# IOTI Webinar 2/20/20 Transcript

## Jeff Sheen 0:00

Alright, welcome everyone. This is Jeff Sheen at the Center for Persons with Disabilities. And this is something new that we're trying with the IOTI projects this year. So we're doing a mid year report out from the projects, which I'm very excited about. It looks like for our presenters, we have about five other people on the line. And so we'll see as more people join us, we are recording this and we'll be putting this out onto the CPD website as part of our transparency efforts around these projects. But it's straight up 12 o'clock now.

## Jeff Sheen 0:36

So I'm excited to welcome you all here. I appreciate everybody taking the time. Those of you that are not presenters, just so you know. Today we have with us three presenters from the three different projects that were funded. We have Valerie D'Astous of the University of Utah, and you can give them more information when you introduce yourselves. And then we have Tania Tetz at the Utah Department of Health and we have Kristie Latimer at TKJ. And so the order we're going to go in today is Valerie will go first. And each of the presenters will take 15 to 20 minutes to kind of give you a highlight of their project and where they're at, and also take questions as we have time during their presentation. I'll keep track of the time and we do we did build in some time on the back-end for additional conversations and questions from those out in the audience. And also presenters if you have questions for each other. This is the first chance we've all had to be together. And so there's things you want to ask each other that's that's welcome as well. So we're going to take turns with the presenters sharing their screens and working through their presentation. So Valerie, if you are ready-

## Valerie D'Astous 1:44

Yes.

## Jeff Sheen 1:45

We'll turn it over to you to share your screen and I'll just keep track of the time and give you a heads up when we're close.

## Valerie D'Astous 1:50

Okay, brilliant. So... Share my screen. Oh crikey. So just a second. How come I did it earlier and now I can't. Okay, desktop. Here we go. Can you can you all see my screen at the minute?

## Jeff Sheen 2:18

We can see your screen.

## Valerie D'Astous 2:20

Okay, let me just go to presentation mode. I don't know if you can still see me at the at the minute either. But here can everybody can see this presentation right now?

## Jeff Sheen 2:29

Yeah, your presentation is good. And you're in a little box to the side. So we should-

## Valerie D'Astous 2:32

Okay, perfect. Perfect. So just briefly to introduce myself. My name is Val D'Astous and I am a researcher and professor at the University of Utah. I have, I'm a gerontologist with my area focus being on aging with autism. So to the way this presentation will go, I don't think I'll take my full 15 minutes. I hope not. But if you have any questions along the way, feel free to ask me, I'm just going to talk to you about a bit about the background of this program, the rationale and the goals that we have for it. I'll explain to you what we've done about about the training itself, what we've done to date and what we have left to do.

## Valerie D'Astous 3:15

So let's get going. So it's called the Autism Employment Training Program or AETP, but I have a caveat to tell you about that. That'll come that name has since changed. So I'll tell you about that in a second. So just to start with, for if you're not aware of autism, in particular, that your at the university Utah Registry of Autism and Developmental Disabilities in 1918, recorded that there's nearly 10,000 autistic adults in the state of Utah, and adults being 18 years of age and older and, moreover, despite the capab- capacity and their willingness of these individuals to work, autistic adults face significant disadvantages and barriers to entering the labor market. And they have a lack of understanding and support in employment settings. That compared to populations at large and indeed even to other people with disabilities, the autistic adult is more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, which means they're in jobs that under utilize their knowledge and experience or mal-employed. And that means that they're in jobs that for which they are not suited.

## Valerie D'Astous 4:38

To give you an example I have a friend at the University of Utah, who has two sons on the autism spectrum. Her oldest son graduated with a degree in chemical engineering from the University of Utah and for the five years after he graduated the only employment he could get and sustain was working at a pizza parlor creating pizza and delivering them. And as he with a degree in chemical engineering that was very much under utilizing his knowledge. And many times they're often only temporarily or in part-time positions as well. So what was the rationale? Why did we decide to do this? Well, a number of reasons for far too long. We have treat -the focus has been on teaching autists how to very much prime focus in a neurotypical world in which neurotypical world is very foreign to way the way that they operate. And so, we've always -a lot of training has worked with autists on how to to become more, be more employable. But often that's also neuro typical people teaching these autists how to work in the neuro typical workplace. And so the rationale for this was that we realize there is limited support for adults on the autism spectrum who are seeking access, and there's indeed barriers to them to accessing the workplace, and there's a critical gap in understanding of from the employer side, what an autist can bring to the workplace. And so we're trying to instead of just focusing on one part of this equation, we are this programs working on both sides from the employer side and the autist's side.

## Valerie D'Astous 6:31

So before I tell you about the training itself, I want to tell you that we have since changed the name of the AETP to Optimizing Autism. And we felt that this better captured what we were trying to do in a much more positive kind of way. So of this from the, the two two pieces of this, we have optimizing the workplace, which is specific to helping employers, HR personnel managers, coworkers to understand the benefits that autism brings to the workplace. And our goal for the optimizing the workplace piece was that we would reach out and conduct trainings at 20 Utah companies across the state of Utah in the three years. The second piece of our training program is optimizing yourself, which is specific to autists to increase their employment probability by conducting peer led, employment focused workshops throughout the Utah youth communities in Utah. And the significant thing here that I want to draw your attention to is that these are peer led workshops. And that, again, with with autism being a social communication disorder, to have neurotypical people teaching and training autists, how to better prepare themselves how to communicate in the workplace, we felt there might be a lot lost in translation. So all of the consultants that work on this program with me are on the autism spectrum. And they provide provide the language and the communication with autists. There seems to be a better communication, autists autists than we know, autists and neurotypical.

