

**An Evaluation of the Wisconsin Council on Developmental
Disabilities Workforce Trainings**

Final DRAFT

**Prepared by Melissa Mulliken
October 2004**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary **Page 2**

Introduction **Page 3**

Section I: Background on prior, relevant research

WCDD/BDDS Retention Survey **Page 4**

Methodology

Key Findings of the WCDD/BDDS Retention Survey

Key statistical findings

WCDD/BDDS Wage and Benefits Survey **Page 5**

Methodology

Key Findings

Section II: The Workforce Training Curriculum

An Overview of the Purpose and Contents **Page 6**

Module One **Page 7**

Module Two **Page 8**

Module Three **Page 9**

Section III: An Assessment of the Workforce Trainings

Workforce Training Assessment Methodology **Page 10**

Key Findings

Conclusion

Appendix:

Detailed Summaries of WCDD/BDSS Workforce Training Curriculum **Pages 14-16**

Executive Summary

■ WCDD Research Has Explored Retention and Wages

- ◆ Workshops & hearings with providers, people with disabilities, families, guardians
- ◆ Retention survey: July 2002
 - Mail Survey of 4000 Direct Support Workers
- ◆ Wage/Benefits survey: June 2003
 - Mail survey of agencies with 10 or more employees, providing residential or vocational services to adults with developmental disabilities
- ◆ Assessment of workforce trainings: Summer 2004
 - In depth interviews with training attendees from six provider agencies, serving more than 1000 people with disabilities in about 30 counties employing about 2000 direct support workers

■ Research Shaped WCDD Trainings

- ◆ Importance to stakeholders of continuity of care (retention)
- ◆ Direct support workers told us:
 - it is the relationships with the people they support that makes the work meaningful
 - how important it is for them to feel supported in their work
 - that those factors, rather than wages, are the basis for making a decision to stay in the work

■ Training Modules Were Created and Three Were Evaluated

Module One: High Reliability for Organizations

- Geared to all agency staff
- Improve the organizational environment in which direct support workers perform their job

Module Two: Good Work

- Geared to direct service staff
- Identify and build on the factors that contribute to direct support workers' job satisfaction

Module Three: Power and Control

- Geared to all agency staff
- Provide participants information they need to better understand the power dynamic in the relationship between themselves and the people they support and the tools to better manage the relationship

■ Agency Leaders Perceive Trainings Helped Improve Retention

- ◆ Respondents perceive retention of qualified, committed direct support workers as more important than recruitment or increasing wages
- ◆ Respondents found the trainings helped agency staff add to their repertoire of tools and strategies that re-connect people at all levels of the organization to mission; change attitudes toward work; and improve retention.
- ◆ Specific reported outcomes of the trainings included:
 - Helped improve retention and build greater commitment to direct service work
 - Better and more personalized support for people with disabilities
 - Happier, more motivated and more self-directed direct support workers
 - Improved supervising and mentoring by managers
 - Increased participation and engagement by direct support workers
 - Changed and improved orientation for new staff
 - Improved and focused agendas and goals for team meetings
 - Provided exercises that form the basis for in-service activities
 - Enabled supervisors to better, more deeply understand the needs of direct support staff
 - Gave supervisors the tools to respond to the needs of direct support staff

Introduction

Since 2001, the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) and the state Bureau on Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) have collaborated on an initiative to improve the quality and continuity of the direct service workforce that provides day-to-day support to Wisconsin citizens with developmental disabilities. An important element in this initiative is its accountability in accurately identifying the most important problems and the most effective solutions to strengthen the workforce.

Credible and insightful research starts with a focus on posing the right questions. The right questions pave a path to useful answers. The report that follows details the answer to a critically important question: what is the most important element in retaining qualified, committed direct support workers?

That question arises from a principle outlined in WCDD's State Plan: that there are few other factors with as much impact on the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities than the commitment and competence of the people who provide them direct support. Following from that is the understanding that longevity among those workers and the continuity of care that results from staff retention is the bedrock anchoring competent care in a community-based network.

And finally, there is the WCDD workforce initiative's insight that answers the question posed above: the reason qualified committed direct support workers stay in their jobs is the value those workers place on their relationship with the person they support. We know that from research undertaken in July 2002, consisting of a mail survey sent to about 4000 direct support workers in residential and vocational settings throughout Wisconsin. We know that from public hearings and workshops the WCDD conducted with providers, people with disabilities, their families and guardians.

