

The View from Different Perspectives

by Brent A. Askvig, Ph.D., NDCPD Executive Director

In June 2013, eight staff from NDCPD attended a conference and a series of meetings in Oslo, Trondheim and Lysoya, Norway. The conference was co-sponsored by NDCPD, NAKU, South Trondelag University College, and the University of Oslo School of Law. It consisted two days of presentations and discussion on topics of human rights and community living conditions for people with intellectual disabilities.

The NDCPD staff and Dr. Karl Ellingsen’s staff from NAKU (the National Institute on Intellectual Disabilities and Community in Norway) then spent four days discussing the results of the conference, current trends and issues in our countries, and potential collaborations in research, writing and program development. We found some differences in our approaches and topics of priority for our programs, but we found many commonalities that will lead to co-sponsored work in our countries. It was good for us to talk about issues and interesting to see our different perspectives on things.

During our time in Norway, the NDCPD and NAKU staff visited Vallersund Gård. Vallersund Gård is a commune-type farm of about 30 people, 17 without disabilities and 13 with intellectual disabilities. Located on an island on the western coast of Norway, about 100 miles from Trondheim, Vallersund was founded on the principle of anthroposophy. This concept, developed by Rudolph Steiner in the early 1900s, sought to apply a scientific view of spirituality on the world. In the 1940s, this concept was used to deliver special education services in farm/commune type communities. These communities for persons with disabilities were based on the work of Karl Konig and incorporated spirituality, biodynamic farming techniques, and recycling. Called Camphill Communities, these were and still are “residential life-sharing communities and schools for adults and children with learning disabilities, mental health problems and other special needs, which provide services and support for work, learning and daily living.” Vallersund is essentially run as a self-supporting micro-community, where people with and without intellectual disabilities live, work and relax with each other on a daily basis. As one member said, “We all contribute to the degree that we can, and we take out from it what we need.”

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The View from Different Perspectives continued...

The NAKU and NDCPD staff had some interesting ideas and perspectives on Vallersund. Dr. Ellingsen stated that in the early 1990s, when Norway implemented a total deinstitutionalization process for persons with intellectual disabilities, there was considerable discussion and disagreement about whether places like Vallersund constituted an institution. After a lengthy period, Vallersund was allowed to remain open, and today still receives some state (Norwegian government) support.

Individual perspectives of the NAKU and NDCPD staff were quite varied about Vallersund. Some staff thought that places like Vallersund exemplified a very inclusive process. Staff said that they could see how everyone in the community, those with and those without disabilities, were treated as equals. With everyone living together, and participating to the extent possible, in an interdependent way, Vallersund might be viewed as a goal for those of us in larger public communities.

Others were worried that a Vallersund commune was much like early institutions in Europe and in the US, where groups of people with intellectual disabilities were housed in rural areas (often called farms), and staff were organized to live and work among residents. We saw some examples of this, when Vallersund staff talked about how important it was for the residents of the commune to develop their own food and sustenance so as not to become a burden, or to rely excessively upon governmental funding.

All of the NAKU and NDCPD colleagues agreed that we had a very short (2 hour) view of a likely more complex system and community. Few of us completely understood the underlying philosophy of anthroposophy, or the conceptual ideas of Konig as applied to people with disabilities and spirituality. Still, we each analyzed our observations based on our perspectives across countries, and across our individualized interpretations of concepts like inclusion, personalized supports, independence, interdependence, and community living. Ideas like continued governmental support, self-sustenance, and spiritual development became central points in our discussion. But it was clear we all had to go back, re-define what we thought we understood about some basic principles in the field, and then try to fit what we had observed in Vallersund. And from that, we all came away with our own ideas about whether a place like Vallersund was the right thing to do for people with intellectual disabilities. In the end, it all came down to our varying perspectives. And though we may have disagreed on individual interpretations, we agreed that often services systems in countries around the world all depend on our varying perspectives. And that is OK.