## Valerie D'Astous 8:27

So we tell you a bit more about the trainings from here. Any questions at this point? Okay, so we have set this program up as three phases. And the three phases represent each year of the grant. The three year grant, the first one, we are designing and conducting these peer led, employment focused optimizing yourself workshops for autistic individuals. We're designing and implementing the optimizing the workplace training for employers. And to supplement these trainings we're developing e-guides, manuals and videos for not only to supplement the training, but also to provide continuity for professional development.

## Valerie D'Astous 9:16

So let me get into more of the nitty gritty of what the training involves. Oh, let me just first I'll tell you about the subsequent phases. So this was the first phase, phase two will probably be and this this isn't necessarily reflective of each year, because once we've created some of the trainings for and train some people on the autism spectrum, the second phase is that they will have a 12 week internship, work based internship, which we hope will when the employers are trained and the autists are trained, then we're going to try to create these work based learning opportunities, where each can learn and grow from each other, hopefully, prior to preceding competitive employment. And then the last phase that we hope to replicate this whole program across the state to reach a wide audience, both rural and urban across the state. We already have a little bit of an in there, in that I was the director of a program called the Utah Neurodiversity Workforce Program in which we received funding from the governor's Office of Economic Development. And in the second year of that funding, we expanded to include Utah State, UVU and Dixie as well as University of Utah replicating that program, UNWP programs. So we already have reached across the state, working with adults on the autism spectrum and working with academics who are interested in this area.

## Valerie D'Astous 10:48

So what is the training itself or what we have accomplished today? So what do we accomplish today? We've mostly focused on the optimizing the workplace because we felt that first and foremost, we had to prepare the workplace to receive these autists. If we if we, instead of just focusing on helping autists prepare for the workplace, we needed to prepare the workplace for the autists. So we've got a one hour basic autism awareness training that we go around to any interest any industry that will listen to us, to do a very basic training on what autism is, the advantages it brings to the workplace, some of the challenges, we're not minimizing the challenges that it has. But we're providing evidence-based strategies to help some employers understand how best to employ and retain these individuals. So from the optimizing workplace curriculum, we've got, we've developed five one-hour workshops for HR and managers. There's an overview of what optimize what autism in the workplace looks, looks for, and as I said at the beginning, the barriers to autists to employment begin even before the interview process, it starts with job descriptions, and how job descriptions are written, that are exclusive exclude people on the autism spectrum. So we're teaching HR and managers how to recraft their job descriptions, and how to best interview somebody who may be on the autism spectrum.

## Valerie D'Astous 12:22

Another one of the workshops is on onboarding, how best to onboard somebody who's on the autism spectrum, or maybe on the autism spectrum. Communication, accommodation and inclusion is another one, a big workshop that we do. And all of these workshops involve components where it's not just us lecturing at them, that they have to do some work to understand how to make these changes, and to identify what their what how how things have worked in their company that might be not inclusive to people on the autism spectrum and how they can accommodate and change these things. We talk a lot about inclusion versus accommodation. And that if you could make an inclusive workplace that wouldn't people on the autism spectrum wouldn't require as many accommodations as they as they might need. We also talk about ADA awareness and cultural analysis and what we mean by cultural analysis is the unspoken rules and policies that a company has. And taking a hard look at these and seeing that somebody who has nonverbal communication difficulties, how do they perceive these things? And how can they we best help them and indeed helping somebody who's on the autism spectrum, to understand the cultural environment of a company will also help everybody because we take for granted the things people just pick up on these things and many people don't. So those are the five one-hour workshops that we have developed for managers and HR.

## Valerie D'Astous 13:56

We also have a one hour manager specific training for somebody who's going to be managing an employee who is on the autism spectrum, and most of this focuses again, on good communication strategies, and again, it works best for, for not just for autists but for everybody. And we also have a one hour coworker training for coworkers that are working with somebody who is on the autism spectrum.

## Valerie D'Astous 14:24

So let me tell you who we're working with to date as far as companies, oh, I lied, I'm always ahead of myself. So what we have as far as resources, so we've worked with a company called Spark Light Productions, to develop to date five videos of four different autists who are my consultants who are all successfully employed and have been for a number of years. And they in these five different videos we have explaining what autism optimizing autism is. It talks about what autism is the strengths and challenges of autism in the workplace, how to craft job descriptions and interviews. Another one of them very clear communication. And the last one is on effective strategies. So we've also outlined blog topics that we envision. We've started crafting some of them to enhance the trainings so these will be supplemental to the trainings that people can read access on our website. And we've, the curriculum we've detailed the curriculum for these trainings, which will be available in print and electronic format. So that's the resources that we have begun to work on to date.

