the back going that that have made us stop our relationship with a volunteer?

>> April. That. Has happened. What's great about doing the background check is you will -- if somebody has something in their background, you will get a very clear letter from the department of public safety stating what that Sthe nature of it and if that happens, you know, we have a policy in place to where that council tear -- depending on where the nature of that conviction, where they could appeal it or they would be terminated. I would call Amina one -- one letter that we got back from DP, some where we did decide to go ahead and approve the volunteer because it was a misdemeanor conviction 30 years ago. So that is something we worked out to have a policy in place.

>> We learned about how to do that screening from our person wall assistance training. For years, they had to do the same thing. If somebody got a DUPHAOEURBGS 30 years ago and they're had no convictions since, then they, you know, they can still work. But if they had some crime against people or recent DUI, things like that would tell you there's a problem. So, it is helpful and on a rare occasion, it does mean that somebody isn't able to work with us.

And part of that is of course the fingerprint and background check that goes along with that. The thing about the felony conviction too is where and how F. somebody has paid their debt to society and has had no problem since, that might be something we look at especially in your state because, UIs are felonies -- because DUIs are felonies. We have to look that the to be clear, but for most case, we'll say no.

Next. Sorry. I'm going to sneeze. Excuse me. Sorry. Good. It's your turn, April.

>> April: All right. Well, to talk to you a little bit about our training, it is how twice a year, as Amina mention before, it is mandatory for all of our peer mentoring is to go through training even if they had experience working in another program.

It is really important to have them come through our training and really learn about ABIL, learn about our program, learn about our specific requirements for peer mentors. Is that can vary greatly between different agencies and different community programs. So our training is mandatory for all of our mentors. What's really wonderful for me is our training is two days.

And what's really great for me and the participants I think as well is that our staff come in and assist the volunteer coordinator and assist me in presenting the curriculum. Not only are they hearing from me, but they're also getting ton key staff like Amen alike our executive director.

Getting to know some of the hear from each other about why are right before learn. If the group has a lot of questions, they stay and have lunch and keep answering questions. They get to hear from current mentor choice share some of the experiences they've had and answered questions. So again, it's a great chance for them to talk to people who are currently mentoring and learn what that is like what's hard and what's enjoyable and really get to pick somebody's brain about why they volunteer here at ABIL.

Next slide. Most of our mentors had some sort of disability. Occasionally, we will have a participant who maybe is a spouse to somebody who can coming through the training and maybe that individual was interested or offering their services to speak to family. For examples I have a long-time couple who have mentored with us and so the wife is an amputee.

So she talks to the individual with the disability in the hospital and the husband talks to the family. And so, um, we definitely would have that spouse or that person come through that training and be certified just like we would the peer mentor.

Next slide. Um, the other reason we would have people, um -- come through that training even if they're a spouse or a sig sesibling is we want to make sure they understand our philosophy, they understand independent living philosophy that we're talking to them about people first language.

And surprisingly, you know, I would say for a high majority of our attendees at the training, that is new information to them. They don't necessarily know about people first language.

It might be the first time they're impacting with an independent living center and so they don't know our history. They don't know about Ed Roberts. So that's really a great chance of that training to introduce them to our philosophy and make sure that that's a good fit for them and it's a good fit for us, that they're really comfortable because for us, that's just as important as any other requirement is that we would have for them as a mentor.

We had mention earlier that we do have a policy, a council tear duty to report policy. If a mentor is expressing thoughts or feelings about harm themselves or others, volunteers must sign this at the peer mentor training and it really outlines for them what they do if they have a mentee that report to them they're feeling homicidal or suicidal or if they have a mentee that reports to them they've had an incident of abuse.

Next slide. So we kind of unofficially call this our pass the buck policy. And really what we mean by that is we have to be respectful of the fact that our volunteers are volunteers. They are not therapist. They are not counselor and we don't want them to be.

We don'tor to provide intervention, crisis intervention. They're not taking on any of the responsibility to get that person help. That's what I'm here to do. So all they're agreeing to is pick up the phone and, um, contact me and let me know, hey, I've had a mentee.

