Save the Date – Next DD Community Forum
Tuesday, June 20 from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM
Click Here to Register

Join BHDDH for the Spring DD Community Forum on Tuesday, June 20th from 3:00-4:30 PM to get the latest news from the BHDDH Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Everyone must register in advance. After you register, you will receive a confirmation email with your unique login details to join the forum.

When you register, you can enter your questions or comments about the RI DD System. Director Kevin Savage and the DD team will answer questions and share other information and updates at this quarterly online event.

The forum will be hosted by Advocates in Action and will be held on Zoom. You will also be able to call in. If you can't join us, the forum will be recorded to watch later.

An ASL interpreter will be present at this event. For other accommodation requests, please email **MichelleWhite@AdvocatesinAction.org**. If you have any questions or need assistance registering, call Advocates in Action toll-free: 1-877-532-5543, or email **aina@AdvocatesinAction.org**.

Technology Fund Will Continue For Another Year

The Technology Fund is currently in its 5th Round, which ends on May 31st. However, the Technology Fund will be in place for at least another year.

Individuals making a request need to have an active ISP and are able to receive technology from this Fund one time only. The **FAQs** has been updated to reflect the new rounds and dates of the Technology Fund and have been attached at the end of this newsletter.

The **Request Form for Technology** is on the BHDDH website under the DD Initiatives: **Technology Fund | Dept. of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals**.

If you have any questions, please contact you DD Social Caseworker. There is a contact list after page 6 of this newsletter. If you aren't sure who your DD Social Caseworker is, please call the main number at (401) 462-3421 and we can help you.

The 90-Day Challenge:
How to Retain Direct Support Professionals from Day One
Wednesday, May 17, 2023
2:00 PM to 3:00 PM
Click Here to Register

The first 90 days are a crucial period when new DSPs are still adjusting to their roles and may be at risk of burnout or turnover. This webinar will explore practical steps that agencies and people who self-direct their services can take to address this challenge and ensure DSPs stay engaged and committed to their work.

First, Barbara Kleist, Program Director at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI), will share her expertise on this topic, drawing from ICI's interactive online training resources for people who self-direct their services. Next, Andrew Whalen, a person who self-directs his services, and three DSPs (Alicia Cole, Britney Eley, and William Harold) will share their perspectives on best practices to engage and retain DSPs.

By the end of this session, attendees will gain new strategies to boost DSP engagement and support early in their employment—and improve retention in turn.

Visit the Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative Community Hub to stay informed, access resources, and connect with one another: https://riswi.org/

State Workforce Initative Advisory Group Meeting
Wednesday, June 7
5:30 PM to 6:30 PM
Click Here to Register

The next meeting for the Advisory Group will be on June 7. Please register in advance with the link above. People with I/DD and family members are encouraged to join.

If you can't make it to the meeting, you will receive a recording and meeting materials. We'll send an agenda and meeting materials to current members and new members who register.

RI Direct Support Professional
State Workforce Initiative (SWI)

Related to **Caring Careers RI**, RI DSP State Workforce Initiative is focused solely on the Rhode Island Direct Support Professional Workforce Community. For more information on the SWI, see the **SWI CollaborationHub at riswi.org**.

CaringCareersRI: A New Online Resource From EOHHS

Find out about training, employment, and continuing education opportunities for home and community-based direct care workers at **Caring Careers RI**.

Caring Careers RI is a workforce effort focused on all types of care professionals, including Personal Care Aides (PCA), Nursing Assistants, Peer Recovery Specialists, Community Health Workers, Dental Assistants, Medical Assistants, Home-Based Therapeutic Services, and Case Managers as well as Direct Support Professionals (DSP).

RI Health & Human Services Workforce Summit: The Road Ahead
Tuesday, June 6
8:30 AM - 12:15 PM
Registration starts at 8:00 AM
RI Nursing Education Center, 350 Eddy St, Providence
Click Here to Register

Join healthcare providers, educators, policy-makers, and other partners as we continue our collaborative efforts to develop solutions to address Rhode Island's health and human services workforce challenges. Let's celebrate accomplishments from the first-year planning process and outline the vision for The Road Ahead. Light refreshments & parking validation will be provided.

