REALTIME FILE

APRIL

IL Philosophy And Your Organization:

Learn It, Live It, And Pass It On-(Zoom)

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 >> I will do StreamText because I am not able to get there from okay. We're getting caught up here.

 >> Larry can you start typing. Edris is actually on StreamText. We've sent out the link. Let’s turn it over to our speaker. Sorry guys. Kimberly, are you ready it take it away?

 >> I am ready. All right. So thanks so much for everybody's patience. I know sometimes making sure we provide fully accessible webinars can sometimes be challenging, just with making sure our captioners and all of that is set up, we appreciate your patience today.

 We're excited to have this conversation today about IL philosophy with the Centers for Independent Living. I wanted to start off a little bit by what our organization has done to kind of set the tone for independent living philosophy throughout -- about with our decision-making.

 A couple of years ago when I became executive director of our organization we were a little bit weak and it was not being implemented correctly.

 We needed to set the tone for our organization and we ended up creating a nonnegotiable principles that we will not compromise that guides every bit of our decision-making as an organization. We use our principles for a number of things, but mainly when we are looking at having programs, writing grants, and when we are asked to collaborate on things, we use this principle. For accessibility purposes, I will read the slide and I will give you a little bit of a narrative from there.

 The first principle that we use it empowerment. We don't reach goals for individuals, but teach the skills that allow them to do for themselves. One of the organizations that are not in the Center for Independent Living often do for people with disabilities really makes them dependent on the agency, and that's where we completely stand out.

 Inclusion. We advocate for individuals with disabilities to be included in employment, housing, leadership roles and in discussions that impacts their lives and the disability community.

 We do not believe anything segregated and should not be particular facilities for people. Also, independents and individuals with disabilities have the right to control their own lives making decision for what's best for them.

 We believe every individual can be independent and that takes creativity. If someone has not been given the opportunity to communicate, we will explore communication devices and we will make our programs in a way that can be fully accessible and people will be able to make choices.

 The next slide. Can I get somebody to change that? The next one is equality. We advocate for equal rights and access, not special treatment. Disability pride. Disability is not a negative word. It means we're adaptable and proud of who we are, and the disability makes me stronger. Can you hear me?

 >> You are good.

 >> So these rules are what we use to really guide our organization and everyone has pretty much drilled these. These are ones completely for independent center living. We'll talk about on board and in a little bit.

 The basic RI principles. If I can get the slide. I'm having a little bit of technical difficulties myself. People have a common form, shared history and shared struggle and we're a community of a culture when we're branded together. So when we do our advocacy gay events we do that altogether, so it is cross disability. All of our programs are across all disability and not just for certain populations.

 Equal opportunities and rights should be for segregation, not just stereotypes. As I mentioned before, people with a disability are the best experts of their needs and should decide what's best for them. And controls for all independent living.

 No person should live in institutions on the basis of disability and that's our transition core service. Having a disability doesn't mean a person is sick, and we have a certified medical professional for the area they are living. We want to be sure we're not practicing anything based off a medical model and this is been a hot topic lately for individuals with autism as well.

 We don't want to push ADA because ADA "hear" and we want to be sure individual has the option of what choices they are given. People learn and grow from discussing their concerns, needs and issues with people with similar experiences.

 That's the magic of Centers for Independent Living. We're not like any other organization because we are a news net by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. We should all stand out and try to create services that we're providing because we are so different and we'll approach it from that perspective.

 Systemic cross disability advocacy efforts are needed to ensure that all people with disabilities benefit for all society has to offer and that goes back to events that I know a lot participate in, like advocacy days, make even legislation, making sure people with disability are united because a particular bill for one population could truly impact other populations of individuals with disabilities.

 A great example of that, our state had legislation that only protected blind parents with disabilities, so our organization actually went back and brother legislation with nonfederal funding and was able to pass the Persons with Disabilities Rights Parent Act, which is a cross disability legislation, and we needed to go and fix that and make sure that was across disability legislation protecting the rights of everybody with a disability.

 There shaping a no barriers to independent, including architectural, communication and occupational barriers, and that's what we truly fight for every single day. As ILs, we believe the best organizations that support that assist individuals are governed by people with disabilities. I know what gets under my skin, the people providing disability services don't even hire those with disabilities.