I'm a little correspond. They seem a little down this week. I'm concerned and usually people aren't make direct threats. It is usually the mentor calling and saying, man, they just don't seem in a good place this week or, you know, they said that they're feeling really tired. I'm concerned about them.

So what that does is that allows me to do some intervention to get the starve involved to contact thatmentee. Is it a more serious situation where I need do crisis intervention with that mentee. That's the pass the buck policy. We try to make it really S. for us as a program, this again isn't something that comes up very often. I can only think as long as I've been coordinators, I can think of a handful of times where we had a situation where we had a mentor call in and say I'm concerned about somebody.

One of those times was actually a peer mentor that was really depressed, had had an incident come up and was immediately struggling. So that wases crisis intervention that I was doing with the peer mentallor. So it is not something that comes up very everyone, but we train them to make sure they are ready for that situation.

This is probably the section I was most nervous B. I wasn't sure how people would respond to this or whether they would feel overwhelmed or have a lot of concerns or questions. What I was surprised to find is that the vast majority of our peer mentors say things like I'm glad you guy have that policy.

That's simple. I can do that. That makes sense to me. So once they hear the policy and understand that as far as liability ethical Lee, moral Lee, legal Lee, their only responsibility is to pass that buck and call Meeks call is ABIL and report that. Most of them are very, very comfortable with this policy and we don't have a lot of questions or concerns about it.

Next slide. So the mentors are always invited and encouraged and, um, gentry bugged by me to continue ongoing training at ABIL. We have workshops.

Self advocacy or legislate workshops or presentation. These are great ways for the mentors to come in and get additional training and learn, um, and develop their skills.

So we have mentors coming in all the time for our legislative advocacy workshops or come in interest do a workshop disability awareness. So those are great opportunities for the peer mentors to take advantage that ever and we definitely encourage that. I also do one on one trainings with the mentors as needed.

For example, I had a referral for a mentallor. I'm asking them to work with somebody and maybe it's a completely new disability to them. I would definitely sit down with them and educate them about that disability or educate them about a need. Or even it's a community resource that they're going to need to be familiar with. That's something that I can sit down and work with them and kind of coach them on learning about that resource.

The peer mentors we definitely encourage demand, expect that if their mentee encounters a challenging situation that they take advantage of me as a coordinator to pick up the phone or come meet with me. This is a particularly challenging situation.

Can you give me advice on how to coach this mentee through this challenge. For examples I had a peer mentor call last week who said mimentee is having a dispute with their neighbor and I've been trying to support them and listen and I want to talk this situation over with you.

I spent a half an hour with them and gate mentallor ideas about how they can support mendee and resources. So that's definitely, um, something that we would expect the mentors to, um, to tap into and to pick up that phone and have that communication if they're needing support from me.

Next slide.

>> Amina, I want to interject here. I know we have people listening at all levels at independent living centers and the choice of the volunteer coordinator is so important because they have a lot of responsibility to feel comfortable with the challenging situation and, ah, to have good judgment around those kinds of issues and have created solutions.

So for instance, that's how we ended up having the -- there were times from different volunteer coordinators where we had mentoring groups, but we didn't have them for a while. One of the reasons was April noticed that, um -- I'm sorry.

I forgot put on my motorcyclelo phone. There were some people who went through the mentoring program who only wanted to work with a certain kind of disability and we really didn't get referrals of people that disability very often, but they were sincere and then we also had a staff person who said I've got some people that are still in the nursing home.

They want to get out of the nursing home and it would be really good for them to come out to some kind of a group. So April was creative to put those things together and so that's really how ourment organization group started was originally for some people who didn't feel comfortable doing one on one or weren't ready or for whatever reason didn't have a match, but they wanted to get going because if you don't give volunteers jobs when they volunteer, then they tend to fade away.

And then there were those people who, um, were interested in getting some support and weren't ready for the one on one goals yet. So I just wanted to interject there that creativity as you get in to it to say what is really needed in your community that the volunteers can be helpful for.