That knowledge shaped a training curriculum, developed by the WCDD in collaboration with the BDDS. Three modules of that training have been piloted to more than 80 agencies, working in more than 55 counties and serving more than 8000 people with disabilities in Wisconsin.

In the summer of 2004, the WCDD contracted with Melissa Mulliken Consulting to conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of that training curriculum. In the following pages, that assessment is described and put into the context of earlier research and findings.

Section I: Background on prior, relevant research

WCDD/BDDS Retention Survey

In the summer of 2002, the WCDD and BDDS commissioned a workforce retention study. This quantitative research followed numerous public hearings and workshops during which agencies, people with developmental disabilities, their loved ones and families repeatedly raised the issue of how difficult - and important - it is to retain direct support workers. Likewise, a national literature search revealed a number of reports on retention issues. Many of those cited the high turnover and staff shortages that many human services agencies faced and focused on the barriers to keeping good workers such as poor pay, inadequate benefits, the low status of the work, high caseloads and burdensome overtime demands.

Methodology

The WCDD/BDDS Retention survey sought an understanding of *why* direct support workers stayed in the field and *which* aspects of their job they valued. Because there is no statewide data base or registry of direct service workers, finding workers to survey required some ingenuity. In May of 2002, a 19-question survey instrument was mailed to a list of 4000 unnamed direct support workers at the home addresses of people with developmental disabilities receiving assistance from the Medicaid waiver programs. The survey targeted direct service staff working in three types of non-institutional residential settings: adult family homes, group homes, and supported living arrangements. One questionnaire was mailed to each address. Because this project was publicly funded, no incentive (e.g., a dollar bill or small token) was included with the questionnaire. There was no follow-up reminder mailing. A self-addressed, business reply envelope was provided and 712 individuals responded by mailing a completed questionnaire within a five-week timeframe.

The constraints of the Retention study (no direct link to workers, confidentiality issues, lack of incentive) clearly dampened the response rate. The respondents were most likely representative of workers who are satisfied with their jobs and who intend to remain in the field. Absent a financial incentive, which provides some motivation for unhappy workers to participate, this survey clearly attracted, overwhelmingly, the cooperation of people who have vested deeply in their jobs, have worked in the field for some time and who find the work rewarding and personally satisfying.

Key Findings of the WCDD/BDDS Retention Survey

- ◆ There is a core of people for whom direct support work is meaningful and rewarding.
- ◆ They acknowledge the downsides but those are off-set by the passion and commitment they feel toward the people they serve.
- ◆ For them, the work is relational, not transactional.

Direct Support workers who responded to the job retention survey are extraordinarily satisfied with their jobs at which they have worked at for a long time, and they find the work they do fulfilling, rewarding and important. They acknowledge the downsides - low pay, long hours - but those are off-set by the passion and commitment they feel toward the people they serve. For these respondents, direct support work is relational not transactional: they feel a calling toward taking responsibility for another person's care and well-being.

They hear the negative messages about the work they do - its low status, for example - but once again, their long-term relationships with the consumers they work with and their conviction that the work they do is making a difference are more important to them than those messages. Those relationships are complex and human - a fact many acknowledged - and because of that complexity, this group does not clamor for the kind of big-picture fixes such as certification programs that are often proposed to alleviate high turnover and worker shortages. Rather, their focus is on making their clients' lives better. When asked about making their jobs better, their focus is on concrete activities and items that will make a difference day-to-day (a bigger van, for example; more time for more fun activities, etc.)

Key statistical findings

- ◆ Nearly 60% have been direct support workers for more than six years.
- ◆ More than half have been with their current employer for four years or more.
- ◆ Asked, "Is this the kind of job you would like to continue to do for the next two years?" 83% said yes. As a comparison, in the 1999 U. S. National Employee Relationship Benchmark Report, only 24% of respondents intended to stay in their current job for more than two years.
- ◆ 99.3% believe they perform a valuable and important service.
- ◆ 97.9% enjoy being with the people they support.
- ◆ 96.1 percent find the job a good match for their personality and lifestyle.
- ◆ An overwhelming 95% say they are satisfied in their job and more than half (54%) say they are very satisfied.

As one of the Retention survey respondents put it: *"I enjoy this line of work. I try to keep the politics out. The individual I care for is too special."*

WCDD/BDDS Wage/Benefit Survey

Methodology

In late 2002, WCDD and BDDS commissioned a wage and benefit survey of agencies with 10 or more employees, providing residential or vocational services to adults with developmental disabilities. The survey was designed to both establish a baseline for future wage/benefits data and to provide accurate, quantitative information on the status of direct care workers, in residential and vocational settings, throughout Wisconsin.