## Valerie D'Astous 15:48

And the companies that we have participating in these trainings, as I said earlier, we our goal is 20 different companies across the state of Utah, and at the minute we have Park City Municipal Corporation who's who we're working with. We have done training, basic training for them. We've done training for their co workers, and we're starting our five trainings for managers and HR with them. We also have Workfront which is a tech company down in Lehigh and Next INT. Next INT is a company who actually reached out to us through Leah Labato's group because they hired a person person on the autism spectrum from the University of Utah and wanted to know how best to support this individual and help him to be successful in on their in their work force. So we have reached out to Next INT we've done at the minute we've just done basic awareness trainings with them.

## Jeff Sheen 16:45

Valerie, this is Jeff, if I can just jump in real quick before you finish. There have been a couple of questions that maybe is now a good time.

## Valerie D'Astous 16:51

Okay, perfect. I love that.

## Jeff Sheen 16:54

Yeah, and I forgot to mention to the folks that are on if you want to put your questions in the chat feature. I'll monitor that and then I'll prompt the presenters with the specific question. So a couple of questions, Valerie.

## Valerie D'Astous 17:06

Yeah.

## Jeff Sheen 17:07

One is if there are any e-guides available now, and related to that is whether or not the videos, if these materials are ready for sharing, there are people here at the CPD that would love to share them if you're ready for them to be shared.

## Valerie D'Astous 17:21

Right? Okay, so e-guides are in progress. The videos we've got done second round of videos, but we have, we're in the process of developing our website. So at the minute, there's a very tentative optimizingautism.org website that you can access and we just put that up so that we could, in case industries wanted to reach out to us, but we've just we have a meeting on Thursday with a website development company, who we're going to talk to about creating our website and how what we what we need to have on there. So we anticipate having that up and going in a month or two. E-guides are not e-guides are not ready at the minute we've we're still the curriculum is developed and as we're training, doing the trainings, we are creating the e-guides at the same time. So it's still a work in progress.

## Jeff Sheen 18:17

Well, and just to remind the folks that are on the call with us. These are now three year projects. And we're we're really at the very beginning stages of these three projects. We're in the first six months. And so a lot of these things they're talking about will be available, but not they're not expected to have them ready yet because yeah, really are not even the first we haven't completed the first third of these projects yet.

## Valerie D'Astous 18:39

Yeah.

## Jeff Sheen 18:40

But we'll definitely keep that posted. And then another question. Just a real quick question. Could you elaborate a bit on the benefits? You mentioned, talking about the benefits that autists bring to the workplace?

## Valerie D'Astous 18:51

Absolutely. The benefits of somebody on the autism spectrum bring to the workplace include, first and foremost that they're very focused, they're very focused and very, really dedicated employees. So if if you get somebody on the autism spectrum who has an interest in that particular area, first of all, they're very knowledgeable because that's their, their passion. With their often people on the autism spectrum have part of the disabi-, the diagnosis or the labeling is that they have repetitive behaviors. And of that is often that they have a very significant focus in some area. So they're really, really good employees. As far as honesty, as far as focusing on what they can do. They're particularly good, although it's a misnomer that their people on the autism spectrum are all good at at technology, because that's not true at all. They're just as varied and diverse as everybody else. But because of the way their brain is wired differently. They often see things in patterns and structure, so they're often very good at picking up in IT the structure or where things break in, in a pattern. They're very honest, honest to a fault. So that often is how they get into trouble and miscommunication because they give you a very unbiased, honest opinion. They're literal thinkers and again, they can get into difficulties with that. But they bring they because of the way they think, too, they don't have, they don't think within the same structure that neurotypical people bring think within. So they're very creative and innovative in the way that they think. And they challenge things they they, why you do something, the way you do it, they might have an alternative way of doing things. So they're they're. If you get an autist in your company, and you've got you know, you're you have, first of all, a lifelong employee if you get things right.

## Jeff Sheen 20:52

Great. Thank you, Val. So and we have about five minutes if you want to wrap up this portion.

## Valerie D'Astous 20:56

Yeah.

## Jeff Sheen 20:56

We can come back to questions after we have the other presenters share theirs, but so if you can get kind of about next five minutes will transition over to Tania.

## Valerie D'Astous 21:06

Yeah. Okay. So what we have left to do is another part part of the IOTI grant that I didn't expand on is that we we hope to work ourselves out of a job. So we want to come into these companies, do our trainings, teach the teach the HR managers, co workers, as well as autists who are either employed or being employed, how to be successful in employment, but what we want to do is have a train the trainer model, where in these companies we create what we're calling an autism ally. And this person who it will be selected, self select, or will be selected. Some people, some of the companies saying it's going to be somebody in HR, and it's not just gonna be one person and number of people will become autists -our autism allies, and these are the people who that both the neurotypical people, co workers, managers, or what have you, or the autists who are employed will go to as a first line of resources. So these are this is an above and beyond training that we're going to do with a certain amount of employees to become a resource within the company for both their own coworkers and people on the autism spectrum. We haven't developed fleshed out as much of the optimizing yourself program and its resources. Although we do know that what it's going to cover the pieces of we've identified what pieces of employment it's going to cover and the resources that we need, although we haven't worked on that curriculum to date as much. And as I said, the website development is in progress. And we have a meeting on Thursday about that.

## Jeff Sheen 22:46

Fantastic Valerie. I really appreciate this update. I know there's just two final questions. Maybe we can wrap up-

## Valerie D'Astous 22:52

Sure.