>> April: One thing I will say about thement organization groups, it is amazing what kind of resources and information can get shared when you get people with disabilities in a room together.

The mentors and I have joked that at some point, we'll have a conversation about and medicine and then, you know, public transportation. But it really is, you know, just an amazing way for people in a very natural way to sit down and share information with each other and so for the mentors and me it is one of the funnest things to do. We really can brainstorm and support somebody right their in the group and really network, which is nice to be able to do that and provide that support.

Final slide on our training and then we'll go to questions and answers. To break down the training manual for you to give you an idea, some of the sections we have in there, we have a section on independent living philosophy, disability history. If you're wanting to get your mentors educate and the excited about disability history, that's a great book. Again, it is called no pity.

And we had a section on ABIL. We have a section about talking about grieving and adapting to disability. Those materials are based on the stages of grief and loss developed by Cooper Ross. We talk about disability liberation and center types and disability awareness.

We talk about how do we internalize oppression and how do we turn that around and how do we turn that to action. Of course, we have a section on self advocacy because we want the mentors to be role modeling that and teach skill to the mentee.

Of course, we have a section on disability etiquit. We want them to work with different people. So that's definitely a great section to have if that's the goal for your program. Amina said that is for ours and so we can do a lot to teach people about etiquette and interacting better with each other. We have sections about goal planning and teaching the mentors who's difference between helping versus dependency. So we really kind of had some great sections that we break down to really walk them through, um, what some are key components that mentors really need to be aware of.

Of course, selfadvo characters goal planning, advocacy, disability Awarns are all really important to doing that. So that's all included in our training.

>> April brings in various staff members to teach different parts of this training. So the mentors get a chance to get familiar with more of the staff than they may have known before.

>> April: All right. I think we'll move to any questions that we have.

>> Operator: as a reminder, if you do have a question, please press star 7 on your telephone key pad. There are no questions at this time, Tim. Are there any questions your end?

>> TIM: Yeah. First question comes from Margaret soon sipress. She asked if you can please discuss the mentor groups T. a big group discussion? Do people pair off and do you pick topics for your meetings?

>> Sure. As Amina said, the mentor group developed because I had some great peer mentors that I hadn't been able to match because they were really looking for a very specific disability. And I thought that was unfortunate because they were so knowledgeable and really.Ing to help and volunteer. And the other reason was we had some people in the nursing homes we wanted to get out and start, you know, connecting with other people outside the institution and connecting with resources and getting to the center that way. So that's kind of how it started. It's kind of developed over the years. What we do is, um, I invite the peer mentors who are interested in doing a group that month and I'll send outd invitation to them at beginning of the month and I will do the same with our staff.

The staff might invite somebody who is not connected with the peer mentor program, but maybe it would benefit from a positive group and being able to come and interact with the peer mentors. So those individuals get invited. The peer mentors who are matched one on one get invited and they can bring their mentees with them. Again, another place they can have a positive group and, you know, the mentors know thementees will be around good people who are -- they're there to network and learn and share.

As far as topics, um, you know, occasionally, we do have a specific topic like last month Amina came in and talked to the group about our get out vote efforts and talking to them about advocacy and voter registration. So we did do a specific, um, presentation for part of the group. We also just have encouraged mentors and mentees to bring questions or, um, you know, just come prepared to talk about whatever the issue is for them, whatever they're needing support O.

so we do that and so I kind of have a very flexible agenda depending on, you know, once I'm facilitating the group and figuring out what the needs are today, I have a topic or thought prepared in advance so that I can share if we have more time. So, N, we we'll be talking a little bit smat point with the group what, do we project to the world? What are our attitudes projecting to the world? And how does that, urge affect what we get back?

And so we just had a couple ofmentees struggling with that recently and I've some conversations with peer mentors about supporting people through that. So that's what our topic is for next week. A couple of months ago, we had somebody say, you know, hey, I'm glad to come to the group today I didn't I was going to make it because I haven't gotten oust bed for two days base found out something really bad about my dad and his little.