 Leadership for independent living and disability rights is vested in individuals with disabilities. We're not an organization that cannot serve parents for people with disabilities and we don't provide services to service providers or other representatives. We are vested in individuals with disabilities. That's the perspective we serve.

 Mary, are you wanting to jump in?

 >> Continuing with the technical difficulties.

 >> Okay. I think Larry and I could help. One of the things we wanted to start the conversation off today is Larry and I wanted to talk to you today about some of our experiences at the Centers for Independent Living that we've been at, and one of the questions and discussions that we'll start with. When did we learn about the history and philosophy when we started with our organizations and what really stuck with us?

 I will go ahead and tell you what really stuck with me and I love independent living movement because it is our movement.

 We're not, again, like any other service providers in our area and we are a movement run and operated by people with disabilities for people with disabilities and that's one thing that stuck with me as executive Director of APRIL South Carolina and we own that and they have to make sure that we do a great job within our philosophy within our organization and the community. Larry, did you want to speak about this?

 >> Yeah. I will jump in, there's a lot that sticks with about history, working with folks and consumer type things.

 One of the things that sticks with me is my experience first as an individual who came here as a consumer looking for help with advocacy with public transportation. I had no idea what independent living was and went in there with my complaint they would fix it and instead there was the approach that we're going to teach you how to be that advocate and you are in charge of a dressing that situation and they helped facilitate this and that needs to be our approach when people come to us for assistance, no matter what it is, giving them the skills they need and address whatever situation they need in life and supporting that person as they resolve is and move forward.

 >> Another thing with how it stuck with us, too. Our disability, we're all in this together and so we do share some barriers with other individuals. I have a physical disability and I always tell my staff and everybody in the community, my barriers are really no different than someone with an intellectual disability, someone blind or deaf. Needs assessment always shows that employment, perception, housing, transportation are the common barriers within all of the disability community and what we're -- their efforts.

 The next question we're going to touch upon as well, how do we incorporated had philosophy in an ongoing basis. We require hours -- my Board of Directors takes this seriously as well. Every staff member is supposed to get at least 18 hours of professional development hours as it Lee rates to their position.

 So we make sure that there are things like I you, I net, conferences and whatever we implement our staff meetings which are quarterly, we make sure we discuss a hot topic.

 The last staff meeting we had was we focused on plastic straws and merging these topics within our organization and everyone knows and speaks together as we advocate.

 We also make sure we model for staff. I am the executive Director, but sometimes you can catch me working with consumers, making sure that I'm understanding what staff members are -- deal with every day within their own job responsibilities reporting and data collection. Also understanding that I am helping them along the way to make them understand independent living philosophy, forever, we're trying to engrain it.

 We get with supervisors in our department, making sure they have team meetings to make sure the independent living philosophy throughout. And if staff are struggling with it we provide examples. Also, making sure our physical and cultural environment matches with the independent philosophy.

 A rule I have -- and 80% of our staff right now have disabilities, and I make sure that all accommodations are offered to anybody with or without a disability. If something is available to help someone do their job, we make sure of that as well, making sure throughout the organization so everybody sees the benefits.

 We also provide intensive trainings and we have about a 2 1/2 week orientation process, and Mary is going to give you a sample of all of your new employees and also give you evaluations and provide more intensive trainings as new staff members come on board.

 Again of our programming goes against the philosophy. I know some Centers for Independent Living across the company service people with getting guardianship, that's absolutely against the independent living philosophy. That strips someone's rights away. So we make sure that any of our programs are in our independent living philosophy.

 Also we're doing that across the country. We're going to stop some of the guardianships and some of the programs vile violating the rights of people with disabilities Larry, do you want it chime in?

 >> Yeah, I'm going to talk about initial ongoing training and I can jump into that or do we want to give opportunities for community?

 >> I think -- I'm not sure how the compassioning is going, but with Mary having technical difficulties.

 >> I'm here and we're welcome to -- if folks have thoughts, are you welcome to jump in at that point. You do have the mute option for yourself, if you want to give it a go, you are welcome to jump in.

 Larry, don't you go ahead. Let folks know. We'll go under there.

 >> Sounds great. Mary, if you are able to move the slides. I am connected by my phone and I'm not sure that I can view those with my phone. Thanks everybody for your patience.

 I want to talk a little bit about passing out IL philosophy and what's important about our movement to staff volunteers and to your board. So I'm going to talk about an initial onboarding and training that hopefully is part of every center's orientation process to your job and what's important to the center and it is really important to our philosophy, significant movement, et cetera.

