



Newsletter

Volume 7
May 3, 2024



Mental Health Awareness & Women's Healthcare Month

Inside This Issue

- DDD Updates
- Healthcare
- Community News
- Reporting Abuse
- BHDDH Staff Contact List
- Shared Resources



Mental Health Test

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Start the month off by learning about your mental health. Visit the [Mental Health America \(MHA\) website to take the mental health test](#). This test can give you an idea about your mental health and resources to improve it.



We want to learn from you!

We want to continue to learn from the community. Share your feedback about our newsletter by completing our [online newsletter survey](#). We will keep the survey open to make sure we keep getting your feedback.

DDD Updates

Important Newsletter Update

Exciting news and updates are coming to the Newsletter!

DDD's goal is to continue to grow and improve how we share information with the community. To make sure we are sharing the most important, helpful, and useful information, DDD we will change how often the newsletter goes out each month. On the first Friday of every month, we will share our regular newsletter. This newsletter will be just like the newsletter you are reading now. It will have many pages sharing DDD updates, community news, and shared resources.

On the third Friday of every month, we will share a shorter newsletter. This newsletter will include quick updates and community resources.

This change will start in **June 2024**.

We will keep our newsletter survey open. Please can use this survey to let us know what you think about this change.



BHDDH Your Life, Your Rights Program

Everyone has the right to healthcare. That is why the BHDDH Your Life, Your Rights Program is focusing on your healthcare rights this May.

Healthcare includes physical health, which is about body wellness. It also includes mental health, which is about mind wellness. Your healthcare rights make sure get the treatment you need to feel your best. To learn what your healthcare rights are, check out the next page of this newsletter.

If you would like to share your feedback on the Your Life, Your Rights Program, fill out our online [Rights Program Online Survey](#).





Your Life, Your Rights Healthcare

Rights to Healthcare

Everyone has the right to healthcare. This includes physical health and mental health services. Here are your rights to healthcare:



Be treated with dignity and respect



Have free access to an interpreter



Have the same treatment options as everyone else



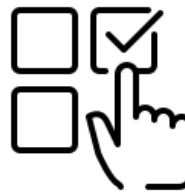
Have the same access to healthcare as everyone else



Make an appointment with your doctor when you need to



Talk to your doctor about starting or stopping treatment



Make decisions about your health



Get health education to help you make choices



Get emergency care when you need it even if you can't pay



To have your personal health records kept private



You decide who can have access to your health information



You can get your medical records at anytime

Contact the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office website to file a healthcare complaint by phone at (401) 274-4400 x1896 or online at www.riag.ri.gov/

Community News

Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM)

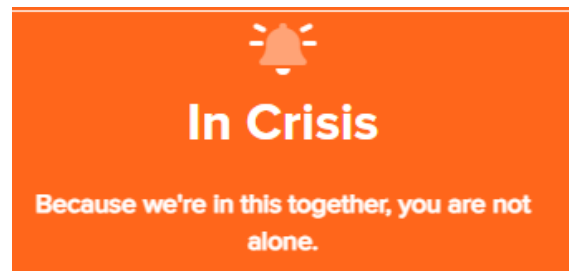
Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM) A quick overview of facts about this month:

- It was founded in 1945 to show how important mental health is to everyone's daily life.
- Mental illness is not always visible, this does not mean it is less important than other visible illness. It affects the brain.
- Mental illness can affect anyone despite gender, race or cultural differences.
- Culture can play a role in how we seek and treat mental illness.
- Drug or Alcohol abuse are factors in mental health illness.

MHAM is about making sure we, as people, understand how to get the help we need when we find ourselves struggling with our mental health. Here at DDD, we understand that our community also struggles with the challenges of day-to-day life that can feel heavy emotionally, physically, and mentally. When we do not feel well mentally, it can make us not feel well physically as well.

Where to get help if you are struggling with your mental health:

- Take the first step to getting help with mental health, drug, or alcohol issues. Visit [FindSupport.gov](https://www.findsupport.gov) to get started.
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) of Rhode Island](#) has many resources to help when you are in crisis.
- The [Importance of Mental Health Awareness Month](#) is a local blog with Lifespan with great data on what Mental illness is and local resources to help.