A total of 224 agencies that met the criteria for the survey were identified by WCDD and BDDS staff. Introductory letters, the survey instrument itself and a follow-up post-card were mailed to each of those agencies. Professional interviewers made follow-up phone calls to agencies that had not responded within six weeks. WCDD posted the instrument electronically on its website and respondents could submit the survey over the Internet. Because the study was publicly funded, no incentive was included. A coding system ensured one response per provider.

The survey achieved a 55% response rate (123 responses).

Key Findings of the WCDD/BDDS Wage and Benefits Survey

- ◆ Median wages for direct service workers, regardless of tenure and in both residential and vocational settings in Wisconsin, range from \$7.95 to \$10.43. That is less than what the average worker in Wisconsin earns.
- ◆ At the lowest end of the median earning range, wages are less than the poverty wage of \$8.19 an hour.
- ◆ Wisconsin direct service agencies experienced an average health insurance cost increase of 25% in 2001; Nationally, health insurance costs rose about 10% in 2001.
- ◆ For the majority of respondent agencies, these increases have come on top of three years of increases.

Section II: The WCDD/BDDS Workforce Training Curriculum

An Overview of the Purpose and Contents

To achieve [a high quality workforce], we must assure that values are preserved, reflected upon and taught. We must engage in activities that lead to outcomes that assure that workforce-related training is relevant, focuses on advancing organizational and problem-solving competencies and increases personal skill and personal growth.

*--From **A Common Understanding of the Direct Service Workforce Crisis** by Jennifer Ondrejka, Marcie Brost, and Howard Mandeville*

Based on survey findings, input from people with disabilities and their families, a national literature search, and guided by WCDD policy and priorities, a curriculum was developed for trainings designed to help agencies improve retention.

The curriculum was designed around what was overwhelmingly cited as the crucial factor in retaining qualified, committed direct support workers: the satisfaction those workers get from the relationship they have with the people they support. The trainings had three overarching goals:

- ◆ Providing tools and strategies for agencies wishing to create and foster a work environment in which those relationships are valued and supported;

- ◆ Providing direct support workers the tools and strategies to improve their relationships with the people they support; and
- ◆ Providing supervisors tools and strategies to help them become more effective managers of direct support workers.

Six modules have been created. The first three have been piloted around the state and fourth, fifth and sixth have been field-tested.

The WCDD/BDDS Curriculum: An Overview of Modules One, Two and Three

Module One: Good Work

Goal: Focus and build on the factors that contribute to direct support workers' job satisfaction.

Intended for: Direct service staff at all levels in their career (module is flexible to accommodate different levels of experience).

Format:

- ◆ Group activities and individual exercises.
- ◆ Interaction among training participants and the training leader.
- ◆ A power point presentation.

Participants learn: What distinguishes a type of work as a profession.

The unique mission, standards, and identity that defines direct support work.

The importance of quality relationships, including relationships with fellow workers and the worker's relationships with the people who rely on their support.

Agencies can: Integrate the exercises into their approaches to orientation, in-service, supportive supervision, and performance review.

Encourage and integrate follow-up discussions which are effective in clarifying and reinforcing the message of Good Work.

The curriculum: A series of interactive exercises supplemented by a power point presentation and group activities; conducted by a trainer.

The Good Work exercises encourage participants to explore three areas:

- ◆ The standards that define good direct support work.
- ◆ What it means to be a professional and how professionalism shapes a workers' sense of that work and themselves.
- ◆ The values that are at the foundation of good direct support work.

Module Two: High Reliability for Organizations

Goal: Improve the organizational environment in which direct support workers perform their job.

Intended for: Management teams of community provider agencies supporting people with developmental disabilities. This training works best when the agency team includes:

- ◆ top managers who can make organizational decisions;
- ◆ mid-level supervisors responsible for supervising; and guiding the work of direct service workers; and
- ◆ at least one direct service worker.

Format:

- ◆ Participants work in teams.
- ◆ Interactive exercises.
- ◆ Power point presentation.
- ◆ Training guide.

Participants learn: How their own agencies support people from the point of view of research on High Reliability Organizations.

Practical methods to examine how well agency operations and agency culture promote and value direct service staff.