 We're going to talk about ideas for the initial and ongoing training and move this forward really well with the great stuff Kimberly just talked about.

 First of all, it is really important to think about this from a broad perspective staff, volunteers and board members. The training that each of those folks from those different identities will probably vary a little bit. But it is important that all three of these audiences get this opportunity to be engaged.

 So why is this important? Why is it important to do this initial and then ongoing training around independent living? It can improve the quality of all kinds of services that your center provides. Helping to keep everyone focused and mission and purpose, really important.

 Focus and consumers, the individuals you serve and your connection to the broader community. I think it is really key that we're expected to be a consumer focus, consumer-driven organization and to be responsive to the needs of our community and those two pieces are super important to what we do as organizations and you know, so making sure you are doing the training both when someone comes on board and when the person moves forward whether they are at a year or 15 years is important.

 I want to draw some examples of how you can do this training and have structured discussions around issues that are important to cover.

I have done trainings with my staff just periodically around goal setting with consumers. They come in and you are going to open a CSR and maybe or maybe not do an IL plan, but you are setting goals for services, but it is really important that it is the individual driving that. And it is important that you are prompting them, but providing the training and reminders for staff on an ongoing basis is key.

 It is easy to slip in, this is another individual coming in the door be said they want help with X, Y, and Z and putting yourself in a spot where you are in control of the process and it is important not do that. And then writing IL plans it is important to do that. The ambitions of the consumer.

 Also, just in general, trainings around approaches and techniques and -- at your center, being surveys that you do, training sessions, listening sessions just gathering that input, making sure do that and making the staffer aware of those things.

 Key for me, I think it is important to provide trainings and opportunities for learning that are driven by and really focused on the experience of folks from other backgrounds, be it ethnic, gender, racial and so forth, and getting into conversations with folks from those communities is important.

 Then training and observance and celebration of important events, dates and disabilities and training opportunity for staff and volunteers and we'll talk more about that toward the end of my comments. How and where do we do this? You say, I have a person coming on board and we're doing the training. How do you do it ongoing?

 I found an excellent opportunity either ask your director, program director, or other staff to lead conversations around other issues and that can be a great place to do it.

 Informal conversations over the water cooler, potluck, whatever you are doing. Informal conversation, even to ask a staff person or group of staff people, hey, how is this going? What are the issues you are dealing with? What are some of the successes? Those can be training related learning opportunities.

 I often like it when you ask stuff to share both successes and challenges at formal and informal settings and I think that can be great as well and become great learning and sharing opportunities from one staff to the other. It incorporates that peer element and that training, which is really important to us.

 I have often found it ideal to create scenarios where I might present a situation or ask a staff person to develop a couple of fictitious situations in order to facilitate conversation and specific things a person is dealing with and talk through what is important to that person, addressing whatever that issue is, what our approach would be, how we do it, with a focus on how we are recognizing and evaluating and putting first the goals of the individual.

 Those are a few examples, especially on an ongoing basis, especially with the onboarding piece. I have been places with the ongoing, it is almost like when you come in the door, you get the orientation, learn your jobs, you know what to do, and just expect okay you got it and you are good. But there's value in the ongoing training and learning and promoting those opportunities so you stay focused.

 Real quick, I want to talk about -- I talked about staff, but I also want to about volunteers making sure they are available and you are including them and offering those opportunities to volunteer at your organization. It is really important.

 Often these are folks who are current or former consumers who your center has helped and they want to support and may choose to want to be part of what you are doing and want to give back. Maybe community members who are invested and you never know what someone's interest is, but volunteering and having an interest clearly in your work.

 Volunteers fill an important role in your organization. I have a center volunteers answering the phone, greeting people when they walk in, doing customer satisfaction surveys, facilitating peer groups. That's important they get the necessary and ongoing support training as well. You never know. As is the case for me and other people, they may be support for the, and may be people who end up working for you. Again, engaging volunteers in the initial training situation is key. I talk about the training, it is the IL history philosophy and the ongoing piece.

 I want to talk about board members because ultimately it starts at the top of your organization. If your board members get that training, initially and on an ongoing basis, they leave your organization and it is really important that they are on board obviously with your philosophy and what you are about.