## Jeff Sheen 22:52

Our transition over to Tania sharing her screen. One is with teleworking being something that some companies do is that included as part of your training? And-

## Valerie D'Astous 23:01

That's a great question. And teleworking would be a, maybe a really good fit for some people on the autism spectrum. So that isn't something we have, have have considered. But that's a really good suggestion. And if the person who's asking that would know of any companies that specifically do tele tele employment, then we would love to reach out to them. That's a great a great suggestion.

## Jeff Sheen 23:29

And so, you know, that question came from your fellow presenter, Tania.

## Valerie D'Astous 23:33

Oh, good. Okay. Tania, you need to talk to me about that. That's brilliant.

## Jeff Sheen 23:37

So then the other question is actually from Kristie, is, are these trainings relevant for individuals who require more support, like an onsite job coach, or are they tailored for those individuals who can already totally work independently?

## Valerie D'Astous 23:50

Yeah, and that is a limitation of the program to date is that we are first and foremost focusing on individuals who require less support. So that that is a big limitation to it.

## Jeff Sheen 24:07

Yeah, great. Well, thank you. Are there other questions as we transition over to Tania? If not, well, Valerie we'll have you go ahead and stop sharing your screen.

## Valerie D'Astous 24:14

Okay, brilliant.

## Jeff Sheen 24:15

And then we'll put all the presenters will stick around. So if there are other questions that come up in a moment, we'll certainly come back to those at the end of these. So we appreciate and I'll keep an eye on the group chat. So Tania, go ahead and share yours.

## Tania Tetz 24:29

Can you see it?

## Jeff Sheen 24:30

Um, it's working on it. There we go.

## Tania Tetz 24:34

Okay, let me start it.

## Jeff Sheen 24:37

And then I'll give you a heads up too in about 20 minutes.

## Tania Tetz 24:40

Okay, thanks. So. My name is Tania Tetz, and I've been working for the Department of Health for over 12 years. And I'm a health program specialist in a new program. We've only been around for a year. So this is a family, youth and outreach- the family youth and outreach program and this project that we're doing through IOTI with the funding, it's helping us reach a new population that we hadn't reached before. This is new for us, and especially working with adolescents, or the parents and professionals that work with adolescents. So I'll go ahead and, and continue.

## Tania Tetz 25:29

So in this presentation, I'm going to review the IOTI funded project at the Utah Department of Health, the top five challenges encountered in implementation and how we address them, the progress in the first six months of implementation, and also any future plans that are coming. So our project we work with the, what's her title, the teen teen pregnancy coordinator or teen pregnancy prevention coordinator in the state and talk to her about what we could do to reach this this population and we talked about the trusted adults and adolescent's life. And for any adolescent, it's really important to have a trusted adult because they are a protective factor against against adolescents engaging in risky behaviors in any level, you know, with disabilities or without disabilities, they need that adult in their life.

## Tania Tetz 26:41

When it comes to youth with disabilities, they are considered a vulnerable population. And from what we've seen in the health department and research that we know is that they know the youth with disabilities are more likely than their peers to use substances. Such as cigarettes and alcohol, and they are also more likely than their peers to be involved in pregnancy or start having sex at a younger age. So it's it's a population that for us, you know, it's, it's concerning, right? So they need that support as much as any if not more so than and for an adult for them to thrive into healthy adolescence and go on into a healthy adult. So the two groups that we that more we talk about, like who could we reach when we're training to help this youth and become this or help them be these trusted adults. We decided that it was the paraprofessionals at the school level, and the parents or the guardians. These groups spend so much time with children and the youth with disabilities that these were the best two groups that we can come up with, because they can influence the youth. And the parents even though we still we think that media and friends have a greater impact on the youth it's actually the parents, the parents still continue to have a big impact on their youth on making decisions. So they don't do don't start risky behaviors early.

## Tania Tetz 28:28

So what we decided to do trainings for paraprofessionals. The first training we wanted to do is the social emotional learning in practice toolkit. This is a toolkit that comes from the University of Minnesota, and this has activities to help, to help a person teach a child about emotion and how to deal through their emotions and how to grow emotionally and they be able to identify one of the, what they're feeling one of their activities that we start doing even with the people who are going to, to work is like, Okay, how many emotions do you think there are? Can you list all the emotions that you think and it's interesting that even as adults, we can come up with like five or seven, and we should actually learn know 17. And I don't think anybody knows 17 emotions right off the bat. So we go through things like that we go through how to channel when they're getting angry, gratitude, all these things. And so it's like 250 pages long. And there's a it's a toolkit for the paraprofessional and it can be tailored. That's the nice thing about this one. And the developer in Minnesota is really interested to get feedback on how they're tailoring the activities for a population with disabilities, so that they can add that content or adapt the activities as they go. So they are very open minded, which is very uncommon from a developer to let you do that through their stuff, which was great.

## Tania Tetz 30:19

The next. The next thing for the paraprofessionals is this outside of the Michigan, they're written in Michigan, just called the sparks videos, and they start like 15 minute videos that provide information on how to be how to create an environment that is safe for somebody to come and talk to you adolescent development of the brain. All those things that the paraprofessional can do to help the student or the youth that they have at their care. And there's videos and handouts.