How to take what they have learned back to their own agencies and integrate the strategies within their own organizations

The curriculum: Participants work in teams and participate in interactive exercises in which they examine how their own agencies support people from the point of view of research on High Reliability Organizations

The training presents a method of research-based organizational self-assessment that assists agencies to become:

- ◆ More mindful;
- ◆ More alert and responsive to failure;
- ◆ More reluctant to simplify;
- ◆ More sensitive to the work and the necessity of relationships;
- ◆ More committed to increasing resiliency; and
- ◆ Better able to make use of expertise.

An important component of the training is crafting a plan to put practices in place when the teams return to their home agencies.

Each participant takes turns in practicing facilitation skills in an organizational self-assessment.

Each team tailors a plan on how to use the ideas and strategies within their organizations.

Module Three: Power and Control

- Goal:** Provide participants information they need to better understand the power dynamic in the relationship between themselves and the people they support and the tools to better manage the relationship.
- Intended for:**
- ◆ Adult family home sponsors,
 - ◆ Direct service workers,
 - ◆ Residential providers,
 - ◆ Vocational providers,
 - ◆ Case managers,
 - ◆ County program coordinators and contract managers.
- Format:**
- ◆ Group activities and exercises,
 - ◆ Interaction among training participants and the training leader,
 - ◆ A power point presentation.
- Participants learn:**
- A method for evaluating the power and control dynamics between people with disabilities and their caregivers.
- A framework for developing care-giving relationships that foster collaboration and equality.
- How to recognize subtle forms of disrespect and coercion that may unintentionally seep into care-giving relationships.
- How to prevent avoidable “power struggles.”
- Strategies for workers to balance the control dynamics of their relationships with the people they support with approaches based on collaboration and equality.
- The Curriculum:** Interactive exercises and facilitated group discussions and interaction meant to:
- ◆ Explore the dynamics of the relationships between caregivers and the people they support;
 - ◆ Help participants realize that the authority and responsibility expected of the worker often wires a power and control imbalance into the core of the relationship; and
 - ◆ Offer specific strategies for developing and sustaining responsible care-giving relationships that foster personal safety, collaboration, and equality.

Section III: Workforce Training Assessment

In the summer of 2004, WCDD retained Melissa Mulliken to construct and conduct an assessment of the workforce trainings. WCDD asked Ms. Mulliken to assess the training modules' effectiveness in:

- ◆ Enhancing relationships between workers and the people they support;
- ◆ Enhancing relationships among managers, supervisors and direct service staff;
- ◆ Providing managers helpful, useful and understandable strategies and tools for improving they way they relate to staff, manage staff and in how the organization delivers services; and
- ◆ Helping providers retain qualified, committed direct support workers.

Workforce Training Assessment Methodology

Ms. Mulliken developed a protocol consisting of in-depth interviews, conducted both personally and by phone, with a diverse group of agency directors who had personally participated in one or more of the workshops and who had agency personnel who had participated in one or more of the training modules.

In-depth interviews, in which a professional interviewer sits one-on-one with a subject are a recognized market research tool, often used when a particular topic needs to be explored in depth or detail. Accordingly, they are often used to develop a detailed look at consumer attitudes, motivations, and buying behaviors as well as a consumer's decision-making process. They uncover facts and are valuable, as well, in helping determine perceptions, opinions, and reactions. In-depth interviews are not meant to obtain results that can be generalized to a whole population.

Ms. Mulliken, in consultation with the authors of the training and with WCDD's Executive Director, developed about 15 mostly open-ended (i.e. "Tell me about...") questions that guided the interviews. Ms. Mulliken was free to probe in terms of particular topics that came up in any specific interview. Interviews were tape-recorded.

In late July, August and September six in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals representing providers that serve more than 1000 people with disabilities in about 30 counties and employ about 2000 direct support workers. Respondents also represented the diversity of the workforce and included small, single county agencies as well as large, multi-county agencies, in both rural and urban settings.

Key Findings: Agency Leaders Perceive Trainings Helped Improve Retention

"The workshops brought back the purpose of what we do, beyond just money. The focus on dollars is not good for our clients. The focus should be on relationships."

--Multi-county urban and rural provider

"Empowering and giving staff ownership is going to improve longevity."

--Multi-county rural provider

The six respondents were very experienced – among them was a total of 132 years of experience -- and most had served in a number of roles within the community integration network including direct support worker, supervisor, executive director as well as founder of an agency .