Governors Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

By Tom Alexander, Project Director

On April 2, 2013, Governor Dalrymple signed Senate Bill 2271, which amends and reenacts subsection 5 of section 39-01-15 and section 50-06.1-16 of the North Dakota Century code, related to the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (Committee). The amendments expand the membership of the Committee and advances competitive and integrated employment as the first employment option for people with disabilities.

Governors Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities cont...

In accordance with SB 2271, the membership of the Committee shall include:

1. The Director of the Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Development, or the director's designee;
2. The Director of the Department of Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, or the director's designee;
3. The Superintendent of Public Instruction's Director of Special Education, or the director's designee;
4. The Director of the Protection and Advocacy Project, or the director's designee;
5. The head of the Department of Human Services Developmental Disabilities programs, as identified by the Executive Director of the Department of Human Services;
6. The executive Director of the North Dakota association of community providers or designee of the director;
7. One community employer representative;
8. One individual with a disability; and
9. One family member of an individual with a disability.

The goal of the committee is to remove barriers in reaching and identify how to further the goal of public and private employers considering competitive and integrated employment as the first option when supporting individuals with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment.

The Committee will collaborate, coordinate, and improve employment outcomes for working –age adults with disabilities to include;

- Reviewing and aligning policies, procedures, eligibility, and enrollment and planning for services for individuals, with the objective of increasing opportunities for community employment for North Dakotans with disabilities.
- Developing cross-agency tools to document eligibility, order of selection, assessment, and planning for services for individuals with disabilities.
- Identifying best practices, effective partnerships, sources of available federal funds, opportunities for shared services among existing providers, and means to expand model programs to increase community employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Identifying and addressing areas where sufficient support is not currently available or where additional options are needed to assist individuals with disabilities to work in competitive employment in integrated settings.
- Establishing interagency agreements to improve coordination of services and allow for data sharing as appropriate to assist individuals with disabilities.
- Setting benchmarks for improving community employment outcomes and services for individuals with Disabilities.

The committee will officially begin on August 1, 2013. For additional information, contact Tom Alexander at tom.alexander@minotstateu.edu or 1-800-233-1737.

Secondary Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of & Use of Self-determination Curricula & Strategies

By Brent A. Askvig, Rhonda Weathers, & Stephanie Burt

Definition of Self-Determination:

- ◆ Self-Determination is a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior.
- ◆ Self-Determination is a *key skill* that can be developed to assist students with disabilities in becoming strong self-advocates as they move through their educational experience.
- ◆ Self-determination is an understanding of one's strengths understanding and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective.
- ◆ When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have a greater ability to take control of their lives and assume roles of adults in our society.

(Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, Wehmeyer, 1998b).

Self-determination has been recognized as a critical and important feature of transition instruction for students with disabilities. Special education teachers have heard of self-determination and clearly believe it is important to teach the core component skills that allow students with disabilities an opportunity to be self-determined (Wehmeyer, 1999). Past research has shown though, that most teachers do not teach self-determination. With the introduction over the last 10 years of evidence-based curricula, more research and many books on the subject, one would expect increased importance for and use of self-determination instruction in the schools. This study was conducted to examine secondary special education teachers' perceptions of the importance of self-determination instruction, and their actual use of methodologies for students with disabilities. The authors further asked about teachers' preferences for instructional content and formats for professional development on self-determination.

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of importance self-determination skills and if and how often teaching of self-determination skills took place among secondary special education teachers in North Dakota. Secondary special education teachers were surveyed about the importance of self-determination, the use of curricula/materials, and self-determination assessments. General findings indicated: nearly 2/3 of teachers say they teach self-determination; average hours per week in teaching self-determination components range from 1.3 hours to 3.27 hours (of a 20 hour week); less than 1 in 5 teachers (19%) use student-led IEPs; very few teachers administer specific student assessments on self-determination, and secondary special education teachers want further training in self-determination instruction. This study was a good first step in understanding North Dakota teachers' perceptions of self-determination and their instructional approaches in this area. Results of the study were shared at the 2013 Secondary Transition & Parental Involvement Conference in Mandan.