 Often we're looking for board members and characteristics in what we think might be value in a board member, but it is whether it is true across potential staff or volunteer board members, there are not a lot of people walking around with the working knowledge and understanding of the independent living philosophy, so you have to teach that and make sure they buy into that. It is really important.

 Ways to do that. You can include IL philosophy and other components in the initial training and ongoing training. I think it is appropriate to invite volunteers to have meetings things like it if appropriate.

 Invite consumers and staff to a board meeting to talk about and share their experience with the center and have staff come to the board meeting and share what's going on with their program. Not just about that, but also talk about success stories and challenges they have. It can be educational for board members.

 Lastly, my experience is often you send written reports to board members and other folks as well, and it is always great to include again, success stories, challenges and written reports that you are putting out there. It helps to inform about independent living what it is about.

 If you are doing this, how you will know you are doing it right? Really key to look for this. It is a good indicator that you are doing it right. Examples of evidence. Services provided at your center are determined and directed by consumers. That consumers are engaged and you are not just doing for folks, but you are engaging them and they are driving the process. Past and present consumers volunteering with the organization is a good indicator.

 Your center is the hub for disability and community in your neighborhood. Volunteers, consumers, whatever. I have a colleague she works at one center and there were several consumers who kept a coffee cup at the center because it was a place to go, and share. If yours looks like that, you are doing it right.

 The leadership of your organization reflects the diversity of your community. So that's board, staff, et cetera, and management. And then it resembles the diversity of your community.

 Lastly, I want to talk about passing it on to the community. How do you pass on this IL philosophy your values and what you are about? How do you embed that into your community? There are a couple much ways to could do that.

 You celebrate your history. It could be the ADA. We just had some 29th anniversary events and we'll celebrate in a variety of ways. I know centers do something around Ed Roberts’s day and use it as an opportunity it educate about Ed Roberts and independent living movement.

 I have become familiar with several organizations and communities that have come together to promote disability pride festivals, and I think it could be a great way to bring the community together and projecting your values as an organization and what they are about in the community so folks see that.

 Engaging in the community --

 >> Larry, can I jump in real quick. I'm making sure that all of you know events are fully accessible for anyone with any type of disability. English, open formats, sign language interpreters, live captioning when needed, American Sign Language interpreter, so I'm thinking through every aspect of every disability that exists and make sure that all of your events are accessible when you hold them.

 >> That's a really important point. I want to add on that is increasing in tension, I know being aware of chemical sensitivity. That becomes an issue for some folks as well. In general, make sure you have that conversation that you will be part of it you are planning an event solely as your organization, you really look the accessibility feature, that is really important.

 I think it is important to engage with civil rights organizations in your community. I they're found a lot of value in being part of activities, events, educational awareness, et cetera events that disability crosses all aspects of society and if it is an event for -- that's being driven by, like the Urban League or the LBGT community, or whoever, that it is important to engage with those folks and it may not be a disability event per se, but bring your point of view to their events and your values to them and that can be vital because disability crosses all aspects of society.

 Those are some comments I wanted to share, and I'm interested in hearing questions and comments from the audience.

 >> I am, too. At this point, if folks can -- if you move your cursor on your screen and you should see on the top or bottom, a microphone and on the screen, unmute it. We've talk about a whole bunch of stuff. What are the IL philosophies you should have, how do we incorporate into our organizations and our training and how to celebrate it. Let's hear from other folks.

 You can unmute with the little microphone or are you welcome to type in the chat box, and I will be happy to voice it for you.

 >> This is Ed Keelen. I really liked the one-page summary Kimberly showed for philosophy for IL. It is nice to have us sync that and it is understandable and that's one that the whole staff can commit to, understand and build training around.

 >> Thanks Ed. Do you have any thoughts what you use in your organization?

 >> Of course, I'm not an IL person. I'm on the Independent Living Council that kind of is over a lot of the ILs in South Carolina. We're blessed to be going through a three hour training program. Who's it Kimberly doing the training?

 >> Paula Mack (Spelling?).

 >> Yeah, she's on the West Coast we're in South Carolina, and she is going to do another webinar to get us up to speed. I think we have a lot of new people on the Council and we're struggling how can we relate to the ILs and how can we continue the journey.

 >> Ed, this is Larry. I spent a couple of years as the SILK Director and I think it is actually important for all SILKs to look at this. Again, the members of the State of Independent Living Council are charged with doing work and Independent Living Centers. While you are not providing services, but it is important to have a really strong onboarding and training that SILK members really understand what Independent Living Centers understand and a lot of the principles Kimberly talked about.

