Personal Networks: Do-It-Yourself…TOGETHER!

TEXAS NETWORK CONNECTIONS
Creating Community for People with Disabilities

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What We'll Cover Today

- Why are we at this Workshop?!!!
- What is a personal network?
- Barriers to starting a network
- Breakout #1: Identify potential network members
- Breakout #2: Consider possible network goals
- Next steps and timeline

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SNAPshots, 2014

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Colter's Intelligence Agency (CIA)—2017

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Why are we at this Workshop?!!

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What is a Personal Network?

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What is a Personal Network?

*Personal networks are **intentional communities** of friends, family members and acquaintances who assist and collaborate with a person who may be at risk of isolation because of disability.*

Personal networks promote planning and social opportunities, assist with decision-making and goal setting, and work with the person-at-the-center to be a sustainable resource after parents can no longer be available.

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Barriers to Starting a Network

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- **Asking for help…#1 reason**
- **No family**
- **People are busy**
- **One more thing I have to do**
- **What else?**

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #1
IDENTIFY POTENTIAL NETWORK MEMBERS

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #1
IDENTIFY POTENTIAL NETWORK MEMBERS

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #1
GETTING STARTED: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL NETWORK MEMBERS
FAMILY MEMBERS

- List them all, even those you don't want to invite!
- Immediate and extended family
- Include out of town family members
- Include young children
- Think about your reasons for wanting or not wanting someone to join the network

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #1
GETTING STARTED: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL NETWORK MEMBERS
CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS/RELATIONSHIPS

- Your child's friends and peer
- Close family friends
- Friends of siblings
- Other parents ("I'll join yours if you join mine!")
- Anyone who has offered to help
- People with common interests
- Caregivers who want to broaden their relationship with your child
- List them all, even those you don't want to invite!
- Think about your reasons for wanting or not wanting someone to join the network

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #1
GETTING STARTED: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL NETWORK MEMBERS
COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

- Former teachers
- Church members
- People at work
- People who your child may want to get to know better, but have never known how to ask
- Club members (e.g. book club, YMCA, rock club, etc.)
- Retirees
- Neighbors
- Think about your reasons for wanting or not wanting someone to join the network

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #1
GETTING STARTED: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL NETWORK MEMBERS
PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

- Case managers
- Former attendants
- Lawyers
- Doctors
- Financial planners
- Therapists
- Teachers

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #2
NETWORK GOALS

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #2
Network Goals: Where do I Begin?

- Start with personal visions and goals
- Long-term vs. Short-term goals
- Think about what network members may want to learn
- Remember: Relationships are the key to a good life and the foundation of networks
- Pace yourself!
- #1 goal for the first few years of a network is to launch the network and meet every three months!!

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #2
Personal Goals for a Good Life

- **Independence**
- **Friendships**
- **Ability to manage my finances**
- **To play the guitar**
- **A girlfriend**
- **A job**
- **My own apartment with a roommate**
- **A good life**
- **To run a half marathon**
- **My own business**
- **To have fun**
- **To be healthy**

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BREAKOUT EXERCISE #2
Network Goals: What Can Networks Do?

- Provide social opportunities
- Help person at center to identify and articulate his or her needs from the network
- Offer guidance and mentorship
- Assist with goal setting
- Learn about services and supports
- Monitor services
- Learn about disability issues
- Explore employment options
- Develop emergency plans
- Eat good food and drink
- Have fun!
- Financial planning
- Explore housing
- Post-secondary education
- Become good allies to person at center
- Legal decisions
- Increasing independence
- And lots more!

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Next Steps

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Basic Network Timeline

- **Email invitation to information/invitation meeting (send out 2-3 weeks prior to meeting; send reminder 1 week prior, then 1 day prior**
- **Host an Invitation Meeting**
- **Within 1-2 weeks, email to invitees: "Do you want to join network?"**
- **Schedule first Network Meeting (6 weeks after information/invitation meeting)**
- **Hold first Network Meeting (don't forget reminders!)**
- **Schedule subsequent Network Meetings every three months (four meetings per year)**
- **Keep meeting!**

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Join a TAG (Transition Action Group)

- Collaborative of 5-10 parents/self-advocates who commit to meeting regularly for several months to start a personal network for their sons or daughters, or for themselves
- TAG's can focus on personal networks or other transition goals
- Texas Network Connections supports TAG's with facilitation services, information and encouragement
- If you want to join a TAG, email denise.sonleitner@txp2p.org

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Personal Networks Meet-Up and Q & A

- See www.txp2p.org for upcoming meet-ups and Q&A
- Forum where network members (whether new, old, about-to-start, or in-need-of-a-reboot) can meet, share stories, and ask questions
- Have attended the *Introduction to Personal Networks* presentation offered by TxP2P (either via Zoom or In-Person)
- Register at txp2p.org (TxP2P Upcoming Events)

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