Summit Overview

Executive Briefing (8:30 AM - 10:00 AM)

- Year-One Progress Report

- Vision for the Year Ahead: Attract, Train, & Retain

- Featured Speakers: Perspectives from Industry Leaders

Interactive Session (10:15 AM - 12:15 PM)

- Live & Dynamic Health Workforce Data Session (EOHHS Data Ecosystem)

- Panel Discussion: Centering Equity in RI's Health & Human Services Workforce Initiatives

Additional details will be announced soon!

Note: Only one individual may register per webform submission. Space is limited, and this registration form will close once we meet capacity. If you would like to participate, register ASAP!

Next Steps

- Meeting materials, parking instructions, and any additional information will be sent to registrants via email as the event approaches. Please watch for relevant correspondence.

- Please submit any inquiries to Aryana Huskey at **aryana.huskey.ctr@ohhs.ri.gov**

Affordable Connectivity Program

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has launched a new landing page at **GetInternet.gov** for its Affordable Connectivity Program. **AffordableConnectivity.gov** will still exist as a resource for consumers and digital navigators with more detailed information about the program. The FCC is continuing its efforts to promote the program by providing grants to community partners, supporting navigators who help eligible consumers enroll, and developing media strategies to increase public awareness. **GetInternet.gov** was chosen as the URL for consumer information and advertising due to its simplicity and memorability, and to link consumers directly to the application. The information previously available at **GetInternet.gov** can still be accessed through **whitehouse.gov/getinternet** .

For questions regarding this update to the Affordable Connectivity Program, please contact Jamile Kadre at **Jamile.Kadre@fcc.gov**.

Shirley Ryan Ability Lab Seeks People Who Use Medicaid-Funded HCBS for a Research Study

Shirley Ryan Ability Lab and Northwestern University are seeking participants who use Medicaid-funded Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) for a research study. The study aims to improve a survey that measures person-centered outcomes for HCBS users. Participants will be compensated with a $50 gift card upon completion of the 90-minute interview.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact John Abbate at **jabbate@sralab.org** or Allen Heinemann at **aheinemann@sralab.org**.

Aligning Employment and Financial Conversations

This quick reference guide provides information and resources to help workforce staff and partners discuss financial and employment goal setting with disabled jobseekers. This guide provides the tools needed to have successful conversations that align the money and employment goals of jobseekers.

The **Office of Disability Employment Policy** (ODEP) also added some new tools to their **Financial Toolkit**:

Aligning My Career Path with My Earning Needs
How much money do I need to earn to pay my bills and meet my financial goals? Asking yourself these and other questions can help you align your career path with your earning needs.

What Are My Housing Options?
Learn about resources that can help you make housing decisions that best meet your needs.

2023 Self-Direction Conference Recordings

The 2023 Self-Direction Conference: Virtual Series has officially wrapped after 8 weeks. The National Self-Direction Conference brings together state and federal government, managed care organizations, Financial Management Services entities, people and families who self-direct, support brokers, and other key stakeholders from across the country to collaborate on one goal: advancing self-direction. The slides and recordings are available **online**.

Here are links to some of the recorded and on-demand sessions.

- **An Untapped Funding Approach: Using Medicaid to Pay for Live-In Caregiver Housing and to Offset Wages for Care**

- **Emerging Workforce Practices in Self-Direction**

- **Beyond the Basics: Advancing High-Quality Self-Direction in a Managed Care Context**

- **The Surprising Successes: How Self-Direction Best Serves People Frequently Sidelined as "Too Challenging to Self-Direct"**

- **Self-Direct Sustainability Planning: What Happens When a Caregiver is No Longer Capable or Alive to Administer the Self-Direct Model of Care?**

- **Advancing Best Practices to Expand Access to Self-Direction**

- **How State-Level Advocacy Can Strengthen Your Self-Direction Program**

- **Stories of Self-Direction**

- **Under the Hood: A Self-Direction Q&A with State Programs**

- **Self-Direction in Respite Voucher Programs: Path to Person and Family-Centered Care**

- **Top Strategies for Effective Support Brokerage**

- **A Day, A Week, A Life: Family Caregivers on the Front Line**

- **Ari's Story: How Self-Direction Brought a Young Man Home After 15 Years**

- **How Natural Language Processing Can Be Used to Improve Outcomes in Self-Direction**

- **Expectations Matter: My Life, My Choice, My Plan**

- **Self-Direction from Childhood to Adulthood**

- **Clearing the Path Ahead: Rosie's Advocacy Journey**

2023 from your desk
Self-Direction Conference
Virtual Series

Report Suspected Abuse

Mandated Reporting

Reporting suspected occurrences of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals with developmental disabilities

To report abuse and serious incidents call the QA hotline at
(401) 462-2629

The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit at BHDDH operates a 24 hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment and financial exploitation.

