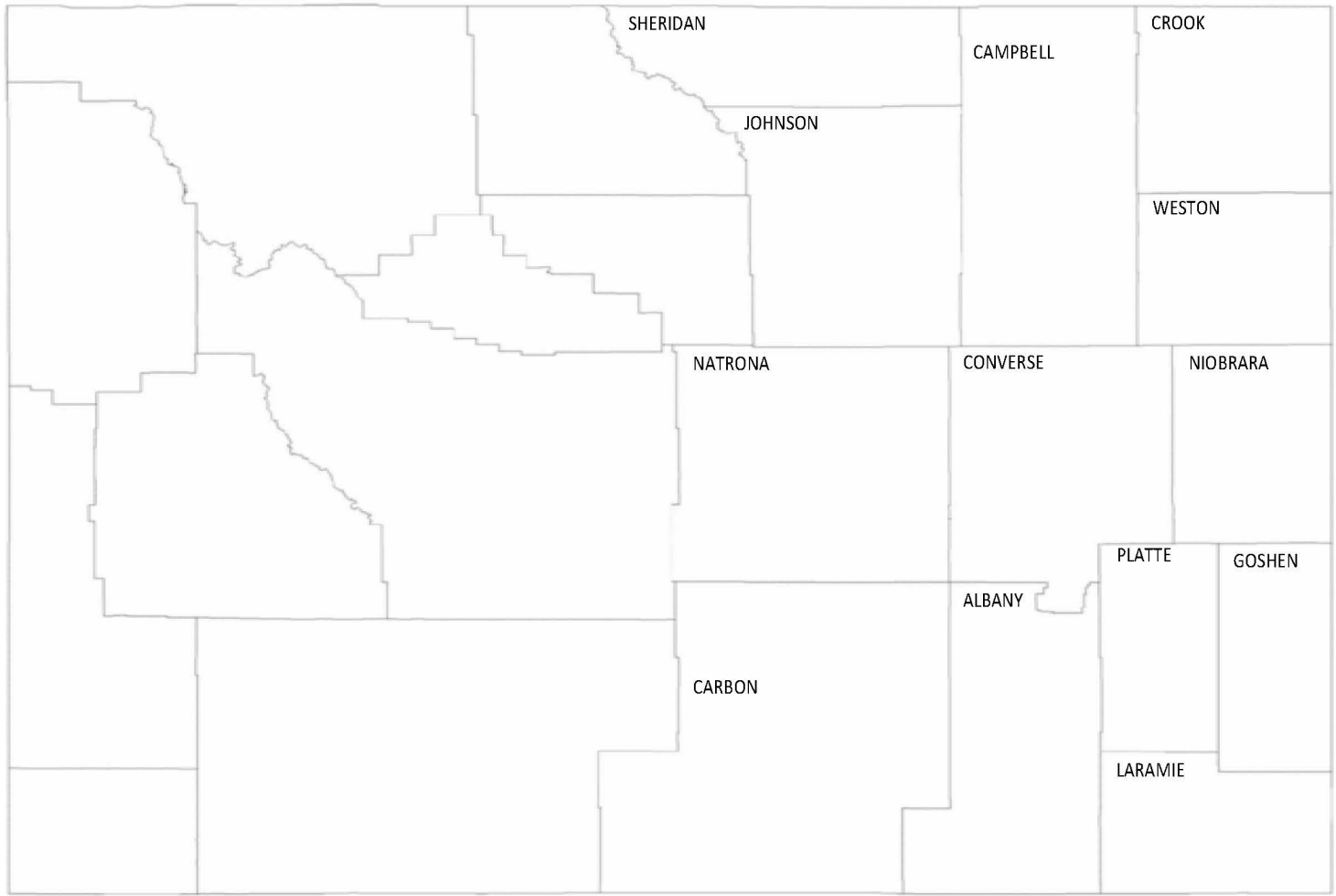




**WYOMING
INDEPENDENT
LIVING**

Expanding,
Engaging &
Energizing Peer
Support Groups



Wyoming Independent Living Service Area

Perplexing Pandemic

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

Pandemic Pluses

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

Change is HARD

- ▶ No Change to Peer Groups
 - Zoom only needed for a few months to “get by”.
 - Technical problems
 - Awkward silences
 - Inappropriate Conversations
 - Attendance down

- ▶ Zoom wasn't going away & needed to embrace it and learn how to navigate
- ▶ Needed to become better facilitators
- ▶ IL team needed to come together and decide what the goals of Peer Support should be
- ▶ Attendance increased with consistent message structure, engagement, and flexibility



Engage & Energize

▶ Facilitator Training

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

▶ IL Team Values

Engage & Energize

- ▶ Peer Support Groups/Workshops
 - Renamed
 - Consistent Format
 - *Engaging
 - *Energizing
 - *Directly disability related
 - *Peer involvement in all decisions
 - Two facilitators in different centers

Expand

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

Disability Connection

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

Ammo for Advocating

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

Moving Forward

- ▶ Hybrid Structure
 - Groups offered via Zoom and in person
 - OWL set up in all Centers
 - Flexibility increases access
- ▶ Increase outreach & public awareness
- ▶ Ongoing assessment of consumer/community needs
- ▶ Implement other Peer Groups as needed



Thank You!
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