

Workplace Readiness

Jon Wallner, M.S. CESP, recently hosted our fourth consecutive Virtual Workplace Readiness Program, focusing on social skills, adulthood transition skills, and self-advocacy skills for students with disabilities. The ages of students ranged from 14 to 21. Funding for this program has been made possible through the South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), also known as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) have offered funding opportunities for summer training opportunities relevant to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities since the summer of 2016.

This summer program featured the PEERS® (The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills) curriculum, with an emphasis on teaching social awareness and self-advocacy skills to participants, especially as they pertain to the workplace environment. Each summer, the class size has stood at roughly six to nine students. The Zoom sessions consist of full group educational lessons enhanced with breakout room practice activities, working with social coaches. This has allowed for students to individually review and practice the skills taught in the main instructive lessons.

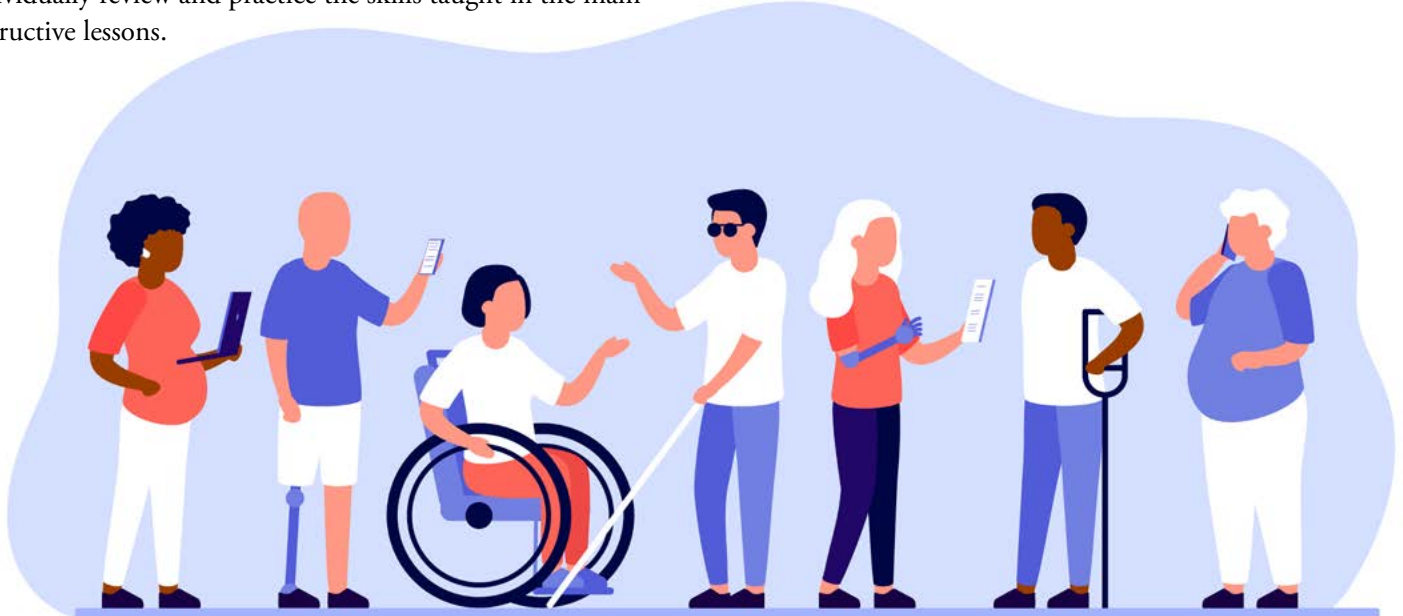
Here is what families of students have expressed about the Workplace Readiness Program throughout the years:

“You covered a lot of information and was impressed as we printed out the paperwork each week with what you covered. Repetition is key for my son and this was such a good start. I hope he can continue to find resources like this to further his confidence in talking to people and interviewing for jobs. Thank you!” – Summer 2024

*“We thought the program was very informational and provided many things that ***** will encounter in the coming years. The information was very good coming from sources other than family.” – Summer 2023*

“I felt the up-beat attitudes of the teachers was great. It really kept everything rolling along. I never thought my kiddo would stay engaged for that long.” – Summer 2022

“Thank you for holding this class. It was nice to be able to attend the class from all over the state. The teacher and coaches were very helpful. It was great to have the employer panel and Voc Rehab representative. Thank you for mailing the homework. That was well organized and helpful as well.” – Summer 2021



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The Center for Disabilities at the USD Sanford School of Medicine is South Dakota's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD). As the South Dakota UCEDD, the Center for Disabilities works with others to create opportunities that enhance the lives of people with disabilities and their families through training, services, information, research, and community education. The Center for Disabilities delivers activities across the lifespan from a community-based, family-centered and culturally-competent perspective.