For More Information on DD Initiatives

Consent Decree: see **https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree**

Conflict Free Case Management: see the **EOHHS CFCM website** or **DD Initiatives-CFCM**

RI DSP State Workforce Initiative: see **https://riswi.org/** or **DD Initiatives-SWI**

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can **sign up here** or on our website. Go to
https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/events/newsandupdates/ to sign up or to see past quarterly newsletters and issues of DD News.

> SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

Contacting DD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM for questions or support **(401) 462-3421** Para español, llame **(401) 462-3014**

Send general questions to the AskDD email address. **BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov** Please do not email critical issues.

BH Link is Here for You

BH LINK

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Visit the BH Link website at **www.bhlink.org** or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL **(401) 414-LINK (5465)**   If under 18 CALL: **(855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)**

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY Triage Center at **975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI**

Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger

Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts

Main Phone #:	(401) 462-3421	TDD:	(401) 462-3226	Website:	https://bhddh.ri.gov/	**To report abuse/neglect:**
Fax:	(401) 462-2775	Spanish Line:	(401) 462-3014	BH Link:	(401) 414-5465	**(401) 462-2629**

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Kevin	Savage	Director	462-0581	Kevin.Savage@bhddh.ri.gov
Heather	Mincey	Assistant Director	462-1218	Heather.Mincey@bhddh.ri.gov
Maria	Bonaparte	Consent Decree Coordinator	462-6593	Maria.Bonaparte@bhddh.ri.gov
Christine	Botts	Deputy Administrator	462-2766	Christine.Botts@bhddh.ri.gov
Jackie	Camilloni	Coordinator, Self Direction	462-6608	Jackie.Camilloni@bhddh.ri.gov
Brenda	DuHamel	Associate Director, Admin Services	462-3010	Brenda.DuHamel@bhddh.ri.gov
Cindy	Fusco	Interdepartmental Project Manager	462-6689	Cynthia.Fusco@bhddh.ri.gov
Melissa	Greenlief	Administrator, Community Services	462-2459	Melissa.Greenlief@bhddh.ri.gov
Anne	LeClerc	Associate Director, Program Performance	462-0192	Anne.LeClerc@bhddh.ri.gov
Tracy	Levesque	Associate Director, Clinical	462-0209	Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov
Gerard (Jay)	MacKay	Associate Administrator, Employment	462-5279	Gerard.Mackay@bhddh.ri.gov
Erin	Perron	Associate Director, RICLAS	462-2180	Erin.Perron@bhddh.ri.gov
Kelly	Petersen	Chief of Training & Staff Development	462-6592	Kelly.Petersen@bhddh.ri.gov
Jacqueline	Reilly	Programming Services Officer	462-0126	Jacqueline.Reilly@bhddh.ri.gov

Case Management Units

East Providence/Pawtucket/Central Falls region

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Marguerite	Belisle	Casework Supervisor II	462-0714	Marguerite.Belisle@bhddh.ri.gov
Amie	Adams	Social Caseworker II	462-2480	Amie.Adams@bhddh.ri.gov
Stacey	Perry	Social Caseworker II	462-2418	Stacey.Perry@bhddh.ri.gov
Suzanne	Porter	Social Caseworker II	462-1972	Suzanne.Porter@bhddh.ri.gov
Mary Beth	Stevens	Social Caseworker II	462-2438	Marybeth.Stevens@bhddh.ri.gov
Heather	Soares	Social Caseworker II	462-6097	Heather.Soares@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacant		Social Caseworker II		

