"ADVANCING UNITY FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH FOR ALL"

Allies Living Legacy (ALL) Committee of the New Mexico Allies for Advocacy, Inc.
(A nonprofit organization run by people with disabilities to unite and educate the public on disability issues across New Mexico)
2021- "Moving Forward" Conference Presenters

- ALL, an acronym that stands for Allies Living Legacy
- Joan Curtiss, Senior Advocate from Disability Rights New Mexico
- Carol Peterson - Advocate and Parent
- Jaime Campbell - UNM Advocate for people with DD/MI
- Judy Stevens - Advocate for people with disabilities
- Barbara Ibáñez - Health Educator, Autism Program, Center on Development and Disability at UNM
THINKING FORWARD

WITH JOAN CURTISS
Some Statistics

Autism

- 40% of people with autism are nonverbal
- 85% of people with autism are unemployed
- Boys are 4 times more likely to be diagnosed with autism
- Girls show autism in different ways and tend to hide their symptoms
- 93% of people with autism say they were impacted by Covid
- ADHD is the most common co-occurring mental health condition with autism
- No two people with autism are alike.
Some Statistics

DD/MI

- 78% of people with Developmental Disabilities have co-occurring serious mental illness, sometimes called “Dual Diagnosis”
- 90% of people with Developmental Disabilities have been sexually abused at some point in their lives. 49% will experience 10 or more abusive incidents, leading to a need for trauma-informed care. Neglect, bullying, restraint and other traumatic events may spark more mental health symptoms.
- Many people with Down’s Syndrome have Anxiety, ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive disorder, and Depression often in reaction to loss of a key attachment figure.
- Many people with Down’s Syndrome have Alzheimer’s Dementia as they age, sometimes as early as age 30. About 50% of people with Down’s Syndrome have Alzheimer’s Dementia in their 60s.
- One out of every 54 people has autism as of 2018
- People who have autism are 3 times more likely to have schizophrenia
Behaviors are Communication with People with DD/MI

Example of person at Los Lunas Hospital and Training School (LLH&TS) - example of red flag!

- Nonverbal
- Running away, jumping over fence
- Staff was providing Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) restraint, and antipsychotic medication.
- One staff was found to be sexually abusing this man.
- Whenever perpetrator/staff was around, person attempted to run away.
- Person was communicating with his behavior by running away in the only way he knew how.
Children with Special Education

DD/MI issues

- A 7 year old girl with 2 autism diagnoses and extreme behaviors came back from an Residential Treatment Center (RTC) back to her home in a rural school district.

- The school district ignored the autism diagnoses and placed the child in an emotional disturbance classroom, saying her diagnosis was now bipolar disorder.

- Because the school district did not address her sensory integration issues and Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) needs, the student ran away every day, and was picked up by the police.

- Lack of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) led the child into the school to jail pipeline.
A middle schooler with autism hit a School Resource Officer and ran from him.
The principal referred him to the probation office.
The Juvenile Probation Officer (JPO) recognized the child had self-stimulation behavior and other characteristics of autism, and diverted him back to the classroom.
School to Jail Pipeline averted.
Kids with DD/MI
Special Education scenarios

- School Resource Officers
- handcuffing and basket holds or chicken wing holds
Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) versus Police

Personal Experience

- Police with 6 police cars and staff in uniform with guns drawn, live ammo, yelling at my son and chasing him over fences in the neighborhood during a psychotic episode. My son received an emergency injection of Thorazine and was belligerent with staff and family.

- CIT dressing in everyday jeans and shirts, calmly sitting down and talking with my son, offering him a cigarette after a psychotic episode, and quietly offering a seat in his car, driving him to the psychiatric ER. Treatment began with his approval and family and staff were seen by him as supportive.

- Another mother advancing unity for better mental health for all is Carol Peterson, who will now share her experiences and recommendations.
Don't take our FREEDOM away!
Our Model

Step 1: Identify Your Ultimate Customers
Step 2: Recruit Self-Advocate Partners
Step 3: Support Self-Advocates to Success Pitfalls to Avoid
Jaime and Jon
DISABLED IN LOVE

WITH

JAIME CAMPBELL
Remember when...

First "crush"?

First kiss?

First relationship?

Falling in love with your life partner?
Have you ever?

Lived in a group home?

Were in a romantic relationship while living in a group home?

Were told you can’t have a relationship because you are disabled?
Expectations
Did you expect this?
Expectations

• People with disabilities are not expected to be in romantic relationships

• People with disabilities are not seen as a sexual being.

• Government regulations discourage partnerships and cohabitation. Marriage Penalty

• Activities of Daily Living (ADL)s should NOT be prioritized over relationships.
Our Story

- We met at Church and water exercise.
- We talked and talked and swam a little (and prayed a lot)
One Thing Led To Another…
Happily Ever After
...or Not?

- Staff is awkward in the middle of a marriage.
Support... or not

- Group homes do not accept couples.

- Group homes are service based either Mental Health or Developmental Disability - not both.

- Group homes are women with women OR men with men.
Who Caretakess?

◦ We were partners. Staff expected one of us to be the caretaker.
◦ Staff did not see us as a couple. We were separated for the purposes of support.
◦ We were not recognized as a team in each other’s treatment support. We wanted to be involved in each other’s care but were often seen as incapable.
Conclusion

- Marriage needs to be recognized by all providers and disciplines.
- Partners need to be involved in each other’s care but not responsible for each other’s care.
The Dream

◦ We need support not restriction

◦ I can imagine a support system that includes us as a team - maybe a couples group or even a couples residence where we are the norm.
JON T. PETERSON
2021 AWARD
NM Allies
JON T. PETERSON
SELF-ADVOCATE
AWARD FOR
Policy and System Change Presented to....
ROBERT SALAZAR

Congratulations!
"Advancing Unity for Better Mental Health for All"

Recommended Resources

◦ Mental Health Developmental Disabilities (MHDD) National Training Center - https://www.mhddcenter.org/
◦ Parents Reaching Out - https://parentsreachingout.org/
◦ Families ASAP - https://familiesasap.org/
◦ The Arc of NM - https://www.arcnm.org/
◦ Autism Programs, CDD at UNM - https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/autism-programs/
◦ Native American Disability Law Center - https://www.nativedisabilitylaw.org/
◦ NAMI - https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved
◦ Pegasus Law - https://pegasuslaw.org/
◦ Disability Rights New Mexico - https://drnm.org/
◦ Crisis Intervention Team at UNM – https://gocit.org
◦ NM Allies for Advocacy, Inc. - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCRBGh8XX5P675OFzsASeg/
Any Questions or Comments