

Independently Managing Through a Pandemic

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Community Living Introduction

- ▶ Deinstitutionalization is at an all time high
- ▶ Self-determination (all individuals have the right to direct their own lives)
- ▶ Community Living is preferred by individuals
- ▶ More Cost-effective than certified settings
- ▶ Increased community participation & relationships
- ▶ Positive outcomes across almost all quality of life domains

Personal Outcome Measures (POMS)

- ▶ Access POMS data, Independent vs IRAs
 - ▶ 16 out of 21 outcomes met for people in Indep. Housing
 - ▶ 12 out of 21 outcomes met for people in IRAs
 - ▶ Safety - 84% for people in Indep. Housing; 80% for people in IRAs; CQL Benchmark is 80%
 - ▶ Community Involvement - 92% for people in Indep Housing; 66% for people in IRAs; CQL benchmark is 38%
 - ▶ Access their Environments - 98% for people in Indep Housing; 60% for people in IRAs; CQL benchmark is 61%
 - ▶ Treated Fairly - 88% for people in Indep Housing; 68% for people in IRAs; CQL benchmark is 41%
 - ▶ Having Friends - 72% for people in Indep Housing; 66% for people in IRAs; CQL benchmark is 34%

Office of People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) Housing

- ▶ OPWDD supports over 7,000 individuals in NYS with developmental disabilities to live as independently in the community as possible by helping with housing costs
- ▶ Housing subsidy - decided using a formula that takes into account the county the person lives in, the number of people who will be living in the home, the number of bedrooms in the home and other criteria's
- ▶ Individual contributes a percentage of their income towards the housing costs

OPWDD Community Habilitation

- ▶ Community Habilitation staff help people learn and keep the skills they need to live safely and more independently,
- ▶ Maintain or improve their health
- ▶ Meet people and make and keep friends, take part in community activities, and be part of their community
- ▶ Work toward other personal goals

Barriers to Independent Living Pre-Pandemic

- ▶ Lack of transition planning from an individual living in a home setting or Supervised IRA to Independence
- ▶ Lack of step-down models
- ▶ Loneliness can be devastating to those who live alone, including, and especially, for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- ▶ Lack of natural supports & involved family members
- ▶ The inability to manage health, nutrition, and cooking
- ▶ Lack of public transportation
- ▶ Lack of access to staffing
- ▶ Engaging in illegal /criminal activities
- ▶ Conflicts with neighbors
- ▶ Lack of money management skills

Independently Managing Through a Pandemic

- ▶ Access serves 110 people with IDD who live in their own apartments
- ▶ While many services halted, slowed, or paused during the Pandemic the Housing paired with Community Habilitation Services at Access had to find safe ways to continue to support the people who are living independently
- ▶ The need for support only increased during the pandemic as uncertainty, fear, loneliness and anxiety of current circumstances loomed

Barriers to Independent Living in a Pandemic

- ▶ Obtaining PPE to distribute to individuals and staff
- ▶ Educating individuals on proper use and disposal of masks
- ▶ Maintaining social distancing
- ▶ Quarantine - not allowed to go out with positive diagnosis
- ▶ Loneliness - lack of staff support including Mental Health resources & availability. New Model of Telehealth Services introduced to the clients which required training and education
- ▶ Managing health/nutrition/cooking - limited access to food, staff not able to take them food shopping
- ▶ Attending appointments that now were offered virtually - little access or knowledge in the use of telehealth features without staffing

Barriers during Pandemic Cont.

- ▶ Lack of 24 hour access to staff - The Individuals Support Team was not able to meet Face To Face which included their Care Managers, staff, friends and families.
- ▶ Engaging in at-risk activities - During COVID we saw an increase in social media activities that caused anxiety and inappropriate relationships
- ▶ Conflicts with neighbors- Educating individuals in ensuring they understood what it meant to stay six feet apart of others and to wear masks
- ▶ Lack of money management skills- Individuals not being able to go banking and cash stimulus checks and manage monies appropriately

In-Person & Telehealth

- ▶ Staff were able to bill for services rendered through Telehealth, a means not allowed prior to COVID
- ▶ Checked in and talked to individuals to help comfort and address loneliness and fear
- ▶ During the pandemic individuals still needed assistance with banking, food shopping and meal preparation
 - ▶ In-Person supports did not stop

Independently Managing Through a Pandemic

- ▶ Education on COVID
 - ▶ Social distancing
 - ▶ Quarantine Practices
 - ▶ Typical Service Planning activities
- ▶ Distribution of PPE
- ▶ Transport to vaccination appointments
- ▶ Navigating food pantries & delivering food if they were unable to leave their homes
- ▶ Smart Technology
- ▶ Community Habilitation Clinical Services
- ▶ Housing Team Leader
- ▶ Group activities paused during Pandemic

Where do we go from here?

- ▶ Audience Participation

- ▶ As a system how do we continue to build successful independent living models?

Where do we go from here?

- ▶ How do we foster independence?
- ▶ Working with individuals' support teams to better prepare them for independent living by teaching daily living and coping skills
 - ▶ cooking, money management, self-care
 - ▶ Socialization skills & making friendships
 - ▶ Nutrition, Biometrics, managing chronic health conditions
- ▶ Increasing natural supports
- ▶ Education around safety and emergency preparedness
- ▶ Education around death and what are the wishes for those that have no family involvement
- ▶ Education around health and safety- including safe sex and identifying dangers
- ▶ Faith groups
- ▶ Employment or volunteer opportunities

QUESTIONS?

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