Northern RI/West Bay/Kent Region

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Janice	Bijesse	Casework Supervisor II	462-4290	Janice.Bijesse@bhddh.ri.gov
Mary	Cameron	Social Caseworker II	462-1307	Mary.Cameron@bhddh.ri.gov
Megan	Gilbert	Social Caseworker II	462-2524	Megan.Gilbert@bhddh.ri.gov
Dayna	Hansen	Social Caseworker II	462-2505	Dayna.Hansen@bhddh.ri.gov
Erin	Simonelli	Social Caseworker II	462-2502	Erin.Simonelli@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacant		Social Caseworker II		
Vacant		Social Caseworker II		

South County/West Bay/Kent Region

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Vacant		Casework Supervisor II		
Marisa	Abbruzzi	Social Caseworker II (RICLAS)	462-6099	Marisa.Abbruzzi@bhddh.ri.gov
Timothy	Cronin	Social Caseworker II	462-1721	Timothy.Cronin@bhddh.ri.gov
Jennifer	Gouveia	Social Caseworker II	462-0098	Jennifer.Gouveia@bhddh.ri.gov
Celestina	Okai	Social Caseworker II (RICLAS)	462-3896	Celestina.Okai@bhddh.ri.gov
Jill	Murphy	Social Caseworker II	462-2409	Jill.Murphy@bhddh.ri.gov
Lena	Sousa	Acting Casework Supervisor	462-1834	Lena.Sousa@bhddh.ri.gov
Joseph	Tevyaw	Social Caseworker II	462-2474	Joseph.Tevyaw@bhddh.ri.gov

Providence/West Bay/Kent Region

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Lauree	Champagne	Social Caseworker II	462-2728	Lauree.Champagne@bhddh.ri.gov
JoAnn	DiMuccio	Social Caseworker II	462-2523	JoAnn.DiMuccio@bhddh.ri.gov
Souphalak	Muriel	Acting Casework Supervisor	462-2512	Souphalak.Muriel@bhddh.ri.gov
Yolande	Ramos	Social Caseworker II	462-1059	Yolande.Ramos@bhddh.ri.gov
Judy	Smith	Social Caseworker II	462-1327	Judith.Smith@bhddh.ri.gov
Vacant		Social Caseworker II		

Eligibility Unit

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Karen	Lowell	Casework Supervisor II	462-2209	Karen.Lowell@bhddh.ri.gov
Christine	Harding	Social Caseworker II	462-3233	Christine.Harding@bhddh.ri.gov
Lori	Lombardi, RN	PASRR	462-0089	Lori.Lombardiburns@bhddh.ri.gov
Kim	Wright	Information Aide	462-2584	Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov

SIS Unit

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Donna	Standish	Casework Supervisor II	462-2628	Donna.Standish@bhddh.ri.gov
Wendy	Cormier	Social Caseworker II	462-1302	Wendy.Cormier@bhddh.ri.gov
Jamie	Fitzgibbons	Social Caseworker II	462-2510	Jamie.Fitzgibbons@bhddh.ri.gov
Meaghan	Jencks	Social Caseworker II	462-2113	Meaghan.Jencks@bhddh.ri.gov
Kristen	Miga	Social Caseworker II	462-0449	Kristen.Miga@bhddh.ri.gov

Transition Unit

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Susan	Hayward	Administrator, YIT	462-2519	Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov
Carolee	Leach	Professional Services Coordinator	462-1723	Carolee.Leach@bhddh.ri.gov

Support Staff

Name		Title	Phone	Email
Stephanie	Andreozzi	Implementation Aide	462-1859	Stephanie.Andreozzi@bhddh.ri.gov
Laurie	Rossi	Implementation Aide	462-2563	Laurie.Rossi@bhddh.ri.gov

Working While Disabled—Work Incentives Sessions

SSDI Overview:
June 7, 2023, 12-1 pm

Working with Benefits - Yes, You Can!
June 21, 2023, 12-1 pm

SSI Overview:
July 19, 2023, 12-1 pm

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Work Pays! An Introduction to YOUTH SSI
May 18, 2023, 4:00 - 5:00 pm

ALL SESSIONS will be offered on Zoom with subtitles in English.

REGISTER ONLINE at https://bit.ly/2KkUCVQ

The Sherlock Center provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and those that support them (family, guardian, rep payee, professionals). These sessions will be of value to anyone looking for a basic introduction to disability-related work incentives and/or has related questions. The Work and Benefits Introduction is for those starting to think about working and have general questions. The SSI or SSDI sessions provide details about the specific work incentives and other related information. All sessions provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the following topics:

- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

Upon registration please share your questions.
NOTE: These sessions will not address how to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits.