## Tania Tetz 30:59

It's like that and for the parent, we have this what we call Teamspeak. And this one's developed by a person that worked in a medical field for a long time, and was able to develop this training, and he provides strategies to improve communication between adults. In this case, the parent and the guard or the guardian with a child and topics about risky behavior. It's the four hour training and it also has an online component. And they don't, they're not telling the person how to parent they're not telling that person how what to teach about, but it's just how to handle the situation like if your child is having a hard time. If they have questions, about drinking, about sex, how to approach those questions with the right information and not be embarrassed or caught off guard. So there's a lot of fluidity in this book and it applies. So every family can do what they need to do that fits them. And all these too are based on their research based and they always give you feedback to make it better.

## Tania Tetz 32:21

So originally, we had chosen this areas in the state. And these were chosen because of the geographical area. If they were some of them are rural or underserved areas, otherwise have higher poverty rates and lower educational attainment. Some of them are culturally and linguistically diverse. Some are bigger than the other ones. For example, Salt Lake has the largest population, you know, and we also looked at the number of paraprofessionals in the districts according to the Board of Education website, so those are the areas that we that we have chosen.

## Tania Tetz 33:08

And we've had some challenges. And this is a table that kind of shows you the top five. And originally, we here at the Department of Health, we cannot start a project until everything is signed off, and I don't have power to sign off on anything. So we had to send it up the chain of command that we got the notice everybody was so excited, then I have to go through this like almost two month process of getting it approved. And then once that was done, it was going through the same process to approve the vendors or the developers of the materials and then the same process to get their contracts done. So it was a long and stressful period, but we had to keep on doing a lot of emails calls and tracking and hacking. One of the things that came down also was that the the original timeline stated that we were going to hit the ground running and implement this. But then with all that time we had to adjust our timeline and our work plan. Another challenge was the lack of response from some school districts. From the selected school districts found were excited for example, the Georgia school district are actually going through a process of adding more social emotional learning to their the special ed department so they were game, they were so excited about it and we've been in contact with them. Shane county and Uintah they were very excited about it. Their challenge is the distance, of where they are and where we are.

## Tania Tetz 34:59

So, there was a school district one of the rural school districts that from the get go, they're like, we're not gonna do this and to again take up the child and calling leaving messages and the person was just like, not interested, like they would say nowadays I got ghosted, you know, no responses, nothing. So I was like I started to stress out. So I reached out to, to Jeff and I got permission to open the trainings to community organizations, to charter schools and to other school districts that had interests that have shown some interest. When I also look for guidance from people that that work with schools and I've tried different ways but you know, when there's no interest or it's not a priority, it's kind of kind of hard.

## Tania Tetz 35:49

They have for the paraprofessionals to take the training. I was told that paraprofessionals can only work up to 30 hours a week. That's it. And most of the time is taking care of the students. And so they were not going to... that they don't have enough time to do training. And when you have trainings that are long, you know, or an hour that's that's kind of hard for them to do on a webinar or something like a specific time.

## Tania Tetz 36:24

And then the morphing of the project. Originally, we had we had thought that it was gonna be like, go do regional trainings and then do an online catch up webinar, see where things were going. But as all these challenges started to come, I don't know that districts have substitutes for the paraprofessionals. I know they do for the teachers but not for the paraprofessionals. And some of them are working in the very, very like some of the schools don't have a lot of people working there. So it was kind of hard. So that that format that we had thought it was not gonna work. I think.

## Tania Tetz 37:08

So. So we had, we just opened it and and so that's what we had to do, we have to continue to do regular assessment of the activities, continue to find partners and things like that so we can actually look better. And now instead of doing a oh let's do the majority as a, as a in-person training, now we're backing and doing it more like an online and trying to morph that and figure that out.

## Tania Tetz 37:39

So this is the timeline to show you where the time was spent the last six months. The little rhombus, it says the things that we have that I think have been good. The notification of award, and then you can see how long it took to get approvals of a different stages. And they we did do two of the trainings.

## Tania Tetz 38:07

So, our progress, we finally got our internal approvals. Yay. We did carry out a two and a half hour training webinar for paraprofessionals. The day we did it, it happened to be a day where Jordan school district was off. That day was off, it just coincided. So we had several of their of the paraprofessionals join. And so they got they, they started to learn more about the toolkit, social emotional learning toolkit, and it was during school district and under Shane school County, we had like thirteen paraprofessionals participate. And that one that webinar was given by the developer which was great because it had questions she could answer everything. And it was very good and for our prize for them attending and filling out the evaluation we sent out they went into our drawing to get a book. The social image, social emotional learning tool kit in the back has resource page information. And it has books at list of when twenty-six books or so that reinforce that social emotional learning. Part of in the story, you know, how did this person will make it through a hard time so they got to pick out of that book out of that list what they wanted.

## Tania Tetz 39:40

I also attended the safe and health schools conference, and that is a conference for anybody else but teachers in the school so I got to be in contact with with other districts and that's when I found out that there was a lot more interest in other districts and in other charter schools and it was really interesting because I got to talk about the project.

## Tania Tetz 40:05

And then in December, we did have the Teamspeak training of educators. And that one, we trained sixteen people throughout the state to be able to implement that class, that Teamspeak. And that one was a variety of people. We had somebody from the Boys and Girls Club or greater Salt Lake, the Utah Parent Center, Iron County School District, they came up from Beaver to participate, Jordan School District, Weber school district, and also from the division of services for people with disabilities. So and a couple more people from the Utah Department of Health.