 You can get a few people from the centers on the council, but folks need to come from other places and it can be really hard to find people who they're a good understanding of what Independent Living Centers are about. They have a general idea, but again, I think it is really important for SILKs to have a really strong role in this, too.

 >> Hey, this is Kings. I want to reflect back to the point where people keep a coffee mug or something of theirs. I have worked with a lot of youth programming for Centers for Independent Living. I used to work for Nicoles a few years back. I have seen a wonderfully powerful push to engage youth and carrying on the traditions, and values you mentioned before in the IL movement. So we definitely want to ask, what do you think for some things that we should specifically focus on to make sure we're passing on the younger generation of IL?

 >> Great question. Kimberly or Larry, do you have any thoughts on that?

 >> This is Kimberly. I will tell you a little bit about. The majority of -- over half of our budget is dedicated to youth programs and we have a number of different incentives to frame the future generation of disability leaders. We have a peer-to-peer group, transition services and a number of things. We make sure our organization is open to them all of the time. I mean, working hours, making sure that they know we are a safe place, so that talk and conversation takes place when somebody first gives us a call.

 The independent living philosophy is taught to all callers. Even sometimes parents will call for the youth, and we tell the parents we need to talk with the youth before we can actually implement services because the youth is our consumer. We do a number of activities, not only to come into your office, our office is brightly colored, user friendly. Staff are almost all young adults, so we definitely live by that model of young adult programs for young adults with disabilities. Young adults leading it for young adults with disabilities. Does that answer some of your questions, Kings, or do you want more information?

 >> No, that is perfect. Thank you, Kimberly.

 >> While other folks are getting to their questions, sorry. I will get you through the loop. I did have one in the chat. They are wondering, how do we keep the boundaries clear between aiding someone in their goal, but not getting into case management?

 >> Good question.

 >> That's a really good question. I guess from my perspective, I think it is important to keep those goals in front of you and as the -- I don't want to say provider, that's not the right word, but as the IL person who's working with the individual. Again, if you have written those goals well with the consumer drive and the process and that first prompting of it, I think it could be good and important to keep those in front of you as you work through the process.

 I also would say it is really, you know, it is a tough one because you just -- I said this earlier, you can't do it for the person. My approach, and I spent, you know, multiple years working as a front line staff person and still work with consumers today and it is important for me to do that. I get into the situations where I think the risk is where the individual, consumer if you will, is not as engaged or as active in the process and you are trying to nudge them forward and encourage them to continue to work toward what it is they came to you for originally, and again, reminding them of the goals they set and keeping those in front of them and to be asking questions about, you know, what they are going to do and what to do to address them. Putting tools in their hand. So hey, if you go over here to the state agency or whatever, this is how you might address the situation and I'm happy to coach you through the conversation you might have with the person. It is just an example, but you can't do that for them. Nothing about us without us, it is so important when working with an individual.

 >> This is Kimberly. Something we do in our organization is we establish goals and we make sure they have a responsibility to achieve their own goal and make sure their philosophy is very clear until the beginning, but we also provide a follow-up, e-mail, offer an available alternative format, but kind of their responsibilities. We come up with their responsibilities list when establishing the goals so they know that this is their goals and they are the ones that will be completing those goals. We will not be completing them for them, but we'll be there absolutely 100% of the way, being there for them answering questions, going through the process to navigate them.

 Even on jobs, we're very strict about our employment services and we don't do job placement. If you do job placements, SILKs do that better because they do use the consumer-driven philosophy. But a lot of times when I see job placement done, the choice is not always there. The agencies have a relationship and they block somebody into a position and we don't even go near it with job placement and we will assist them with fully preparing them with a job interview, assisting them with a resume, applying positions, asking for reasonable accommodations, and it is then we're writing our accommodation letter. We try and practice that all of the way through our services, but it is explained up front and we have them sign that they know we will not be achieving their goals for them.

 >> Wonderful. Any other thoughts on that in the audience or other questions or thoughts? If you have thoughts, you can press your microphone and if that is not working, you can type it into the chat. While folks are trying to unmute. I have a question. Kimberly talked about CEU's for staff, what type of CEUs do you accept for staff?

