

DDS EMPLOYEE NEWS

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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DDS Announces New Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Provider



Dear Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Employees & Dependents,

DDS is pleased to announce that we have selected a new provider for our Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Beginning July 1, 2009, Deer Oaks EAP Services will provide EAP Services for all employees and dependents of the Department of Developmental Services. The EAP benefit covers 4 confidential short-term counseling visits and is at no cost to employees and their families. The agency has pre-paid for this benefit for all agency employees and their dependents.

The EAP benefit is not only free to all employees and their dependants, but it is also confidential. Deer Oaks EAP has considerable expertise and clinical knowledge possessed by its clinicians and the numerous convenient locations of their clinicians. Deer Oaks clinicians are well versed in helping clients of all ages, from young children up to the elderly. Deer Oaks also offers unique experience and training in dealing with the full range of emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal difficulties that many individuals are facing today.

The EAP can assist with many different types of problems. Among these are stress, depression, anxiety, workplace difficulties, substance abuse, marital problems, family or parenting conflicts, grief, violence and unhealthy lifestyles. The EAP can also provide assistance with, and referrals for, financial and legal issues.

Deer Oaks EAP is available when you need it, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Deer Oaks will make every effort to coordinate with the agencies Healthcare Plans for cases that require treatment under the employee's medical benefit.

Deer Oaks EAP will be coordinating a transition in services for employees and dependents who are currently receiving services from Solutions EAP, our EAP provider for the past several years. Also, informational material will be distributed to all employees within the next several weeks, and a DVD will be available at each work site to provide an orientation to Deer Oaks EAP.

For more information or to receive a referral to the most appropriate provider nearest you, call 1-866-327-2400 or visit our website at www.deeroaks.com and the username and password login is CTDDS.

North Region - Latino Self-Advocates by Rebecca Negrón, DDS Intern

As a student intern, one of my assignments was to facilitate a group. My supervisor, Julia Velazquez jumped at the opportunity to finally create a self-advocacy group for Latino consumers. We decided it would be a 6-week group that would take place once a week for one hour. We put together a list of consumers from the IFS caseload as well as some consumers living in group homes. Fortunately, Elisa Marcoux, Lauren Benefield, and Rhonda Baskerville, the Family Support staff, were able to provide transportation for those members with no access to transportation of their own. Nilda Diaz also assisted with transportation as well as with Spanish translation each week for those members who only spoke Spanish.

The first week I had twelve consumers looking to me to explain what they were doing there. We played an ice-breaker game in which each member answered questions like, “What would you do with a million dollars?” and “What’s the most creative thing you’ve done?” Then I spoke to them about what self-advocacy is and how they could implement those skills into their lives. Each week we covered topics like healthy living, employment, the portability process, and human rights. The group members had even created a name for their group, which helped unite them. They named their group “Latino Get-Together.” In order to keep my members interested and coming back, I developed games to make each week fun. We played games such as Healthy Living Bingo and a board game about portability. I even had the members partner off and do a role-playing activity.

Each week the members became more and more comfortable with each other. They not only enjoyed coming each week, but they were also learning some basic skills about self-advocacy. Carlos Colon, the self-advocate coordinator for the North Region, had attended most sessions and was able to provide even more information about self-advocacy to the group members. Julia was even able to see some changes in the members when she commented that one member approached her in the lunchroom and struck up a conversation with her. She was very impressed since this is not someone who ordinarily would have done something like that. Another member spoke up for herself during her IP meeting, sharing her feelings and thoughts about what she wanted. I had talked to the group members about their rights at their IP meetings, so it was nice to hear that one member was putting my words into action. Self-advocacy is such an important concept to teach consumers.

After the 6-weeks were over, we held a ceremony to celebrate the success of the members. Each member presented a poster they had made depicting their dreams for the future and concepts they had learned in group to their friends, family members, and staff that were in attendance. John Houchin and Wendy Henderson attended the ceremony and spoke to the group members and their families. John and I then handed out certificates of completion to each group member.



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Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

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