## Tania Tetz 40:48

And then the last thing I've done is I just sent them, I gave them a couple months to implement what they said that we're going to implement after the SEL training in October. Everybody learned one new skill and they decided to implement it those two months. So I sent them a little survey like have you have you used a tool kit for your job and more than 50% said they have 100% of the respondents implemented the skill that they say they would, after the training, and they all have seen improvement in the students that they have. So that's, that's a good thing.

## Tania Tetz 41:33

So what's next our plan is to do SEL training videos. It's based on that information that we got and looking at the challenges we had, we decided to work with a developer, which is the University of Minnesota, and we're going to do four or five videos, short videos that go more in depth on the sections of the toolkit. So whenever somebody wants to learn about how to make your classroom better, or how to the type of activities to do, they can just go and learn more directly instead of, and they can do it at their own time. You know, they don't really have to do it in the middle of the day. So that makes them more flexible and available to more people in this state.

## Tania Tetz 42:20

We want to work with the Utah Parent Center to implement the state team speak with the parents that they have, because they have a lot of parents. Also support the Teamspeak trainers in their communities and schools to implement the training. And that, that could take different ways including getting the materials for them, 'cause the materials do have a cost and we can probably get them for less than if they get them from Amazon or some other place. And then continue to work with school districts that have shown interest and and continue find other school districts and other partners to implement the Teamspeak.

## Tania Tetz 43:05

And also, hopefully do a website. That's my new things, I can house all these things. Like I said, our pride, our program in the health department is so new, we don't even have a website. So we, would be nice to create a landing page or something for us to be able to put these videos for the paraprofessionals, have a schedule of trainings for the parents where they can go get it done. All that so they can get that information that they need and improve that communication. There you go.

## Jeff Sheen 43:40

Great. That was fantastic. Tania, I really appreciate you walking us through that. There were just a couple of quick questions. Then we'll transition over Kristie to you and you can share your screen. Just so folks that are on know, we did schedule this until 1:30, we probably won't go to 1:30 but we didn't want to rush our presenters. So we wanted them to each have a good twenty minutes and then some question and answer. So Tania, a quick question for you, did you get any buy in from top leaders in the school districts?

## Tania Tetz 44:07

You know, I was reaching out for to the director, so the special education program, the programs and they don't and they don't some do reply, the one that told me we're not doing this was one of them. And then when I went to the... Whatchamacallit, to that conference in November. Somebody said, Well, my district, maybe you can try this other person, but it's been the same. I don't know. I don't know why they don't respond. Okay.

## Jeff Sheen 44:40

And so-

## Tania Tetz 44:41

If anybody has any ideas, send me a message.

## Jeff Sheen 44:44

Absolutely. So and I think you answered the question from Valerie. Valerie, we can come back to your question if she didn't get that. But let's go ahead and transition over to Kristie Latimer from TKJ, and we'll let you go for the next 20 minutes. Let me unmute you too Kristie. Okay. We're good.

## Kristie Latimer 45:06

Thanks. That's perfect. Can you guys see my screen? Did I do that correctly?

## Jeff Sheen 45:09

We can. You got it.

## Kristie Latimer 45:11

Alright, perfect. So my name is Kristie Latimer. I'm a licensed clinical social worker and I work for a company called TKJ, we provide residential supports for adults with disabilities who are living in their communities. But our focus for this training grant has been on individuals that have a dual diagnosis. So by that we're referring to folks that have both an intellectual disability as well as a diagnosed mental illness. And this is a group of folks that really haven't been well understood historically. You know, of course, decades ago, there wasn't really differentiation made between folks who had a severe persistent mental illness and those with an intellectual disability. And so the research is really ongoing into how these two things can co occur. And what we need to do in terms of best practice in order to make sure that these individuals are getting the supports that they need.

## Kristie Latimer 46:07

So for our grant, this year or these for the next three years, we're really focused on sharing information with, with partners, both some professionals who treat folks with mental illness and may not be aware of the disability side of the coin and how best to interface with folks who have disabilities, as well as folks from the disability community understanding the the relevance of a mental health diagnosis for those folks. So we're really trying to hit at it from a multi pronged approach where we visit with some of the county mental health authorities, mental health counselors, and folks on that end, we also interface with some of the disability support groups, and we'll talk about some of those partners as well. And then folks with disabilities or mental health in terms of self-advocacy, and making sure that they're aware of the resources that are out there.

## Kristie Latimer 47:02

So, in getting started in the first couple months of this grant period, it's been really fun to sort of hit the ground running and, and really get moving on this. So some of our priorities in getting started on the grant was really to develop a menu of training partners that would help us to get this information out to a diverse group of folks, to folks across the state and people associated with a wide variety of, of groups, and we've really had some good success.

## Kristie Latimer 47:33

So for example, we have already established some great partnerships with the Utah chapter of NASW, which is the National Association of Social Workers, as well as NAMI, which of course, is the National Alliance for Mental Illness, and also the Utah Mental Health Counselor Association. And there's other groups as well, that we're working on building relationships with so that we can provide these trainings to folks who would benefit from it. Getting started, obviously one of our first goals was really to make sure that the trainers had mastered the curriculum materials. We're primarily using a curriculum that was developed by a group called the NADD, which stands for National Association for the Dually Diagnosed, they're fantastic. They have a lot of resources available in their, their online store and primarily one that we have been using is a train the trainer module or set of modules that has fantastic information for for folks.