Their decision-making is guided by a deep understanding of the goals and challenges of community integration. There is a strong sense that, as a society, we have become fairly adept at providing individuals with food and shelter – the “three hots and a cot” idea. The challenge of community integration -- to help people with developmental disabilities form relationships, maintain friendships and to otherwise enfranchise them into the larger world that the general population expects to inhabit – weighs heavily on these providers as does their understanding that it is the complex components of direct support work that are both the basis for longevity among workers as well as the most difficult skills to teach, foster and improve.

Respondents overwhelmingly perceive retention of qualified, committed direct support workers as more important than recruiting workers or increasing wages. They also perceive retention as the area in which they, as providers and professionals, have the most opportunity to effect by means of in-service programs, new employee orientation, employee recognition programs, and the like.

They have also tried most all of those things, as retention has been a priority, for all of them, for some time. There was a great deal of motivation to find new and better ways to retain workers. Work on employee manuals, human resource issues and other nuts-and-bolts items in terms of employee relations were perceived as available through a number of avenues. The kind of training WCDD offered – a higher level, interactive, more experiential training emphasizing values and focused on the relationship, all agree are paramount to effective community based direct support – was perceived as unique and uniquely important. As one respondent said, *“We knew we needed something. We didn’t know quite what until WCDD offered these trainings.”*

Repeatedly, respondents connected the WCDD trainings to positive and hard-to-achieve outcomes in their own organizations:

- ◆ **Re-connecting people at all levels of the organization to mission**
“We want to provide good support and to do that we need a workforce that knows what good support is and has the tools to develop a relationship.”
--Multi-county rural provider
- ◆ **Changing attitudes**
“I see a difference. We now have direct support workers who just don’t say the words, but live the meaning: that we are in this work to support an individual.”
--Multi-county and multi-state provider
- ◆ **Empowering direct support staff**
“We used one of the exercises from the training in a staff meeting and the ideas came pouring out.”
--Multi-county rural provider

◆ **Providing tools and strategies that are flexible, relevant, pertinent, sustainable and which help improve delivery of services**

“The area the trainings changed the most is supervising and mentoring and guiding by the managers. We are doing more of helping new staff and “old” staff to build the kind of relationships our clients need and to center staff around the person. It is a progressive way of guiding that person to goals instead of just setting up a plan.”

--Multi-county provider

Specific reported outcomes of the trainings included:

- Helped improve retention and build greater commitment to direct service work.
- Better and more personalized support for people with disabilities.
- Happier, more motivated and more self-directed direct support workers.
- Improved supervising and mentoring by managers.
- Increased participation and engagement by direct support workers.
- Changed and improved orientation for new staff.
- Improved and focused agendas and goals for team meetings.
- Provided exercises that form the basis for in-service activities.
- Enabled supervisors to better, more deeply understand the needs of direct support staff.
- Gave supervisors the tools to respond to the needs of direct support staff.

Ultimately, respondents directly linked the trainings to improvements in retention, though they were careful to acknowledge that other factors including the economy and the State’s budget issues influence retention as well. Fundamentally, however, they connected absolutely the training’s focus on the relational nature of direct support work as a key to successful in-house retention efforts. Put another way, of the things respondents felt in control of, they were clear and unequivocal that WCDD’s trainings had a direct, positive impact.

Only one of the six respondents either had or provided quantitative turnover or retention figures. For that provider, a multi-county for-profit agency, turnover rate in the south central area had decreased to 27.2% in 2003 from 41% in 2002. The provider said, *“I believe that what went on in my agency as a result of the trainings made a definite contribution to the improvement we saw in turnover rates.”*

Conclusion

In community based settings, relationships between direct support workers and the people with developmental disabilities they support are paramount to the success of that support and to the larger, complex mission of community integration: to build connections to the larger world.

Vested and experienced direct support workers recognize the downsides to their jobs such as low pay and low status but when it comes to job satisfaction, they place a premium on

those things that help in doing their job better -- tools to help them better help the person they support. Likewise, agencies are cognizant that they cannot control or affect a number of factors that influence their workforce. Those agencies seek programs, skill sets, tools and strategies that can help them improve those elements of a direct support worker's existence they can influence: work environment and job satisfaction.

Against this backdrop, WCDD's workforce trainings are perceived as effective and valuable. They clearly meet the goals the Council and the curriculum developers set. Further, the trainings are perceived by those who have participated as an important component of improving work environment, improving retention of qualified and committed direct support workers and as a component not available elsewhere. In that regard, the trainings have increased the prestige of WCDD. In short, respondents believe the workforce trainings are the kind of programs and services the WCDD is uniquely positioned to offer and should offer.

