

Sustainability Planning Work Group Summary from July 24, 2020 call

In attendance: Brooke Bartholomew (Montana), Brittany Huey (Alabama), Doris Green (New York), Jill Kagan (ARCH), Susan Summers (ARCH), Jutta Ulrich (Arizona), and Nadine Walter (Oklahoma). (Notes summarized by Susan.)

The meeting began with a welcome to Brooke, a new member, and a brief summary of the history of the Sustainability Planning Group.

Susan Summers reviewed a one-page handout entitled *Checking-In to Sustain our Work* (attached and posted on the ARCH website) that provided an overview of the process the Nevada Lifespan Respite Coalition used recently during a strategic planning session.

Each state shared an update on activities they are engaged in, especially with respect to sustaining respite activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Doris Green, New York, shared that they, as staff to the coalition, normally do extensive traveling around the state to bring people together, but have been unable to do that during the pandemic. They are now relying on Zoom meetings, to maintain communication and engage in cooperative activities while honoring social distancing requirements. Because they will not be able to convene their annual state conference this year, they have developed a 12-month webinar series including topics related to compassion fatigue; working with underserved populations including LGBTQ, New Americans, and African Americans; end of life planning; changes in Medicare managed care regarding home care services; Alzheimer's populations; and sharing information about the ARCH Innovative and Exemplary Practice Award recipients from New York State.

Jutta Ulrich, Arizona, described the ongoing process of rebuilding partnerships in the state after a change in leadership. Extending the priority on aging populations that results from a key partnership with the State Unit on Aging, Jutta is working to include populations more representative of a lifespan approach. She is especially working on relationship building with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and explaining the importance of the Lifespan Respite Coalition in systems building; is responding to requests from the Veteran's Administration for respite information; and has been invited to serve on a council organized by the University of Arizona's Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

Nadine Walter, Oklahoma, described the diversity of partnerships and funding entities with which she works (Medicaid, Aging, ADRC, Respite etc.) and commented how caregiving issues are central to all of them. She emphasized the importance of “getting the word out there,” or informing and educating employers, consumers, agencies—everyone about respite and its relevance and importance. Having included a pre-post survey with each voucher used, Oklahoma is positioned to share data that is vitally important in helping others understand the meaning and importance of respite. These data will be used as part of an interim study for legislators. Oklahoma is working on an adapting an application that was developed to support working families with children so that it can be used with families needing respite, which will strengthen the coordinated systems approach to respite that is a hallmark of the Lifespan Respite Program.

Brittany Huey, Alabama, described the technological approaches they are using to keep families connected during the Covid-19 pandemic. Alabama conducts regular caregiver wellness calls, and BREAK support groups (including a recent, well-received foray into Zoom Bingo). Alabama has developed a strong online training curriculum, and posts two trainings a month on YouTube. Online trainings have resulted in triple the attendance that live trainings attracted, and because of this response, Alabama will keep developing and using this training option after social distancing guidelines are relaxed. Alabama is also supporting individual counseling for families experiencing Covid-19 related mental health challenges.

Brooke Bartholomew, Montana, reported that they have focused on creating strong partnerships across the state and with AAAs that support respite sustainability, but have not before focused on succession planning, which was apparent a few years ago when their Coalition leader of 30 years left the position. Montana is presently focused on building the number of respite providers across the state—recruiting and training respite providers for their voucher system, and creating state and legislative partnerships. Montana is also actively engaged in providing Covid-19 training through mini-events.