



Who We Are

Title of Project, Name of Lead Entity, Partner, Counties in Indiana we are impacting.

RETHINKING AUTISM SUPPORT TRAINING

Lead Agency: Optimal ACCESS (formerly Optimal Rhythms, Inc.)
Partner: SIRS, Inc. (service area: Vanderburgh, Warrick, Spencer, Dubois, Gibson Counties)
Autistic Contributors:
Elizabeth Bonker, Founder of Communication 4 ALL, Nonspeaking Advocate
Noel Doogs, Shifting the Narrative Panelist, Self-Advocate
Ben Breaux, Social Media Influencer, Author, Disability Rights Advocate
Josh Berkau, IN Medicaid Waiver service user, Self-Advocate
Andrew Simmons, Nonspeaking blogger, Self-Advocate

What We Expect if We Achieve our Vision

Expected short-term and long-term outcomes; and positive impacts on individuals if your project successfully carries out these actions.

SHORT TERM GOALS

- * To develop a virtual training platform to help assess strengths and needs and disseminate training to DSPs, CMs, and other regular providers and family caregivers who support nonspeaking individuals
* To design, schedule, and facilitate engaging and effective synchronous training opportunities for waiver teams and DSPs to access skills practice opportunities with their identified nonspeaking service user, while receiving synchronous supervision and Q & A opportunities
* To train the DSPs and IST members of at least 15 nonspeaking autistic services users receiving RSS or PAC services through SIRS, Inc. (NOTE: Nonspeaking includes minimally verbal, unreliably verbal)

LONG TERM GOALS

- *Improved engagement of nonspeaking service users in the Person-Centered Planning process and PCIPS development
*Decreased use of BMAN services to increase budget availability to other services
*Improved staff stability/reduced turnover
*Increased regulation and social engagement by nonspeaking service users
*Decreased incident reports
*Increased safety, satisfaction and movement toward a "good life"
*To provide an successful and cost-effective training model to be utilized across the state of IN and the US to help unsure that service users who are unable to utilize speech for communication are still give access to person-centered planning and dignity

What We Will Do

Specific actions your agency will take to carry out pilot project.

We will develop an innovative and accessible virtual training model, informed by the field of neuroscience, the lived experience of autistic self-advocates, and the expertise of Optimal ACCESS, to ensure paid and family caregivers, authorized providers, and case managers are informed and equipped to understand and support the sensory, motor, and communication needs of autistic individuals who may be unable to rely on speech for reliable communication.

How We Will Do It

Plan and implementation

- 1) Research which available platforms best support our training components (teaching videos, examples and input by self-advocates, downloadable study guide, pre and post training assessments, interactive participation, tech support and cost effective access)
2) Utilize videographers and video editors to capture our contributors and subject experts
3) Design the asynchronous and synchronous training modules, based on our collaborative resources, lived experiences, CtLC, and our expertise.
4) Utilize IT support from IU to develop our evaluation methods and tools to clearly demonstrate the efficacy of the IPP.
5) Schedule and implement the training with SIRS' service users and ISTs.
6) Evaluate and offer recommendations.

What Will Result

Long-term goals to transform services and/or better support individuals.

We expect that this IPP will further define and document the barriers nonspeaking service users face when trying to access equitable, person-centered services in HCBS.
We expect to demonstrate that a behavioral/deficits mindset is permeating assumptions and low expectations about nonspeaking service users that carry into annual planning practices and their daily supports and interactions. In response, we expect to improve awareness of the true needs of nonspeaking autistics among IST members and instill helpful attitudes and support skills training to improve outcomes for service users with complex communication, sensory, and motor differences.

What We Want to Avoid

Outcomes that may take away from the vision and will serve as "red flags" to consider course correction.

- Attitudinal barriers to participation by paid or unpaid caregivers or providers
Discriminative or ableist interactions by training participants that create stress or unkind feelings or trauma for nonspeakers who we aim to support
Scheduling issues that affect consistent participation and outcomes
Inconsistent staffing that impedes rapport and trust-building with service users
Technical difficulties that create barriers for participation

