**North Carolina Partnership to Address Adult Abuse**

**Triangle J Council of Government**

**11.20.2019**

**Present:** Annetta Brown, Lara Gurganus, Kevin Robertson, Jim Montsinger, Zerlina Agbogbe, Tameka Tyler, John Margolis, Laura Cockman, Nancy Warren, Leo Bohland, Ken Sigmon, Sandra Deutsch, Brittany Hughes, Amanda Little, Roxann Sizemore, Laura McCracken, Stacy Ferrell, John Maron, Melany Earnhardt, Heather Magill, Joan Pellettier, Phil Brown, Pam Palmer, Elizabeth Kressmann, Camilla Ungaro, Ann Elmore, Kathryn Lanier, and Laura Jett.

The meeting was called to order by Nancy Warren, Chair, at 9:30 a.m.

**Approval of the Minutes**: The minutes from the general meeting September 18, 2019 were presented by secretary, Laura Jett. A motion to approve was made by John Maron and seconded by Kevin Robertson. With no further discussion the motion carried.

**Treasurer’s Report**: Pam Palmer presented the treasurer’s report. The beginning balance was $11,630.61 as of July. We have received $490.00 in revenue from membership dues. We had $374.00 in expenses. Our ending balance on this report is $8,746.61, with $3,000 of funds withheld from this balance for our reserve. Total account balance is $11,746.61.

**Updates to the Membership:**

The Save the Date flyer is on the NCP3A website for the May 2020 conference. Please share with partners. You must be a member as of December 31st to get the early bird special. Agency members all receive the early bird rate. Agency members are allowed 2 voting members. Members 65 and older can join for just $10.

Members of the executive committee are meeting with DAAS every quarter to assist with advocacy of department initiatives.

Nancy is on the Education and Public Policy Committees for the National APS Association. The Older Americans Act has a House version and a Senate version currently. Work is being completed to align those bills with a hope of reauthorization soon.

The Elder Justice Act is currently going through the reauthorization process now. The original version never authorized funding for the initiatives in the act.

**Program**: Our presenter today is Dr. Gregory Olley, PhD. Dr. Olley is a psychologist at the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities and Clinical Professor at the School of Medicine at UNC Chapel Hill. His presentation today is “Interviewing Skills with Vulnerable Populations”. He shared the following main points:

* There are no set rules for interviewing.
* We interview individuals with developmental disabilities for a variety of reasons: counseling, crisis, as a victim, a witness, a perpetrator, for research, care planning of services, and for competency.
* These interviews should not be “by the seat of our pants” or based on assumptions. The interviewer must have clinical knowledge of the diagnosis, the person, the research, and interviewing.
* Things to consider: severity of the disease, age, mental age, type of IDD syndrome, coexisting disabilities such as mental illness, speech or language impairment, and mobility limitations.
* Some characteristics of individuals with IDD that may impact interviewing: learning problems; memory problems; impulsive; distractible; issues with planning and implementation; motivation; poor judgement; poor problem solving skills; suggestible/naiveté; poor understanding of self and others emotions; inability to understand consequences of choices; exaggerated response to stress or to everyday events; inability to understand abstract language or generalizations.
* Individuals with IDD may have behaviors that will appear misleading such as poor eye contact or repetitive movements. This may make them appear to be misleading but are a characteristic of their IDD.
* After experiencing abuse, the client may feel threatened, powerless, and fearful of retaliation especially if the abuser is a caretaker, or they may feel the abuse was not taken seriously.
* Interviewing style of questions:
  + Use short words and sentences. Use a single clause.
  + Speak slowly and clearly.
  + Use clear, unambiguous language. Use the present tense.
  + Do not use the passive voice, double negatives, figurative language, or abstract concepts.
  + Written material should be at the reading level of your client.
  + Avoid idioms, regional expressions, colloquialisms.
  + You must wait for a response. Do not be quick to interject of your question has not been answered. The client may be processing or forming the response. There is no time frame for how long to wait.
  + Validity check- If you are concerned the information is not correct, ask the client for an example or ask the same question with different wording.
  + Start your interview with rapport building or “idle chat”. Gather the easy information. Proceed to questions about the current situation, feelings, and current health. Then continue to the specific topic related to the interview.
  + Use open ended questions and prompts, “Tell me what happened”.
* Be aware that your client may confabulate or fill in the gaps of the information. This is not intentional but can cause issues with interviewing and accuracy of the information. Other issues may be the suggestibility of the client, inconsistency, and the tendency to acquiesce with a yes or no answer.
* Some issues you may encounter in court are: failure of the client to understand rights; ability to understand the oath; to understand truth vs. lie; poor understanding of the consequences; rules of court and the process; and withstanding cross examination.

Dr. Olley can be contacted by email at [greg.ollie@ciddd@unc.org](mailto:greg.ollie@ciddd@unc.org). You may also find more information at <https://victimsofcrime.org/library/resource-directory-victims-with-disabilities>.

**MDT Training Update** – Heather Magill, Guilford County Justice Center and Greg Tanner, Mecklenburg County DSS shared their experience working with the MDT Training at the UNC School of Government.

Heather Magill – The team included a Sergeant, Assistant District Attorney, Elder Law Attorney, Elder Victim Advocate, an Assistant Clerk of Court, and Heather Magill with the Family Justice Center. The initial attitude of the ADA was that they are already swamped with murder cases but by the end of the training her passion was ignited. The clerk assumed the local law enforcement had access to the guardians’ database, but they do not. During the training teams were seated with other team counterparts at dinner and had great discussion on how each operates.

The Guilford County team has fine-tuned their mission statement since the workshop. They meet monthly. The MDT training was a great workshop.

Greg Tanner- Greg shared their team consisted of a DSS attorney, a private attorney, and Greg. Debi Lee with the Area Agency on Aging has been a mediator and is working on MOU’s so that information can be shared. Scheduling has been a barrier. Greg states they are attempting to form the MDT and have one for the child welfare program to model from.

Buncombe County shared that they had representation at the School of Government workshop but the MDT has not taken off.

Durham shared that they have tried an MDT. The barrier is getting other agencies to make the long term commitment.

Jim Montsinger shared that New Hanover has an MDT in place.

Laura Cockman shared that MDT’s are a valuable resource for securing training grants. Many grants are available only for MDT’s.

John Maron shared that NC is one of two states in a pilot project on financial exploitation with DSS and the Secretary of State office working together.

**Partner Updates**:

* Kevin Robertson shared that we are currently in Medicare Open Enrollment until 12/7. Raleigh has had a very high call volume. They have 15 people working the phone lines. CMS has noted potential problems with cut off accounts.
* Nancy Warren shared that Money Matters was provided for the Council of District Attorneys, Assistant District Attorneys, and Local Law Enforcement. Nancy attended the training.

**Next Meeting**: January 15, 2020 at 930 a.m. at Triangle J Cog. Our speaker, Colin Austin, Attorney with Hillsborough Will & Trusts, will discuss "Preventing Elder Abuse through Strong Estate Planning."  Also, he will address determining capacity to sign, options under a financial Power of Attorney and health care decision making.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Jett, Secretary

Special Thank You to Ann Elmore for assisting.