TIP: Unsure if you receive SSI or SSDI? You can confirm which benefit you have at
https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/

Presented by Certified Work Incentives Counselors.

REGISTRATION IS LIMITED! Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the session. You can access the session by computer, mobile device or listen using a cell or landline phone.

Accommodation requests or registration questions: Contact Elaine Sollecito at esollecito@ric.edu, 401-456-2764.
Session questions: Contact Vicki Ferrara at vferrara@ric.edu, 401-456-8092 or Joshua Hughes at jhughes@ric.edu, 401-456-4734.

SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS NETWORK
A NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS USING SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS IN RHODE ISLAND

ONLINE MEETING
Wednesday, May 17, 2023
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Dialogue with: Sarah Rao, Tracey Cunningham-Martins,
Rory Carmody, and Casey Gartland
(Invite your Direct Support Professionals to join)

This meeting will take place online using Zoom. When you RSVP, you will receive an email with the directions and a password to join the meeting. You can connect by computer, mobile device, or listen using your telephone. You may be prompted to download an app depending on the device you plan to use.

The Self-Directed Supports Network is a resource for individuals and families using self-directed supports through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Meetings provide an opportunity to share experiences and learn from others.

AGENDA
7:00 – 7:30 – Sarah Rao - SR Personal Training
7:30 – 8:00 – Tracey Cunningham-Martins & Rory Carmody – Access Point – Employment services & New Adult Project Search Program
8:00 – 8:30 -Casey Gartland – West Bay RI – DSP/Community Connection Specialist

This session will be recorded.

RSVP LINK: https://bit.ly/2YUamqz

Please RSVP using the link above. Click the link or cut and paste it into your browser. If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL Interpreter, large print) or information in a language other than English, please make your needs known when you RSVP.

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities

For questions, call or email Crystal Cerullo, Sherlock Center on Disabilities:
Email: ccerullo@ric.edu   Voice: 401-456-8915 TTY: 711

FAMILY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS TRAINING

ONLINE SERIES USING ZOOM

JUNE 05, 07, 12, and 14, 2023

4:30 – 6:00 PM

The Sherlock Center invites families and individuals with developmental disabilities (14 – 22 years of age) to attend this **FREE** series about employment in the community for youth. Professionals and support staff are also welcome to attend.

SESSION DETAILS

Attendees are encouraged to attend all sessions of this four-part series, but it is not required. Each session will be a live, interactive training using Zoom. Sessions will be recorded. However, there will be the opportunity to speak without being recorded.

SESSION 1: JUNE 05, 2023. 4:30-6:00 PM
BUILDING THE DREAM OF EMPLOYMENT
o   Introduction to employment in RI
o   Panel of youth successfully employed in RI

SESSION 2: JUNE 07, 2023, 4:30 -6:00 PM
POSSIBILITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT
o   Supported and customized employment
o   Hear more possibilities!

SESSION 3: JUNE 12, 2023, 4:30 -6:00 PM
PLANNING THE TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT
o   Role of the family in planning for employment
o   School role in planning for employment (Transition IEP)

SESSION 4: JUNE 14, 2023, 4:30 -6:00 PM
ACCESSING ADULT SUPPORTS FOR EMPLOYMENT
o   Office of Rehabilitation Services
o   Division of Developmental Disabilities
o   Related supports

ALL PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:
o   Training materials and resources
o   Opportunity to network with families, employees and entrepreneurs

> *"FEAT was an eye-opening experience. I wasn't sure my son was employable. But now, I have become very excited about some job ideas for my son."*
> -Family Member

> *"I learned that there are many more resources to support my daughter's future employment than I realized."*
> -Family Member

Register online at https://bit.ly/featri

You may also register by fax or mail by completing the attached registration form or by downloading a form at **www.sherlockcenter.org**.

This training is conducted in English; however, ASL or language interpreter services may be requested**.** Make your request known on the registration form or by contacting Elaine Sollecito or Crystal Cerullo as soon as possible.

