Waiver and wait list: Are they going away?

About 18 months ago, our agency heard that the State of Indiana was going to end the wait lists for the Medicaid Waiver. We geared up for an increase in referrals and watched closely... while literally nothing happened. The ability to process more referrals was so tied up, little increase was seen.

That all changed starting in 2014. It seems every time I step out into the hall, one of my staff is talking to either a case manager or parent who is attempting to get services. So far, we have kept up with most of the referrals. We continue to work to get enough Recreation Therapists and Music Therapists, so that the wait list in some areas for those services can be eliminated.

How frustrating it must be for a family who has been waiting so long for services to get placed on a wait list right away!

A few suggestions:

1. If you are attempting to get one therapy, consider another one while you are waiting. Possibly, you wanted music therapy but none is currently available. You might be able to get recreation therapy.

2. If your family member has significant skill deficits, consider adding behavior consultation. A behavior consultant is not just for severe problem behaviors. They can frequently come in and assist in skill increases, as well. When I first started providing behavior management under the waiver, I served a lot of young children. I cannot even tell you how many of them I toilet-trained! A behavior consultant can improve community behavior, increase communication, develop self-help skills, improve social interactions, and help with school skills, to name just a few things.

So, are the waiting lists going away? Well, I guess we will see. I am happy to see so many families get the help they need. I just hope it continues all the way to the bottom of the list!

Sandi
Summer is busytime for the ABA Department

We are so happy that summer is finally here! Our ABA Department has been busy with our summer program, which runs June 9–July 25. May was busy, as we settled in at our new Children’s Therapy Center that serves ages 3–11, and we have also been restructuring our Adolescent and Teenage Therapy Center by turning it into the Meaningful Day Services Apartment. We are excited to announce that Meaningful Day Services ABA Program has partnered with Spalding University by becoming a practicum placement site for Applied Behavior Analysis Graduate Students. We would like to give a big welcome to our two new practicum students: Reenu George and Nicki Shulte. The last weekend in May Meaningful Day Services sponsored FEAT of Louisville Outrunning Autism 5K at The Parklands of Floyds Fork. Our 25-member team raised more than $1,000 for Families for Effective Autism Treatment, which helps ease the autism journey through a community network created for families by families to provide ongoing support, education, programs, and resources. It was a beautiful day and all of the ABA therapists and attendees enjoyed a drum circle led by Chelsea Douglass, an MDS music therapist. With all of our summer preparations almost behind us, we are all looking forward for a fun and engaging program! Check out next month’s newsletter to see all the fun community places the ABA Department visited! We are currently accepting referrals.

More than 20 years of making Meaningful Experiences!
Summer Program is a Hit!

The Children’s Summer program is off to a fantastic start! We are excited about the new environment in Brownsburg, which is proving to be a big hit with all of our individuals. The children have enjoyed making wonderful crafts and participating in many group activities during our “Say Aloha to Summer!” week. The children have learned about live, native reptiles, amphibians, and fish at Eagle Creek; they have engaged in exercise and social play at the park, and they have spent time getting to know the community at Metropolis mall. We are excited about having a fun-filled Summer and giving the kiddos plenty of opportunities to make lots of new friends, as this Summer marks our biggest turnout ever!
MDS Client Spins His Way in Pursuit of Long-term Goals

Robert is a perfect example of just how far someone can come in managing behaviors. He has been a long-time behavior management client and early-on had multiple issues that kept him in a repeated cycle of poor choices, negative behavior, and an overall sense of not having a lot of control over his life and dreams. But he did have a couple of interests that have proven to be key in turning his life around: music and computers.

Building on these interests and actively working to improve his life overall, Robert has fine-tuned his skills to a point of being able to operate a computer-based sound system that allows him to work as a self-taught DJ.

Robert has had several successful jobs in this role. He admits there is some sense of anxiety, should there be an electronics malfunction, or when a little bit of his shy personality comes through, but with each successful job or “gig,” his confidence builds and his performance improves.

Thanks to a lot of intuition about how electronics work, a love of music, and the drive to put it all together in pursuit of a dream, Robert is a successful DJ. He hosts an Internet-based radio show. And he is the regular DJ at a monthly party hosted by the service provider agency, Companion Care, where he pleases the crowd by happily taking requests to play specific songs.