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Collaborating Together to Create Awareness and Provide Support

On July 18th, Dr. Aimee Deliramich and Nikki Eining CSW-PIP QMHP presented at the 2024 Mission: Possible Conference, Advancing Action Against Substance Use Together, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. They were able to share about a new program launching across the state called Behavioral Health, Education, Access, and Management for South Dakota (BEAM-SD). BEAM-SD is a program for South Dakota specifically targeting pediatric mental health care access (0-21). BEAM-SD focuses on three primary pillars: a professional-to-professional consultation line, free CME and CEU opportunities, and pediatric behavioral health resources. Deliramich and Eining shared how through these initiatives, BEAM-SD aims to strengthen the capacity of healthcare providers and school professionals across South Dakota to deliver effective pediatric behavioral healthcare to the individuals in their communities.

They will present on this topic again at the 24th Annual Community Response to Child Abuse Conference on Oct. 3rd. More information regarding registration for this conference can be found on the South Dakota Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment (CPCM) [website](#).

On July 31st, Deliramich and Eining supported a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners webinar training through the South Dakota Center for Prevention of Child Maltreatment on Victims of Violence with Disabilities. The training's focus was to increase participants' understanding of differences in trauma responses of individuals with disabilities versus typically developing individuals, and identify screening, treatment needs, and intervention options for individuals with disabilities that have experienced trauma. They reviewed and defined disabilities and prevalence rates, explored trauma responses in individuals and considerations for those with disabilities, identified considerations specific to the disability community, walked through a case study, and reviewed available resources and supports. A recording of this training is available on CPCM's [website](#) in the eSANE Training Series archive.

Autism Spectrum Education and Resources Training (ASERT)

Planning, learning and more planning; the inaugural year of the Autism Spectrum Education and Resources Training or ASERT has begun! ASERT is a South Dakota Department of Education grant-funded effort carried out by our Brittany Schmidt, MA-CCC/SLP and Heidi Aderhold, MA, Ed.S. Joining them is Nicole Freeman, MA, BCBA, who is employed by the Sioux Falls School District. It will be held over eight-days, six of which will be virtual, with the intention of providing information and guided program development of Evidence-Based intervention practices for autistic students in South Dakota.

Professional development without mentor follow-up yields a 5-10% success rate of implementation of the strategies learned; while providing mentor follow-up for strategy implementation can

lead to a successful implementation

rate of 75-90% (Land and Fox, 2003).

Additionally, Litton, 2017, reported that 41% of 87 responding institutes of higher education offered no Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) specific coursework. We know that ASD incidence numbers continue to rise with the current rate at 1 in 36 people. Teachers and other related services staff are underprepared in their preprofessional programs of study. Additionally, the field of ASD has never been better prepared to understand and apply evidence-based supports for autistic students.

ASERT by the numbers:

3 Trainers

48 ASERT Participants

10 ASERT Mentors

South Dakota has historically offered a 3-4 day in person summer training with the topic being the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) of structured teaching. This training provided no follow-up to the participants, and it was difficult for participants to generalize the content to the variable presentation of autistic students when they returned to their classrooms in the fall. Summer training did provide guided support for the participants via five model autistic students who each had an assigned trainer. However, application and support after the training was not included and the training focused solely on the principles of structured teaching.

This year's ASERT started with two-days of in person sessions focusing on the requirements of ASERT, mentor and participant connections, introductory ASD information, and an overview of Evidence-Based Practices in Autism. Each participant, mentor and trainer are required to set an ASD leadership goal as well as apply a structured set of activities to their own autistic student. Administrators for all ASERT participants were required to sign an approval form for their staff to attend and be given appropriate time to attend and complete all ASERT requirements.

ASERT participants include special education, general education, behavior professionals, paraprofessionals, parents, occupational and speech therapists. They all identified a focus autistic student with whom to apply the strategies learned, as appropriate. Guided discussion, assessment, planning, intervention, and data collection for intervention efficacy are used throughout the training to provide the support to sequentially apply EBP to each focus student's educational plan. Team collaboration and the process of determining what intervention strategies to implement, based on assessment are prioritized.