WCDD and BDDS Direct Service Workforce Training Series

Module 1: Good Work Training

The workshop format

- ◆ Group activities and individual exercises
- ◆ Interaction among training participants and the training leader
- ◆ A power point presentation

Intended for

- ◆ All agency staff including:
 - ◆ Direct support workers, at all levels of career
 - ◆ Agency staff with supervisory responsibilities
 - ◆ Agency staff with administrative as well as supervisory responsibilities

Duration and organization

Specific exercises can be sequenced differently, expanded or reduced depending on the audience (experienced workers, less experienced workers, etc.) Accordingly, the workshop can take from 3-6 hours, which gives providers the opportunity to fit the workshop into existing work schedules and budgets.

The curriculum

- ◆ A series of interactive exercises supplemented by a power point presentation and group activities; conducted by a trainer.
- ◆ The Good Work exercises encourage participants to consider and discuss three areas:
 - ◆ The standards that define good direct support work.
 - ◆ What it means to be a professional and how professionalism shapes a workers' sense of that work and themselves
 - ◆ The values that are at the foundation of good direct support work

Participants learn

- ◆ What sets apart a type of work as a profession
- ◆ The unique mission, standards, and identity that defines direct support work
- ◆ The importance of quality relationships, including relationships with fellow workers and the worker's relationships with the people who rely on their support.

Agencies can

- ◆ Integrate the exercises into their approaches to orientation, in-service, supportive supervision, and performance review
- ◆ Encourage and integrated follow-up discussions which are effective in clarifying and reinforcing the message of Good Work

WCDD and BDDS Direct Service Workforce Training Series

Module 2: High Reliability Organization Training

The workshop format

- ◆ Participants work in teams
- ◆ Interactive exercises
- ◆ Power point presentation
- ◆ Training guide

Intended for

- ◆ Management teams of community provider agencies supporting people with developmental disabilities
- ◆ This training works best when the agency team includes:
 - ◆ top managers who can make organizational decisions;
 - ◆ mid-level supervisors responsible for guiding direct service workers; and
 - ◆ at least one direct service worker.

Duration and organization

The training is organized as a two-day regional training event that can accommodate nine to fifteen agency teams ranging in size from three to eight members per team.

The curriculum

- ◆ Participants examine how their agencies support people from the point of view of research on High Reliability Organizations
- ◆ The training presents a method of research-based organizational self-assessment that assists agencies to become:
 - More mindful
 - More alert and responsive to failure
 - More reluctant to simplify
 - More sensitive to the work and the necessity of relationships
 - More committed to increasing resiliency
 - Better able to make use of expertise.
- ◆ An important component of the training is crafting a plan to put practices in place when the teams return to their home agencies.
- ◆ Each participant takes turns in practicing facilitation skills in an organizational self-assessment.
- ◆ Each team tailors a plan on how to use the ideas and strategies within their organizations.

Participants learn

- ◆ How their own agencies support people from the point of view of research on High Reliability Organizations
- ◆ Practical methods to examine how well agency operations and agency culture promote and value direct service staff.
- ◆ How to take what they have learned back to their own agencies and integrate the strategies within their own organizations

WCDD and BDDS Direct Service Workforce Training Series

Module 3: Dynamics of Power & Control in Supporting People with Disabilities

The workshop format

- ◆ Group activities and exercises
- ◆ Interaction among training participants and the training leader
- ◆ A power point presentation

Intended for

- ◆ Adult family home sponsors
- ◆ Direct service workers
- ◆ Residential providers
- ◆ Vocational providers
- ◆ Case managers
- ◆ County program coordinators and contract managers.

Duration and organization

This training is flexible and can be tailored to agency priorities. It can be presented in versions that range from three hours to two days.

The Curriculum

- ◆ Interactive exercises and facilitated group discussions and interaction designed to:
 - ◆ Explore the dynamics of the relationships between caregivers and the people they support;
 - ◆ Help participants realize that the authority and responsibility expected of the worker often wires a power and control imbalance into the core of the relationship; and
 - ◆ Offer specific strategies for developing and sustaining responsible care-giving relationships that foster personal safety, collaboration, and equality.

Participants learn

A method for evaluating the power and control dynamics between people with disabilities and their caregivers.

- A framework for developing care-giving relationships that foster collaboration and equality.
- How to recognize subtle forms of disrespect and coercion that may unintentionally seep into care-giving relationships.
- How to prevent avoidable “power struggles.”
- Strategies for workers to balance the control dynamics of their relationships with the people they support with approaches based on collaboration and equality.