For questions /requests:
Crystal Cerullo, ccerullo@ric.edu
Elaine Sollecito, esollecito@ric.edu or 401-456-2764

Phone: 401-456-8072 | **Fax:** 401-456-8150
TTY via RI Relay: 711 or (800) 745-5555
Spanish via RI Relay: 711 or (866) 355-9214

Registration Mailing Address:
Sherlock Center / RI College
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Providence, RI 02908
Attn: Elaine Sollecito

8 TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE ON THE INTERNET

We all have seen it. People with disabilities who post private information on Facebook, make themselves vulnerable on the Internet, or text "sexual selfies" to let someone know that they like them.

In the age of the social media and the Internet, what do people with developmental disabilities need to stay safe?

Here are eight tips to use with people with disabilities to help them stay safe.

1. Begin by helping people with disabilities explore the **positives and negatives** of technology. Ask:
"What do you like about texting people and using the Internet to contact friends and family?"
"What are some of the negatives things that can happen with technology?"

2. Remind people with disabilities that everything that he or she post or text is **PUBLIC**. Topics that are okay to post and text are greetings, weather, work, school, public events, and personal information that is on your mind. For example, my cousin just got married.

3. Remind people that before posting or texting words or photos, ask, "Would I want this post or text to end up in the **newspaper?"** If the answer is no, don't send it because some people regret sharing these post, text, and photos so it is important to think before you do this.

4. Suggest that people with disabilities check their **settings** to make sure the settings are private. If they don't know how to do this, they can ask for help from a friend, family member, or staff person.

5. Tell them that they shouldn't give out any **personal** information like where you live or your bank account number or any passwords that belong to you.

6. Mention that sometimes people on line are **not being truthful.** For example, they say they are 18 when they are actually 56.

7. If anything bad happens to you with social media and the Internet, talk to someone that you **trust** so they can help you.

8. Use this format, from *Healthy Foundations*, to think about scenarios and how to respond to certain behaviors:
1. Name the behavior that you see
2. Find out the meaning behind the behavior
3. Decide what messages you want to give
4. Give messages simply
5. Encourage the person to give you feedback

Here is a scenario:
A young man posts pictures of his topless girlfriend in very sexy poses on Facebook.

Here is a possible response to this scenario:
1. "I see that you posted pictures of your girlfriend without a shirt on."
2. "Can you tell me why you did that?"
3. Use the eight tips above to think about messages.
4. "You may think she looks great, but these pictures are private and Facebook is public."
5. "Does that make sense?"

Katherine McLaughlin, M.Ed. is a national expert and trains individuals, staff, and parents on sexuality and developmental disabilities. She teaches sexuality education to people with developmental disabilities and trains them to be peer sexuality educators. She is the author of an agency and school curriculum, "Sexuality Education for People with Developmental Disabilities." She has developed two online courses: "Developmental Disability and Sexuality 101" for professionals and "Talking to Your Kids: Developmental Disabilities and Sexuality" for parents. She has spent her career trying to elevate the status of all people, which is why the name of her growing company is Elevatus Training.

*Format in tip #8 Adapted from Healthy Foundations: The Teacher's Book, The Center for Family Life Education, Planned Parenthood of Greater Northern New Jersey, 1993

RI Division of Developmental Disabilities
Technology Fund
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
(Updated April 2023)

1. **Who is eligible to apply for this fund?**

   • You must be receiving funded services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) with a current Individual Support Plan (ISP) in place.

2. **Where can I find more information about the Technology Fund including the Technology Request Form?**

   • On the BHDDH Technology Fund website: https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/initiatives/technology-fund.

   • The Request Form is available in English, Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL).

   • Contact your DDD Social Case Worker if you need more support.

3. **How much can I spend?**

   • There is no defined minimum or maximum amount you can request. However, the fund holds 2 million dollars which is intended to be shared across approximately 4000 people.

   • You are encouraged to identify technology that best meets your accommodation needs.

4. **Do I need a technology goal in my ISP to access the Technology Fund?**

   • You do not need a goal specific to technology in your ISP.

   • You do need to be able to use the technology requested to meet a goal in your ISP.

     o If you already have a goal where the technology supports your progress, you do not need to write a new goal.

     o Or you may need to update your ISP to reflect your need/intended use of technology. Contact your plan writer/support coordinator to amend your ISP.