Of course, when you get through that, you deal that right then and there. So, um, the mentors andmentees, we're definitely there to support that person and we spend a lot of time in the group talking about grief and end of life issues and, um, as family how do we support a loved one? You just never know. So, I try to be prepare good have something ahead of time. And then I just kind go of with what the group is dictating to me and what the need is.

>> TIM: Great. That's the only question on the computer at this point. Let's see if there's questions on the phone.

>> OPERATOR: There are no questions at this time. Again as a reminder, if you do have a question, please press the number 7 on your telephone key pad.

>> That's good. We need move on anyway. I'm look at the time. Well go, April. Why don't you continue on.

>> April: All right. Kind of -- just a quick conversation about supervising the mentors. As a volunteer coordinators, what are their goals and why do they want to be a peer mentor, what are they here for? Some of the mentors don't need much supervision. Their life experiences have prepared them well or their personalities. They're just good at that. I hear from them when they report their hours. Otherwise they're off and running.

And I have a lot of trust with those people. If something comes up, they will contact me. Other mentors are just one step ahead of theirmentee and they're learning through this process. So they'll need more support. So I just really have to pay attention and communicate with people about what are they needing and really know what type of supervision do I need give each mentor.

Again, on our peer mentor application, we ask them what kind ofment organization work do they want to do? I might enjoy a group while others might enjoy one on one. Some will say I would never ever want to do a presentation don't have me do that, but orders, that is really going to be their cup of tea.

Before they go through the training, the application is asking them what do you want to do as a mentor? What are your talents? What independent link skill cus share with somebody? So we're really trying to tailor that so the mentor is always doing work that feels comfortable and best uses their skills.

Next slide.

>> One of the things we get invite to do, we have one staff nab does work with the special Ed students and there is opportunities for feel go meet with those students and some of the volunteers really enjoy that.

>> April: We get the best questions first students there.

>> April I really work hard to maintain communication to the staff that refer to the program. Periodically, I will attend their unit meetings. I'm giving constant updates about the progress of matches following up with them on referrals, um, really communicating about, um, the referral to make sure it is appropriate to talk with the staff about who we have available as far as the mentor to work with their consumer. So communication is a big part of what I do here.

Next slide.

Program evaluation, ah, we don't know who's working and you don't know what is not working. So we do, um, a series of Evaluation with both our mentors and mendees. So the surveys are typically if you're marched one on one with a mendee, I will contact the mentor and do an evaluation at one month, three month, six months from the dated of their initial meeting.

The staff will do an evaluation to see how the match is going and are the goals being reached. Again, Amina indicate earlier we found the value of doing the earlier evaluations to find out are people make contact with each other? Are they click personality wise? Does the mentor understand the goals? And thementee understand what the mentor is there for?

All of these things if you can get that cleared up. In the beginning, that can be a great indicator for a successful match. We also do evaluations on mentallor groups. So we do these period cannot anybody that attend a mentor group, they can fill out an evaluation on their experience there.

We do evaluations about our disability awareness presentations, the teachers, the student will fill those out. We also do and have a staff evaluation so the starve can get feedback about their interaction with the mentors and the volunteers, their interaction with me, give feedback about our policies, our procedures, and so really that evaluation piece has been really key for us to continually develop and improve this program.

Next slide.per

>> The staff do the evaluation and sometimes she has to remind the staff that it is time for the evaluates as.

>> April. It is realm critical is they that contact person if they have questions and concerns. We know they stay lodger if they have that support. And then the staff will be that continuous contacted for the mentee as well. Next slide. Amina, is this you or me?

>> That's you.

>> April: Again, the part about keeping people and making people feel they want to stay longer is a big piece of that is recognition. What we found is it doesn't have to be something extravagant. It's a card. It's an e-mail. We hold an annual holiday event for the mentors and mentees so they request get and the share a special dinner together.

We do our annual spirited ABIL awards which is recognizing peer mentor of the year and then volunteer of the year. Again, just small things that you can do might even be, you know, t-shirt or sometimes we get scholarships to different conference. All of those things add together to really make that mentor feel valued and make them feel like they're being recognized.

