

## Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) Program

Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center  
University of Cincinnati University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

### *Project Abstract*

#### **Training Modules for Advancement and Transition Services**

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#### **Background**

The University of Cincinnati's Advancement and Transition Services (ATS) division offers three unique postsecondary opportunities for high school students and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) to help them become more independent and live fulfilled lives. Although there has been significant research supporting evidence based practice for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other ID/DD, currently there is a lack of research available to guide service providers who work with adult clients (Gerhardt & Lainer, 2011). Therefore, the challenge is to create a quality experience for adults with ID/DD to help them develop the greatest level of independence.

#### **Objective**

The goal of this project is to develop three systematic training modules to prepare new ATS staff in the implementation of evidence based practice in community and integrated employment settings for individuals who have ID/DD.

#### **Methods**

In order to understand the knowledge and training needs of current ATS student workers, a 23-question needs assessment survey was created and distributed. Additionally, a thorough review of training modules being utilized in the field was conducted, which included the current ATS staff training modules as well as Online and Applied System for Intervention Skills (OASIS) modules from The Kansas Center for Autism Research and Training.

#### **Results**

The survey had a 67% response rate by ATS student workers. The results demonstrated a desire for increased information about characteristics of developmental diagnoses, communication (e.g. non-verbal cues, visuals, simplified language), and behavior (e.g. positive reinforcement, coping skills). This feedback, along with the content in current trainings, inspired the creation of module one of the new ATS training. Module one provides an overview of characteristics of individuals with ID/DD and supports through communication and behavioral strategies, discusses taking a person-centered approach to help individuals with ID/DD have increasing independence and function, and contains case studies and videos that bring the content to life. The content of this module has been reviewed by local stakeholders within ATS leadership and the disability community for content and accuracy.

#### **Discussion**

Limited evidence based techniques exist for working with adults ID/DD. The first training module was created to address current employees' gaps in knowledge when working with this population. As children with ID/DD transition into adulthood, it is essential to create purposeful programs and develop partnerships with external agencies, such as Advancement and Transition Services at UC.

#### **Conclusions/Next Steps**

Next steps are to a) test the effectiveness of the module created and b) develop additional training modules in order to provide direct support staff with all the necessary knowledge and skills to systematically apply information and practices with adults with ASD.