 >> We have a number of different things. Transition conferences in our state, a lot of hiring, trainings that are available, protection and advocacy. We'll do trainings. There have been trainings -- and I know this is not a model we all like to follow -- a person who's cleaning, what it is right now. We they're done planning. We have done extensive workshops, we have a PR, a Public Relations Director who attends different conferences for accessible documents. How to create accessible documents and meeting spaces.

 The ADA summits, or ADA symposiums are always good conferences to attend as well. There are a lot of opportunities in our state and we also wrote that other national conference that is an organization that does a lot around parents with disabilities, protecting their rights, so there are conferences that are offered by a number of different entities that provide that training. We budget annually for a professional development and make sure we have it in our founding to be able to provide that opportunity as well as our staff.

 Our staff is about 58 employees and all of them are required, even our accounting, you really focuses and financial controls and we even participates in professional development trainings required.

 Then we also, that's part of their evaluation process so we track your professional development, and most recently, this was added recently, we also share what others have learned from conferences, so when somebody goes out to a conference, we make sure that they come back and provide that information with staff what they really found was interesting.

 We actually have an internal webinar system, so we use Zoom as well. Our staff will actually do -- they will kind of do train the trainer, they will do a webinar based off of the information they learned from different conferences or different trainings, so we offer that to our staff, too, so they can also experience pretty professional development time, but also experience some of the content that was available for different conferences. Unfortunately, we can't send everybody to APRIL or all of the other conferences and we bring that information back as much as possible.

 >> Sara is wondering how many staff you have?

 >> We have 58 at the moment and 11 brand new positions we just created and we're rapidly growing.

 >> Great. So one more question from the chat, and please, folks, feel free to jump in any time by unmuting your microphone answering questions or just jumping in. We have one from Mehgan, who's wondering, how do folks explain IL philosophy to parents and caregivers who are knowledgeable about the person's needs, but insist they can't do something on their own? Another good question.

 >> This is typical because a lot of times our organization in particular, speaking on behalf of our organization, we not only layer this from parents, but we hear this from teachers, we're out in the pool, transition services, so we're really rear minding them about or organization, about our philosophy. If they keep saying they can't -- we get a lot of conversations from parents, especially, saying oh, my child doesn't understand what you are saying. My child's disability is too significant. We reassure them that our organization has a majority of our staff members actually have significant disabilities, and we were once children and we know that feeling of needing the support that our organization offers.

 We also offer it as a good transition step for the parents, especially when they call about their almost adult children, and we remind them, this is a really good skill to allow the young adult to take the lead of their services and usually we've been extremely successful. We also have a rule that we will not provide services with a family member in the room. So we make sure that up front, we'll sit down with the family member and explain our services.

 If young adult or any consumer wants them in the room, of course, that's their choice, but we have rule up front with all agents, and our information referral staff. We have callers five and six, not them calling directly, but their parents, and our information intake folks will actually ask to speak to the five and six year old, to make sure we have their consent. Even though they are not adults, we want to make sure they understand just as adults. We practice early on, it is also really cool to talk with a young adult or young child and being able to say, our organization is run by people with disabilities and this is the first time often that they have actually seen professionals with disabilities and the environments they have been exposed to. It is eye opening for everybody, but to have that dialogue and take the time.

 There are, of course, helicopter parents that want to know everything we've said and provided and we sit down and educate them about our job here is to help your loved one be as independent as possible and sometimes that does mean removing you from the conversations and they get that.

 >> I want to add on to that. I think it is important to establish this as early in the relationship between you as a staff person, your center and the youth/parent or guardian. Right up front, I always encourage my staff to -- it will happen where a parent comes in with their son or daughter or they are on the phone, and we just really -- I have always encouraged people to be very clear up front and not even to engage beyond, in general, they are going to give why they are calling. Immediately put it out there. This is about your son or daughter and we want to be talking to them and put that into action.

 So when you are having that conversation, if they both come into the office to be directing those questions to the young person and asking for their input. You find a lot of times this will be the first time not only experienced seeing people with disabilities as professionals and employed in general, by it may be the first time they have been given the opportunity to speak for themselves and being empowered and so important for that important.

