METRO REGIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Friday, November 13th, 2020
9 am – 11 am
The Arc Minnesota
2446 University Ave West, Suite 110
St. Paul, Minnesota
Zoom

Purpose Statement: The purpose of the Regional Quality Council is to connect with and promote all communities of people with disabilities so that services and supports help them to live a life based on their hopes and dreams. The council will work together to continually monitor and improve the quality of services and supports for people with disabilities. The council seeks to improve person-centered outcomes, quality of life indicators, and to drive overall systems change.

In attendance: Angie Guenther, Tayler Guccione, Jeffrey Nurick, Chelsea Lorenz, Diane Sjolander, Dr. Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash, Erin Paredes, Joe Cuoco, Judi Marie Ringe, Mary Gaasch, Paris Gatlin, Rhonda Godfrey, Robert Morneau, Rod Carlson, Tim Sullivan, Travis Rooks

Interns: Melanie Campana-Gladstone, Maykala Owens

Guests: Bradford Teslow, Frank Kadwell, Poppy Sundquist, Rachel Garaghty

Speaker: Bob Wagner

1. **Introductions/Updates**
   - Joe Cuoco will leaving the council because of changes to his workload
     - Taking his place will be Travis Rooks, the director of Client Services at Supportive Living Solutions
   - Culture of safety project update:
     - Voted unanimously to move forward with the project
     - Majority voted to be in the Data Action Group
     - They are coming to speak with us and look through the data in January
   - Support staff project update:
     - We have signed both MOU's with Hammer and Living Well

        - We're really excited to hear from both direct care staff and leadership at these organizations as well as people receiving these services. Will be a three-tier approach to understanding best practices and gaps within the recruitment and retention of support staff
        - Already had 12 responses from one agency at the time of the meeting (survey was sent the day before)
    - Employment updates:
        - National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in October was exciting for us. We did a big push on Facebook and reached over 8,000 people by sharing employment-related data, resources, and events.
        - Continuing the We Work campaign
    - Co-Chair seat open due to joe's departure
        - Reach out to Angie if you're interested before next meeting
        - Council agreed on a year-long service
        - Can be flexible in duties/responsibilities
- Frank: Coursera
        - Any resident of Minnesota gets free Coursera coursed through March 31st

2. **Working and the Pursuit of Happiness - Bob Wagner**
    - **Goal and Objectives**
        - Voice for unemployed individuals
        - To increase your understanding of disability history and 80% unemployment
        - To increase your belief and skills that all can work
        - Invite you to your deepest skills and self
    - **Outline- 5 Sections**
        - My Story and the meaning of work
        - Ideas, History and how 8% unemployment came to be
        - Subminimum wage history; where do we go from here?
        - Best Practices
        - Your Role
    - **Section 1: "Using all the gifts given"**
        - Clinical and supervisory background

            35 plus years in mental health, addictions and disability services

        - A fateful day in the Pacific
        - Losses
        - Going back to work and what it meant
        - Responsibility to Savage gifts
        - My hardest day…
        - Not just my story
        - Disability is normative

    - **Section 2: Paradigms: "how we see things is at least as important as how they really are" -Jim Cunningham**
        - This section is largely about ideas and the history that powers those ideas.

- Paradigms

  They shape what and how we see each other

  History: The “other” is the big paradigm and the foundation for all others

  - History of people with disabilities locked up for life, buried in unmarked graves, 80% unemployment
  - People with Disabilities are seen as subhuman because of disability be it intellectual, mental or physical
  - Low expectations paradigm
  - Readiness paradigm of day programs
- Ideas and History

  Employment Rates

  - Minnesota leads the nation in the number of people working in sub minimum wages.
  - Minnesota spent $200 million in Medicaid dollars for employment services. $180 million was were spent a day programs. 19 million in support employment

- **Section 3: Subminimum wage history and arguments**
  - Brief History and Background

    1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed the guaranteed minimum wage, and President Roosevelt signed that into law.

    Day programs and sub minimum wage started to become popular in the 50s and 60s, and more parents started to keep the kids home instead of going into a state institution, they needed something to do during the day
  - Why day programs are popular and seductive

    Operates five days a week, eight hours a day with a transportation structure and basic supervision,

    Many parents expressed concern that if the child did not have access to the sheltered workshop as a form of activity, they would not be able to maintain their own employment.

    There is no real alternative to day programs so after school parents and students are faced with what I call the transition class.

    The work readiness approach within the Day program system is supposed to help people leave the program for a job but very few people, only 5% ever leave.
  - Outcomes and consequences for subminimum wage

    Arc's findings on the consequences of subminimum wage.

        - It traps people in a cycle of poverty,
        - it produces harmful stereotypes of individuals with disabilities, and identifies them as less than, the Other.
        - It forces people to rely on government program, social workers, paid professionals.

      People with disabilities are held to a different level of productivity than non-disabled individuals. The productivity standard is discriminatory Productivity is not universal.
  - Arguments for subminimum wages

      Work provides training for better and higher paying jobs. However, that is not true. Work readiness does not work.

      Subminimum wages jobs provide an individual with structure and keeps them busy.

      Eliminating sub minimum wage would mean employing fewer people within a population that already has a very high unemployment rate.

      Subminimum wage is better than no job at all.
  - The low pay reinforces the view that people with significant disabilities are incapable being fully integrated into the general workforce.
- **Section 4: Best practices**
  - The traditional approach and WHY its ineffective

      Fit and assumption-Problematic

        - Comparison process
        - Front door isn't open
        - Disability friendly businesses and supervisors
  - Customized Employment: Discovery

      Follows the person; expands the possibilities

      Back door swings open

      Builds their social capital
  - Success Rates: Project SEARCH and Build Program

      The best predictor of someone working after they exit school is their parent's expectation of them to work.
- **Section 5: Your role - Transformative power: the joy of making a difference**
  - Embrace Employment First - we must always improve our skills, our vision, our ability to promote Employment First, embrace hope over fear, possibility over certainty, embrace failing and learning.

- Your influence can make a difference for decades. If you help someone get a job, you have changed someone's present and their future their entire lives.
- People with disabilities long to use the gifts given to them.

  Using their gifts gives them money, which gives them more choices, using the gifts give them social connections, self-esteem, and purpose. It gives them a bigger life and possibilities.

  Your role is the use of the gifts given to you so that they can use the gifts given to them. If you do that, not only will they build the life they want for and dream of, you will tap even further into your greatness and gifts.

3. What's Working/What's Not Working

Working:

Bob's presentation (4)

Not Working:

Nothing, great meeting! (3)

Next Meeting: December 11th, 2020 from 9:00 – 11:00am