Robert’s most current project has him busy compiling music from vinyl to digital for a 1950s theme party at a local church. Robert is currently accepting bookings for parties, receptions, or other events. For more information and fees, please contact Clayton Carl at cgc.msw.mds@gmail.com.

Providing quality, hands-on services that enhance and improve the independence of each unique individual.
Welcome new faces!

May was an exciting month for the Music Therapy Department. Several clients performed at a concert in Anderson, two new music therapy interns started their field experience with us, and three new music therapists joined our organization.

We are excited to welcome interns: Kailee Holly from Berklee College of Music and Lindsay Foster from the University of Louisville. We also welcome Meghan Hainer, MT-BC, a recent graduate of Colorado State University to the Indianapolis area. Joanna Calahan, graduate of University of Evansville, will be assisting with our summer ABA program in Jeffersonville. Finally, we are proud to announce that one of our interns, Kate McKarns, has just joined us full-time after completing her internship in early July.

Upcoming Drum Circles

**Brownsburg/West Indy Drum Circle**
July 18, 2014  5:00 pm
August 15, 2014  5:00 pm
Cornerstone Christian Church
8930 State Road 267
Brownsburg, IN

**North Indy Drum Circle**
July 11, 2014  6:15–7:15 pm
August 8, 2014  6:15–7:15 pm
Carmel Lutheran Church
4850 E. Main Street
Carmel, IN 46033

**Fort Wayne Drum Circle**
July 11, 2014  6:00 pm
August 8, 2014  6:00 pm
Epiphany Lutheran Church
6606 Maplecrest Road
Fort Wayne, IN

**Henry County Drum Circle**
July 16, 2014  4:00–5:00 pm
August 20, 2014  4:00–5:00 pm
1510 Washington Street
New Castle, IN

**Jeffersonville**
No July Drum Circle
August 16, 2014  10:00–11:00 am
700 Missouri Avenue
Jeffersonville, IN
Thumball
BY: TREN A ND ERSON, MA, BC

Thumbballs are an excellent tool for working with individuals with intellectual disabilities. Every age and any ability level can play. They are safe and easy to throw and catch in any setting. Thumbballs are ideal for teaching pro-social behaviors through use of appropriate eye contact; turn taking, sharing, game play, color and number identification or safety symbols for community participation. When used in a group, they increase emotional intelligence through use of polite forms, interest in positive characteristics of self and others and recognition of body language and facial expressions. Whether in one-to-one instruction or in a larger group setting, the teaching possibilities are endless.

Shaped and designed after a classic soccer ball, each panel has a word, graphic, photo, or logo relating to a specific subject printed on it. Each ball can be specifically designed for learning emotions, reducing stress, and increasing social interactions. Participants are guided through the exercise and encouraged by the instructor to identify the picture, symbol, or artwork that is on the panel of the ball either under their thumb or finger.

It is not necessary to purchase a Thumball. Thumballs can be made from a standard soccer ball or beach ball. This can be a project the entire group can participate in creating. Colors and numbers can be drawn on or cut out picture symbols can be glued onto the ball. Desired goals and outcomes can be modified and fashioned for individual needs.

For additional information: http://www.trainerswarehouse.com

Welcome to our team:

Ashley Shaner: Ashley, originally from Ohio, received her Bachelor of Science degree in Recreational Therapy from Slippery Rock University, PA. She completed her clinical internship at Kostopulous Dream Foundation in Salt Lake City, UT, where she worked with people with developmental disabilities. Ashley provides home-based services and also does Equine-Assisted Therapy. She serves individuals in Allen and Noble counties.

Carrie Wilson: Carrie, originally from Illinois, received her Bachelor of Science degree in Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Wisconsin, La-Crosse, WI. She completed her clinical internship at Youth Villages in Douglasville, GA, where she worked with emotionally- and behaviorally-troubled youth. Carrie has years of experience working with individuals with disabilities as a Respite Counselor and Certified Habilitation Aid. She serves individuals in Hamilton and Marion counties.

Olivia Brush: Olivia, an Indiana native, received her Bachelor of Science degree in Recreational Therapy from Indiana University, Bloomington. She completed her clinical internship at the Edwards Hines Jr. VA Hospital in Illinois where she completed rotations in mental health, spinal cord injury, and inpatient rehabilitation. Olivia also worked for the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department as a counselor for children with disabilities. She serves individuals in Johnson and Marion counties.

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