 >> This is Kim Gibson from Atlanta. I want to piggy back on what Kimberly and Larry both said that starts with training the staff, and many of the staff come along who are consumers and they've gone through the medical model throughout their lives, but one thing we do for training like Kimberly said, we make sure they have the 18 hours. We do the first with, Hi, how are you? How to process the case that kind of stuff, but we also do the training, not only for staff, but the board members every Friday and each of the staff members share something about the program and how to run it and how -- being able to problem solve and ensure that they are looking at the independent living philosophy rather than the handout kind of thing. So the help is up, not help out.

 It starts with the staff understanding what IL means and then passing that along because a lot of us -- there are quite a few staff members who really want to help people rather than helping people that means doing it for them, so I can't encourage enough the whole training aspect like Kimberly and Larry both stated and really taking it to once you talk to one person or parent that you don't give in, kind of, and you just keep saying the same message over and over.

 >> One other thing before we run out of time. I talked early about passing it on to the community what we're about and IL philosophy. I think it is important that every staff member in the center is out there in the community serving on a board or commission or council or government, nongovernment, and it doesn't matter to me if your job is to be that community person or if you are the informational referral person, or maybe even the finance person, that we need to be projecting what we're about and principles of independent living out into government and social and civic activities and happenings and meetings where decisions are made wherever possible.

 I express to the staff that I have to expect that they are serving on a couple of committees and things of interest and we review what those are and talk about it. We can talk about changing systems, but we're not going to change systems if we don't interface with them. That is a whole other topic. It is really important the IL philosophy as much as possible.

 >> Larry, I'm going feed off of you. If you cannot participate in every local meeting, what I do and what we do is we encourage if there are any disability programs, where are the people with disability because we do recognize a very large population and we also encourage them to seek out people with disabilities. Every meeting that they have. So a great example of that, we have a transition alliance of South Carolina focusing on youth transition and for the longest time they didn't have any youth with disabilities on their state, kind of like a state board, so we haven't pushed for that, but to show them the benefits and they got it and endorsed it.

 >> Good. And why as a center, you should encourage them to bring a consumer or volunteer. Encouraging people to do this and provide that training and engage consumer in other areas to provide this opportunity of advocacy.

 >> Wonderful. We do have a couple more comments in the chat. Really quick, I wanted to let folks know, again, thank you for hanging in there with issues getting the captioners in. As Kimberly mentioned earlier, there's a checklist for staff she uses for her staff training and it is under the APRIL website and I want to remind folks about that.

 There are two little questions that folks will wondering and if you are in the audience and like to answer, you can unmute from home or our panelists.

 There are two. One is, are there any best practices for places with limited staff? And how would you speak to a child about IL philosophy to get their consent or how would you make it relatable to children?

 >> This is Kimberly. We work with students in school and we have had five or six year olds. You have to adapt the way that you communicate with everybody, and so whether he definitely make sure we do that, but we talk with them about their goals and what they want, and a lot of that age group coming to that organization have been bowling and in a unique way support from our staff and have been through that bowling that age as well and also producing advocacy exiles teaching them how to stand up for themselves and also if they need an accommodation, they need something, having a hard time learning in the back of the classroom, needing extra time on their reading assignments or anything like at school, we teach them to tell somebody when you are having a hard time with something and that really starts launching that advocacy skill at an early age.

 Also, making them aware that it is okay to have a disability and it is cool and teaching them that a lot of people have disabilities in the world and they are not alone in this. The impact has been great with a lot of the young kids that have been through our organization and also young adults because this is their safe place and becomes their safe place early on.

 >> Thank you, Kimberly. I think that's a really great point and I know we had technical difficulties, but here we are at 2:30. If you still have comments or questions that you didn't get to ask, please feel free to e-mail me and I will get that to our facilitators. And if you have any ideas that you use to pass on the IL philosophy that you would like to pass on to staff or community, please feel free to send them on. We would love to have them available in the archived call to see what everybody else is doing out there.

 I believe with community you are stronger and the more peer support we get, the better. Of course, thank you so much Larry and Kimberly for being here today. For all of the people in the audience who participated, it makes it a better conversation what we hear more voices.

 With that, do you have any closing remarks you wanted to make, Larry, Kimberly or anybody in the audience? Okay. Well, did anyone else want to make any comments before we close out? Thank you. Awesome. Well, thank you everybody and again, thank you for really hanging in there with me.

 I actually had my laptop melt in the middle of the presentation and I never had that happen before, so I appreciate that everybody kept forging forward. Talk to you again. Thanks everybody!

[End]