## Kristie Latimer 48:31

So we've been mastering that material they provide. They provided the manual, which we have, as well as some PowerPoint slides and really great presentation materials. But what we've done with that as well, we've based primarily on a lot of their data, we have also wanted to tailor those presentations to be specific to the groups that that we're going to be presenting to so many of the modules that came directly from NADD are very long and would take several hours to go through is sometimes several, you know, more than 100 slides at a time. And some of the material can be quite dense, designed, I think maybe for an academic group. And so particularly if we're interfacing with, for example, a parent group, or when we presented for NAMI, we have quite a few self advocates there. We want the slides in the presentation to be accessible for those folks and be something that's useful. So we've edited that material in order to shorten it to shorter timeframes, if need be.

## Kristie Latimer 49:32

The goal is to do some series trainings where we can cover different pieces of that information in different presentations. And then we also wanted to add local resources that'd be relevant to folks. So for example, when we talk to folks who do primarily mental health work, they don't know phone numbers for DSPD services for people with disabilities, or where to where to point those folks, when we do parent groups. We want to make sure that they have resources for crisis phone numbers, local mental health authorities, those types of things. So we've in in adjusting the training materials for the group, we try to include those local resources to make sure that it's really targeted and relevant to the groups that we're presenting to.

## Kristie Latimer 50:17

So far, we have done six trainings, which is really exciting. That's ahead of our timeline. We had anticipated not training until the quarter, this Q3 that we're in now, but we were able to get some great training activities completed. So we presented at NAMI's annual conference this fall and had a great group of folks there that had some good feedback for us. We've also presented to the Canyon School District in coordination with the Utah Parent Center, as you mentioned, Tania, they're a great, great resource and had a great group of really engaged parents who have kiddos dealing with both an intellectual disability as well as a mental illness. We have gone to two locations for North- Northeastern Counseling Services. They are the mental health provider for the Roosevelt-Vernal area of the state. And so we provided to their clinicians who were fantastic. Conamore School is located in Myton, Utah, which is a very rural area. And they provide services to folks with disabilities in that area. And then we've also done a training for Intermountain Healthcare and their behavioral health workers, which was great because they had some is our first time doing a presentation where people are able to access via technology in a webinar kind of platform in addition to in person, so that was really, really exciting.

## Kristie Latimer 51:41

So as you can imagine, determining who the training is targeting is really important. When we're targeting professionals, we're talking about the prevalence of disability in the population, what a disability may look like that they see in their office, and then how to adapt assessment or therapy for those individuals. For example, we talked about decreasing the cognitive load of therapy, slowing down the delivery of information or adapting therapeutic activities to accommodate that individual with a disability. A good example that we try to use when we do trainings is occasionally we'll hear from folks Oh, this person's communication is is, is limited or their cognitive skills are limited. They're just not a good candidate for therapy. And I think an interesting analogy that we try to use, as you know, as mental health professionals, if we had a young child who'd been the victim of a traumatic experience, their communication may also be limited, their cognitive skills may also be limited, but nobody would be saying, Oh, no, they don't need any therapy. They'll be fine. No, of course we would adapt the therapy to meet them at their level in order to be useful and the same is true for individuals with disabilities. On the flip side of that, when we are interfacing primarily with parents or with self advocates, we want to make sure that accessing mental health care is, is something they feel like they have the skills to do and to do effectively. So we talked about what to do to prepare for a mental health appointment, what different mental health providers do, how to track if behavior is changing, or if mental health therapy is being effective for that individual. So for example, we talked about how to track behavior. So we don't fall into the trap of recency bias and and saying, oh, yesterday was awful, therefore, everything's awful when we really had three or four good weeks, maybe prior to that.

## Kristie Latimer 53:36

So it's been fun. We have a lot of great diversity in the materials that we can present depending on what group we're targeting. Sorry, I skipped ahead, one. So in terms of our successes, we're pretty excited that we've already been able to train more than 100 of people year to date, and again, that's ahead of what we had projected. So we're feeling like we're off to a good start. And we have been successful in reaching some folks in the geographically diverse areas of the state as both the previous presenters mentioned, we've been in Salt Lake City, Murray and Sandy along the Wasatch Front, and then also in Roosevelt, Vernal, and Myton. And then evaluations of the trainings have been really, really positive. Folks have completed the the evaluations have said that the information was useful to them, they feel better equipped to interface with folks who have both an intellectual disability as well as mental illness and have some improved skills, in terms of working with those groups.

## Kristie Latimer 54:34

Like my co presenters, we've also had a couple of challenges that that we maybe didn't anticipate. So for, as I mentioned, the full breadth of the material is incredibly dense. And there's so much to talk about in this area, as you can imagine, from assessment to treatment to just basics. It's really so varied. So one challenge that we have come up with or have noticed is that most of our trainings we've scheduled so far, have sort of been one time events or a conference or another gathering. And we'd really like to target moving forward getting some serious trainings in place so that we have the opportunity to provide more information over a longer time period.