>> Amen A. When we were doing well economically, we had dinners where people got recognized and they were given gift certificate. Then when the economy went down, we weren't able to do such a big deal.

We couldn't invite as many people. We had a more immate recognition with the board. A gift card, but not as big a gift card. You can always do something and they really appreciate it.

>> April: Yeah. Next slide.

>> So that's and you the next one is me. And we've only got a couple more minutes, I think. So we need to press on.

>> April: I would say the benefits to the mentor. I heard so many people that paveed it forward to me. People are feeling pro ductive and feeling like they got a chance to give back.

But it also, you know, mentoring increases their advocacy skills and increases their awareness of community resources, their leadership skills. I think it also increases their confidence and their self-esteemed and they feel like we hear this a lot from thementors.

I got all these experiences, the journey that I've had, the road I've been down the I've got to make that easier for somebody. And so that really is kind of the benefit for the mentors.

Next slide. >>D benefit for the mentalees is they don't have to start from scratch and reinvent the wheel. They get a lot of hope and support and knowledge. One of my favorite examples is years ago, um, our volunteer coordinator was taking some mentors over to the rehab center.

And we actually have a whole program that does that now, but at time, it was the volunteer coordinator and a sister pulled aside a sister of a young man who was 18, became paraplegic. They said you can find a place for him, a room with a view. She said I've got something better for you.

Eric will you take him downstairs and show him your car? So Erin took him down and showed him his red convertible with hand controls. This young man ended up doing a foreign exchange program the river arrest downd grand canyon after that.

His life was completely changed from that experience. So, um, to know that somebody cares, to know that other people are having a great life with their disability can make such a difference for people. And they achieve whatever their goals are they set accomplishment to do with that support. So they've kind of learned something about setting goals and how to achieve them by that experience too. And like we sacred often they'll turn around and become mentors and move on in their life, whatever it is their life goals are.

Next slide. The benefit to the community is that like I said, our volunteers have gone on to volunteer other places. They've gone on to join our theatre group, to continue their education. We've had a couple of them go on to community college to get degrees and moving on to master degrees. Or wean others that are out there working in other fields. So, um, and they definitely become more involved and advocates in the community, which we always need have those.

Next slide. I don't even know if we have any time for any questions.

>> TIM: Let's check in quickly on the tonight I don't see any on the web. But let's check for questions on the phone.

>> Operator: there are no questions. But do you have a question, please press star 7 on your telephone key pad.

>> The administrator part here, on April's supervisor, she will come to me. If she's got -- she passes the buck to me. If there is an issue around somebody harming themselves or there is somebody has a fall, we've had that happen with volunteers.

Whatever is going Oshe has a situation she's not sure about how to handle, quite frankly, that's as often with other staff members as it is with volunteers or thementees. She will come and talk that over with me and that helps me know what is going on in the roll and helps reinforce my trust in her judgment when I hear how she's handling those things.

As the supervisor for me, it is important how that is all going and I check in with the volunteers periodically. How are Doug? Are they having a great time? So, ah, you know, she works very independently because that's the kind of person she S. I haven't always had council tear coordinators that were that independent. She's really taint ball and rolled with it and helped the program grow in the way that I probably had six coordinators over the years and I would say three were really good three weren't so good. You see. You learn by your mistakes as you all know.

>> TIM: Great. Well, are there -- is there anyone in the queue, Amanda?

>> Operator: there are no questions at this time.

>> TIM: I will click here to slide 38. And Amina and April have been generous enough to provide their contact information, just their first names, last initial at ABIL.org. You can also contact me. If you have any questions whether it be in a few hours or a few weeks, you e-mail me at Tim.NCIL.org.

And I will click to slide 39 here. And this is the evaluation form. So again, on the training page, that's the web page you received in the confirmation e-mail with the connection instructions and powerpoint, this same evaluation form is posted on that page, but if you're on the webinar and you're looking at this on the screens this is a live linchet if you have done this before, you know they're very short and they only take a couple minutes to complete.

We're a couple minutes past 5:third. Let me thank Amina and April for an excellent presentation. I want to thank you for being with us throughout this whole series. Let us know if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.