



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL

October 10, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Location: Office of Protection and Advocacy

In attendance: Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Karen Hlavac, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Robyn Trowbridge

By phone: Tere Cote, Mona Tremblay

Excused Absence: Wade Chartier (representative for ICC), Sharon Dexler, April Dipollina, Ann Gionet, Steven Hernandez, Mark Greenstein, Colleen Hayles, Lisa Sheppard, Robin Wood

Absent: Tesha Imperati, Maureen Smith, Renee Toper

Call to Order: 10:14 am

Introductions

Public Comment

Larissa Gionfriddo, Advocacy Director from MARC, came as a guest. Larissa's role at MARC is to provide support to and advocacy for parents. Larissa was given some suggestions for ways to connect to other parents/advocates. Discussion around some of the many challenges facing parents include privacy, assuring quality staff and addressing problem staff, fear of the unknown in terms of the future for their loved one, and the differing points of view that arise for parent advocates vs. self advocates. Since the family members that she represents are able to attend meetings, Larissa is interested in continuing to participate to collect resource information to pass along.

Review of September Minutes (Annual Retreat)

Minutes were reviewed and a correction requested. Mona Tremblay made a motion to approve the minute with one change in language in describing the elections held at the Retreat. Karen Hlavac seconded the motion and the minutes were approved with Terry Cote abstaining.

Announcements

Linda Mizzi announced the new policy at Protection and Advocacy for a fragrance free office because of significant staff and visitor allergies and sensitivities. She wanted to bring this to the Council's attention as the policy extends to outside visitors who are using conference rooms, etc. They already have a cell phone policy which is posted asking that cell phones are not used in certain public areas.

Old Business

Annual Report distribution - the Family Support Council 2012 Annual Report is now posted on the main page of the DDS website. There was discussion about ways to highlight the report and the possibility of establishing a "library" of prior reports so they are all accessible on the DDS website. Robyn Trowbridge volunteered to contact Joan Barnish at DDS to discuss options. It was also recommended that the Council start planning for the report earlier in the year so there isn't such a rush to completion at the last minute. It was decided to add this as a New Business item on next month's agenda.

Use of teleconferencing at DDS Offices - There are logistical issues/concerns particularly around the ability of members to provide sufficient notice to have it set up in advance. There continues to be an interest in using this technology and its potential as a positive recruitment tool. It was agreed that this will be discussed again with Robin Wood who was not able to attend today's meeting and the option will be made available in the future.

Update on ASD diagnostic criteria (UCEDD, Yale, DDS, etc.) - This remains in process and the impact of DSM 5 is still being reviewed/discussed.

New Business

Annual Retreat/School Climate follow-up and next steps - There was discussion about the need for parent advocacy in education/transition issues. Families are often unprepared to address special education issues and to advocate at PPT meetings. It was pointed out that the type of advocacy needed will change as the child gets older and his/her needs are different - as are the issues that come up in the school system. There is interest in exploring the role of the Family Support Council relative to educating parents around special education/transition advocacy. It was decided that this is important to include as part of an expanded school climate standing agenda item.

Update/Feedback on DSS changes - Feedback was provided on the consumer experience in using the new DSS Connect system; it seems that DSS was surprised and somewhat unprepared for the volume of calls that came in upon initial implementation. There were concerns raised specifically around waiting time on the phone, the inability to get to talk to a person, and a backlog which exists in the SCAN Center which processes applications. Sylvia Gafford- Alexander has agreed to work with the Eligibility Specialists and other DSS staff to assist in situations which are brought to her attention. She suggested that Council members email concerns and issues to her.

Adjournment

Karen Hlavac made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Sylvia Gafford-Alexander seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.