

Creative Housing - World Cafe

Vinfen Art Connection in Hartford - May 16, 2013

Summary



On May 16, 2013, a group of 36 parents and guardians of individuals who live with intellectual disabilities gathered at the “Vinfen Art Connection” in Harford to discuss creative housing solutions. The group used the “World Café” communication model to engage consumers in designing their future by creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around residential services for family members.

The evening began with a brief social period that included coffee and desserts. Participants were seated in four-or-five-person conversation groups at eight small tables. Each table had one question prepared for discussion. Participants were encouraged to take notes, draw, doodle, and write on the paper table covers. After 20 minutes the participants moved to different groups at different tables where they then discussed another question with another group. This cycle was repeated four times which resulted in each person having the opportunity to discuss four questions. After the four discussion periods, each table shared salient points with the entire group. There were no lectures or presentations. The World Café facilitation model specifically engages the process of participants sharing ideas among themselves.

Myriad types of housing were discussed: apartments, single-family homes, self-contained communities, integrated housing, cottage and farming industries, and assisted living to name a few. Creative housing ideas included: connecting and partnering among families; combining finances

and sharing staff and expenses; housemates; using social media and technology to make connections among families; using natural supports (though parents expressed a mix of ideas and understandings about what are natural supports); interns; peers; gleaning support from civic organizations, and parent groups.

The discussions also raised questions about the future roll of DDS in assisting families, mainly, which housing solutions will be supported by DDS and how much funding would be available. Several participants called for all parents to be more visible to the legislature, especially during the budget process.

More events of this type are planned. For more information, please contact the DDS North Region or the Family Empowerment Task Force via email family-empowerment@comcast.net. We thank Vinfen Connecticut, DDS North Region Regional Advisory Committee, and the Family Empowerment Task Force for their assistance and support of this event.

Respectfully Submitted,

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