A complete report of the findings about *Secondary Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of and Use of Self-Determination Curricula and Strategies* by Brent A. Askvig, Rhonda Weathers, & Stephanie Burt is available by request. Contact Dr. Brent A. Askvig, Executive Director, at North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at 701-858-3052 or Brent.Askvig@minotstateu.edu



The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities is a member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). AUCD is a national network of interdisciplinary centers advancing policy and practice through research, education and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities.



Why Are Older Adults Victims of Fraud?

By Linda Madsen, Project Director

You read it over and over again in the newspaper – “Elderly Victim Scammed by...” a dishonest person. An estimated 7.3 million older adults – 20 percent of older Americans – have been victimized by financial abuse, according to a 2010 survey by the Investor Protection Trust, a nonprofit investor education organization.

As we get older we like to pride ourselves that we are better at judging character, facial expressions, etc. But research is beginning to show that older adults are not always better at judging honesty or making sound decisions. As we age, it seems we lose our internal warning system for detecting dishonesty – that “gut feeling” that says, “Uh -oh, I have a bad feeling about this person.” In addition, especially in people with cognitive decline, there is a decline in the ability to learn from mistakes, thus opening the door to becoming repeat victims of fraud.

Research on Older Victims of Fraud

Research is beginning to reveal that certain changes in the aging process may make older adults prone to fraud.

Research by University of California-Los Angeles health psychology professor Shelley Taylor and colleagues found that changes in the aging brain may make older adults less likely to perceive suspicious or deceitful facial expressions. While giving functional MRI brain scans to 44 older and younger adult participants, the researchers identified significant differences in the ability of older vs. younger adults to identify devious

expressions such as not making eye contact or an insincere smile. Both age groups reacted similarly to trustworthy and neutral faces, but older adults tended to be unable to identify untrustworthy faces.

Other research, by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, indicates that the ability to make effective financial decisions declines with age. “Seniors can more easily be charmed by a charlatan because they tend to process the positive information about him, such as how nice, warm, or attractive he is – that’s what they remember,” Center researcher Kimberly Blanton concluded.

Other recent findings show that:

- 1) Fluid intelligence – word recall and the ability to reason and see patterns – declines in old age.
- 2) About 35 to 40 percent of elders studied by University of Iowa researchers had impaired decision-making abilities (due to damage to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, which controls belief and doubt) that made them especially vulnerable to misleading advertising.

In addition to brain changes, there are social factors that can make a person more vulnerable to fraud. A 2011

MetLife Mature Market Institute report concluded that “In almost all of the cases [of elder financial abuse studied], there existed a combination of tenuous, valued independence and observable vulnerability that merged in the lives of victims to optimize opportunities for abuse by every type of perpetrator — from the closest family members to professional criminals.” These social factors include:

- Low social support and exposure to previous traumatic events
- Clinical depression
- Social vulnerability and personal competence factors

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Why Are Older Adults Victims of Fraud cont...

By Linda Madsen, Project Director

Half of older Americans exhibit one or more of the warning signs of current financial victimization, according to a 2012 survey by the Investor Protection Trust. One of the warning signs is having already been “pitched” by a fraudulent scheme. More than one-third (37 percent) of older adults are currently being pitched by “people (who) are calling me or mailing me asking for money, lotteries, and other schemes,” while 19 percent of adult children believe that their parents are being pressured in such a fashion, the survey found.

The other warning signs of the potential for victimization include: 1) people over age 65 giving wrong answers to questions about their basic investment knowledge; 2) older adults who say they are vulnerable in one or more ways to potential financial victimization; 3) adult children who report their parent’s doctor has concerns about the parent’s mental comprehension; and 4) adult children who are already worried that their parents “have already become or will become less able to handle their personal finances over time.”

The ND Senior Medicare Patrol provides Medicare beneficiaries with the information they need to **PROTECT** themselves from Medicare errors, fraud and abuse; **DETECT** potential errors, fraud and abuse; and **REPORT** their concerns. SMPs use trained senior volunteers to help educate and empower older adults in the fight against health care fraud. ND SMP helps beneficiaries with questions, concerns or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues, as well as providing information and speakers for your facility. ND SMP can be contacted at 1-800-233-1737 or 858-3580.