5. **When do I have to submit my Technology Request Form?**

   • You can submit your Technology Request Form any time before the end of each submission period and it will be reviewed in the quarter in which it is received. Request deadlines are May 31, 2023, September 30, 2023, November 30, 2023, February 28, 2024, and May 31, 2024. You will be notified the month following your submission, in June 2023, October 2023, December 2023, March 2024, and June 2024 respectively.

6. **Who can submit the Technology Request Form?**

   • You can submit your Technology Request form, with or without support, or someone can submit it on your behalf, such as your support coordinator or family member.

7. **I self-direct my services, is there anything I need to know about accessing the Fund?**

   • You access the Fund like everyone else by filling out and submitting the Technology Request Form.

8. **What if I don't know who my Social Caseworker is?**

   • You can call the DDD main phone line at (401) 462-3421 and someone will help you.

9. **How will I know if my request has been approved? Will you send me the technology?**

   • You will be contacted by mail and/or email from your Social Caseworker to let you know if your request was approved.

   • DDD will work with your Provider Agencies/Fiscal Intermediaries to purchase the technology.

10. **What happens if my Technology Request Form is not approved?**

   • You will be contacted by your Social Caseworker and receive feedback about why your request is not being approved. You may choose to resubmit your request, based on the feedback.

To avoid delay of approval, fill out all the details requested in the request form.

Common issues that could delay your request:

- A lack of detail about the exact items you are requesting to purchase, including the device model and an itemized cost.
- Not listing the specific ISP goal/s where technology will be used to support you to work towards your goal, and detailed information on how the technology will be used to support your life.
- A lack of detail about accommodation need that explains why you need more than the base model of a device. For example, you might need a larger screen because of your vision needs.
  - The base model is the least expensive model. **For example**, if you requested an iPad Pro, but did not justify the reason you need the larger model, you will only be approved for the base model: 10inch iPad, Wi-Fi 64 GB $329.00, AppleCare $69.00, Smart Cover $49.00. Total: $492.15
- You asked for subscription services. The Technology Fund can purchase a device with cellular capacity but cannot pay for a subscription/monthly fee. If requesting cellular capacity, provide justification of the need.
- You requested gaming equipment. The Technology Fund will not pay for gaming and entertainment equipment unless there is a clear connection to an ISP goal, and that goal is not isolating a person from community options/connections.
- Your request meets the criteria for approval. However, before your request is processed, the review committee wants to make sure you are aware that there are other pathways to pursue the hardware/software you requested through other funds (for example, Medicaid funds can cover items recommended by Speech Language Pathologist).

- Your request describes use of the device solely for employment goals and could be purchased through other sources (for example, ORS or a self-employment mini grant).

11. **I'm not sure what technology to purchase, where do I start?**

    - The Tech Fund was created to give you access to general technology, for example smart devices and touch screen tablets. There are many options available, you need to explore what is right for you based on your ISP goals.

    - You can explore your options online, using searches on the internet (ex. technology used by people with disabilities, or independence through technology), you can go into stores that sell technology and talk to salespeople, speak to your family, peers, your provider, and your social caseworker.

    - Forums on the Technology Fund will include information on what technology people are using and how they are using it to meet their goals.

12. **Does the Technology Fund pay for assessments or training?**

    - No, it is only for you to receive Technology hardware or software.

13. **When will the next Technology Fund Forum be?**

    - The Technology Fund Forums will be held in August 2022, October 2022, January 2023, and April 2023. Once this Forum is scheduled, meeting information will be made available on the Technology Fund website and in the DDD Newsletter.

    - You can sign up to receive the DDD Newsletter at: https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/newsletters-forums-and-events

14. **What happens if I miss the deadline to submit a Technology Request Form?**

    - Requests will be reviewed on a Quarterly basis. If you miss the deadline for the current Round, your request will be reviewed by the Tech Review Committee during the following quarter.

15. **I will need help to learn the technology I purchase. My staff needs to learn how to support me using it. How do I do this?**

    - Your Support Coordinator / Plan Writer can work with you to identify a training plan. DDD is working with the Sherlock Center and Advocates in Action to develop a library of training tools that includes short videos and clear visually-based training documents.

16. **What's the difference between assistive technology and technology?**

    The definition of assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. For a long time, assistive technology focused on specialized tools and devices. Now with touch screen tablets, and smart devices created for the entire population, technology is becoming more accessible for everyone. Many of these new devices meet the definition of AT.