## Kristie Latimer 55:16

We've also found that the training topic is somewhat niche to who feels like this is relevant to them. So for example, professionals don't necessarily recognize how prevalent intellectual disability might be in their given settings. And so there's been a learning a learning curve for those folks to realize, no, you are seeing individuals with disabilities in your settings. It may not be formally diagnosed or you may not be super aware of it, but it's certainly there. In addition, we've had just in terms of linguistics, the term dual diagnosis in those professional circles is almost exclusively used to refer to substance abuse happening in coordination with mental illness. And so we've had to be careful how we title our presentations to make sure that we're really expressing what we want to talk about and that folks know what they're getting into and what's being presented.

## Kristie Latimer 56:15

And then on the other side of the coin, sometimes the community groups fear that the topic is too specific for them. So folks who are concerned about their children or family members or folks they support needing mental health pieces, they're looking for maybe more broad, just suicide prevention trainings that are not disability specific, or they're looking for disability specific information that doesn't necessarily have that mental health component. So, for us, we see that as a challenge in helping people identify really how common dual diagnosis is and that they may not be recognizing that there is a mental health component or a disability component going on, but, but really recognizing the need for the training has been a challenge.

## Kristie Latimer 57:00

So moving ahead, we've got some exciting things happening. I think in our trainings looking forward to reaching out to a wide variety of folks. We have a relationship, as I mentioned with the Utah chapter of the NASW and they have branches statewide, so we're working on arranging some more trainings outside of the Wasatch Front. Specifically the St. George branch of NASW, we're on the calendar for them and are working with some of the others. We're also in touch with the University of Utah school, graduate school of social work to get in and train some of their students who will be shortly be mental health professionals working in the community. We want to continue to partner with additional school districts in coordination with the Utah Parent Center as we had such success in Canyon School District. We've also made some some connections with other disability groups including UAX and ISCA, which is the Independent Support Coordinator Association. We did a short training for them in a previous grant cycle on a kind of a smaller, almost beta version of this grant training, that was really well received, and we'd like to do some more in-depth trainings for them, as well as for folks at the Department of Human Services.

## Kristie Latimer 58:13

So we have additional trainings on the schedule already that we're really excited about. I mentioned that St. George branch, we're also on the schedule with Salt Lake Behavioral Health, which is a provider of mental health services in the area. And we're also presenting next month now at the Utah Mental Health Counselor Association conference for folks who work primarily, I think, in private practice, we're excited to reach out to that group and really trying to schedule more trainings all the time. That's the goal to get in front of more folks and make sure that we're, we're getting this information out really statewide.

## Kristie Latimer 58:49

As we look ahead, some of the what we'd really like to accomplish, as I mentioned is to really get out to those rural communities, when we've talked with both University of Utah and Utah State University and their schools of social work, we think there's some opportunity to do distance education, things to reach students outside of that traditional brick and mortar setting. I also mentioned we'd really like to increase the number of multi day training events or longer trainings. On our evaluations, we've noticed that some of the recommendations for future trainings folks say Oh, I wish we had longer, I wish we could cover more of this material, which is encouraging, as long as we can get those on the schedule. And then another thing we've noticed that we're hoping to be able to use to our benefit is there's just an increased awareness of the need for this training across the state. And trainers from the NADD themselves have actually been to Utah, at least on two occasions since our grant began, to do multi day trainings in the Salt Lake area, and then down in St. George, which is fantastic. We want to be collaborative, and the goal is to get this information out and to be useful to folks and make sure that we're you know that we're just getting those trainings happening. So we really would love to coordinate our efforts with other groups that have the same goals that we have to make sure that we're, you know, that we're just the outreach is there that folks get the information and that we're collaborators no need for competition in this area. We just want the information to get out there and to be useful to folks. So those are some of our goals for the future. We're excited. We're excited about what we've accomplished so far, but we feel like there's a lot of room for increased efforts and increased trainings. So, any other questions?

## Jeff Sheen 1:00:35

Thanks so much, Kristie. Yeah, if there's questions, go ahead and throw those into the chat box and I'll facilitate it can be for Kristie or any of the other presenters. For those of you that are listening, hopefully this has been informative for you. This is the first time that we have done this. And I am very excited, in the past the IOTI there was kind of a quarterly reports that would come into Sharon and myself are a few other people might look at those. And this has now been recorded and will be out there for the broader community to get a sense of how how these funds are being spent and the good work that is happening.

## Jeff Sheen 1:01:11

So I appreciate all of you as presenters. And there's a couple things I want to just point out that I picked up on, that I'm most excited about as kind of the project officer on these grants is hearing all of you talk about the reach that you're having geographically and through online materials is is fantastic. That's certainly the intent of the funding of these programs. Particularly, you know, I don't know that many people have been to Myton, Utah. There's been some things in Myton, like in person is fantastic. I think that the use of existing materials and then adapting them for the different populations is a really good use of the resources to take evidence-based or best practice in different areas and then adapt it specifically to these projects is exciting. And then when I hear each of you talk about things that will lead to sustainability so that these things will continue to be accessible and available well beyond the three years of the project is is certainly with the intent of this, the Center for Persons with Disabilities has behind administering these grant funds. And so I really appreciate the information that all three of you have shared on your projects. I'm not seeing other questions right now in the chat. So I think we'll go ahead and conclude the formal part and if the three of you would just stay on for half a second I'd love to just chat with you for just a minute.

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