Ten professionals from across the region applied to be ASERT mentors. They received 2-days of training which

included mentor specific support and information about the requirements for their assigned ASERT participants. All mentors are required to meet virtually on a monthly basis with their ASERT participants as well as at least quarterly with the ASERT trainers for the purpose of

guided application of the ASERT training topics to support their assigned participants.

Location of mentors:

Lennox
Montrose
Hill City
Sioux Falls
West Central
Sisseton
Aberdeen
Yankton
Newell
Northeast Educational
Services Cooperative

Additionally, all ASERT participants were grouped by region of the state to be better slated to build local capacity as ASERT continues to be offered annually. Each year, current and former ASERT participants, mentors and trainers will be offered access to regularly provided training activities and an online repository for training materials and intervention plans to best support their local or regional systems of ASD intervention and support.

Collectively the ASERT trainers have over 60 years of professional employment with and for autistic students, their families, and the professionals that provide support to them. It has been their great pleasure to develop and offer this unique and research-based training to our state's educational staff working with some of the most unique and able students we know!

References:

1. Breaking With Traditions: Providing Effective Professional Development for Instructional Personnel Supporting Students with Severe Disabilities, Lang and Fox, 2004
2. Preparation for Teachers for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Call for Quality and Quantity. Litton, 2017
3. Evidence-Based Practices for Children, Youth, and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders, National Professional Developmental Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Wong, C. et al, 2014.
4. Professional coaching: A transformative and research-based model, E! Learning Systems, Inc., Corpus Christi, TX.
5. ADDM Network. Data and Statistics. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/autism/data-research/?CDC_AAref_Val

New Team Member

We are excited to announce our newest team member Samantha Duncan. Please help us welcome her to the Center for Disabilities!



Samantha Duncan, B.S., joined us as our new Center for Disabilities Department Assistant. She will be playing a vital role at the Center by supporting our staff with trainings, activities, outreach efforts, etc. Samantha has already jumped in to assist in many ways and we really appreciate her ideas and suggestions!

She most recently served as a Senior Quality Technician for Target Corp. in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Prior to this, she was a Patient Representative for Avera Medical Group McGreevy. She brings twelve years of experience in patient service and organizational support. Samantha received her bachelor's degree in Health Science from California State University in Chico, California.

Samantha is excited to share her experience with customer service in healthcare and corporate environments, specializing in implementing training, professional development and staff support. Samantha says she is ready to circle back towards her degree as she works at the Center for Disabilities.

Upcoming Trainings

Stay up-to-date through [Facebook](#) and [X](#).

From Law to Learner: Developing Compliant and Student-Centered IEPs

This course will provide training and assistance to participants in the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is legally sound and meets the individual needs of each student. Participants will look deeper at the essential components of an IEP that must be implemented to ensure Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for each child. Dr. Mitchell Yell will be a guest lecturer at each class session. Dr. Yell is a nationally recognized expert in special education law and IEP development.

This course is only offered online.

Cost: \$40

Dates: Sept 10, Oct 15, Nov 12, Dec 4

Time: 4 - 7 PM CST

To register, [CLICK HERE](#).

Intervener Training Series 2024 - 2025

What Is an Intervener?

An intervener is a trained paraprofessional staff member who works one-on-one with a child who has combined hearing and vision loss (deafblindness) to provide critical connections to other people and the environment. The intervener opens channels of communication between the child and others, provides access to information and the environment, and facilitates opportunities for learning and development.

What Is the Importance of an Intervener?

Combined hearing and vision loss creates unique and complex challenges. These challenges are mainly in the areas of communication, concept development, and social and emotional access and development. An intervener responds to these challenges by serving as a bridge to the world for the child who has both hearing and vision loss (deafblindness).

Only offered in person at the School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Address: 605 14th Avenue Southeast, Aberdeen, SD 57401

Cost: \$250

Friday 5 - 9 PM (Dinner at 4:30 pm provided)

Saturday 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM (Lunch provided)

To register, [CLICK HERE](#).

Previous Recordings of Dr. Barkley Educational Series

Have you missed some of our amazing Educational Series with Dr. Russell Barkley?

Or have you been able to join but wish others in your work setting or personal life could hear this same great information that Dr. Barkley has been sharing?

Participants are now able to access Series 1, Series 2, Series 3 and/or Series 4 for the low cost of \$30/series. You can access each series for 12-days, selecting a start date that works best for you!

For more information about the videos in each series, and to register, [CLICK HERE](#).