Upcoming Trainings

Evidence-Based Behavioral Supports: Environmental, Social, and Program Best Practices

Dates & Locations:

August 26 –Development Homes, Inc., Grand Forks

August 27 –Skills and Technology Center, Fargo

August 28 – HIT, Inc., Mandan

August 29 – Minot State University Student Center, Minot

Cost: \$85 per person

Call: (800) 233-1737 before August 15 and ask for Vickie to register and find out information on sleeping rooms for each location. Limited seating at some locations. Register early.

Presenter: Dr. David Lennox, founder and President of QBS, Inc., received his Ph.D. from Western Michigan University specializing in Applied Behavior Analysis.

Description: This six-hour workshop is intended to provide both a broad-to-specific overview of best practices for preventing, minimizing, and changing behavioral challenges. The first half of the presentation will focus on proactively establishing an environment designed to evoke safe, healthy, and socially acceptable behaviors, while also minimizing behavioral challenges. Derived from ABA, PBS, and other research areas, ecological, activity, social, and programmatic best practices will be reviewed, along with special attention to evidence-based methods for establishing reinforcing relationships with individuals.

The afternoon session will provide a more detailed presentation of specific, evidence-based behavioral assessment and change strategies in which anyone supporting individuals with behavioral challenges should be fluent. After first providing the foundation for understanding contributors to challenging behaviors, four specific strategies selected based on ease of training, ease of acquisition/mastery, widespread applicability, and likely efficacy will be presented. A wide variety of challenging behaviors will be addressed through examples of application.

Save the Date**Employment First Summit**

Thursday September 19, 2013
9:00AM - 4:00PM (CDT) (8:30 Registration)

Location:
 Great Hall - Hit, Inc
 2640 Sunset Drive NW
 Mandan, ND

Registration: Marilyn Undhjem
 1-800-233-1737 or 701-858-3580
marilyn.undhjem@minotstateu.edu

Block of Rooms Reserved at:	Seven Seas	Comfort Suites
	2611 Old Red Trail Mandan, ND 58554 701-663-7401 or 1-800-597-7327	929 Gateway Ave Bismarck, ND 58503 701-223-4009

*Block ends 09-03-2013

** Limited stipends available - Deadline September 11, 2013

NDCPD's "Ram Good Job" Award

NDCPD's "Ram Good Job" Award is given to staff members to recognize them for going above and beyond. This award is given by the preceding month's award recipient and honors the staff member's work to enhance the lives of people with disabilities and further NDCPD's mission. Recipients for over the past months include:



April
Vicki Brabandt,
 Administrative Assistant



July
Marilyn Undhjem,
 Administrative Assistant

The Collaborator is going electronic. For those of you receiving hard copies, we will still mail the next two publications, which are the October 2013 edition and the January 2014 edition. If you are not already receiving the electronic copy of the Collaborator, please submit your email address to jolene.orkluck@minotstateu.edu. If after January you still wish to receive a hard copy, please request so by contacting Jolene at jolene.orkluck@minotstateu.edu.

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The Collaborator

The Collaborator is the quarterly newsletter for the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD). NDCPD is a University of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities in Education, Research, and Services at Minot State University. It is part of a network of similar programs at universities throughout the United States.

Our mission:

The mission of NDCPD is to provide service, education, and research with empowers communities to welcome, value and support the well-being and quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.

Vision Statement:

- ◆ People with disabilities have the right to expect that services they receive will appropriately promote their independence, productivity, integrations, and inclusion.
- ◆ People with disabilities have the same rights as all citizens
- ◆ People with all abilities will be included in all aspects of life and receive services they need.

Goal Areas:

- ◆ Inclusive Communities
- ◆ Workforce Development
- ◆ Self Determination
- ◆ Healthy Citizens



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