Community News

Mental Health Awareness Month: Knowing When You Need Help and Calling the 988 Hotline

988 MEANS HELP FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



Everyone has moments in their life where they feel stressed and down. Sometimes it can be difficult to shake these feelings, and people may start to feel worse overtime. A person may start to sleep or eat more or less than usual. They may start to feel irritable or sad. They may have problems in their relationships or trouble focusing. They may also stop feeling joy doing activities they used to enjoy.

If a person feels this way for weeks or months, they may have a mental illness. A **mental illness** is a health condition that changes how a person thinks, feels, and acts. Mental illness is like physical illness, such as colds or broken bones. Instead of making your body feel bad, mental illness makes your mind feel bad.

A mental illness, must be treated like you would a cold. A person with mental illness may be confused about where to go for help. They may even start to have thoughts about hurting themselves or others.

If you start to feel unsafe and that you may hurt yourself or others, you need to get help right away. Call the **988** Suicide & Crisis Lifeline to talk to a trained therapist. You can also visit [BH Link](#), the state's 24-hour mental health crisis center. Call 911 for medical emergencies and other serious situations like fires or crime.

Looking for other mental health resources? Check out these websites:

1. [Mental Health America](#): visit this site to learn more about mental health and where you can go to get help.
2. [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#): visit this site for different guidebooks and flyers on mental wellness. One of the great resources you will find on this website is the guidebook "[What to do when I don't feel okay: Big ideas](#)."



DDD Updates

Women's Healthcare Month

Women's Healthcare Month is recognized yearly with the kickoff of National Women's Health Week (NWHW) beginning on Mother's Day from May 12-18, 2024. This year's theme is [Empowering Women, Cultivating Health: Celebrating Voices, Wellness, and Resilience](#). Supported and lead by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office on Women's Health (OWH). Here are some reason's why this is a National observances:

- Women often juggle many responsibilities and tasks often placing themselves and their health last.
- This month is meant to empower and support women in ways that they make health a priority.
- Raising awareness of many ways women can improve their health.
- With healthcare workers and the community support, women can continue to live health and happy lives.

Some Health conditions effecting women are:

- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Cardiovascular conditions
- Respiratory Conditions
- [Breast Cancer](#)

"Each day of this observance week spotlights a different and timely women's health topic and provides engaging resources to spread the 2024 #NWHW messages. [You can] explore the daily topics and access [U.S. Department of (HHS) and (OWHW)] ready-to-use toolkit [by visiting www.womenshealth.gov/nwhw]." (WomensHealth.gov, 2024)



DDD Updates

Accessibility Tip



Spring feels like it has finally arrived! The weather is warmer, the sun seems brighter, and the breeze is gentler.

Getting outside is a great way to spend the spring days. Many of the Rhode Island state parks are accessible. There are accessible fishing areas, boat ramps, picnic tables, and more. Visit the [Rhode Island State Parks website](#) to learn about park accessibility.

You can also sign up for the [Ocean State Center for Independent Living Adaptive Bike Event](#). This event will take place on Saturday, May 18th at Colt State Park at 1:00pm. This is a free event open to people 14 years or older. You can [sign-up for the Adaptive Bike Event online](#).

The Ride Ahead

Looking for a new film? Check out [The Ride Ahead](#). This is a short film about Samuel Habib, a 21-year-old with a disability that is following his dreams.

The Ride Ahead will be screened for the first time during the May 5 International Film Festival in Boston, MA. Visit [The Ride Ahead website](#) to learn more.



An [audio described version of the trailer](#) is also available.

Community News

Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Health Insurance for Duals



Event: Health Insurance for Duals

Time: Tuesday, May 21 at 6:00 PM

Location: Zoom

Register: [Health Insurance for Duals registration page](#)

The Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) is hosting an information Zoom event for participants with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability (I/DD), their families and caregivers who would like to learn more about how to become "dual-eligible" for both Medicare and Medicaid benefits. This is a wonderful opportunity to understand both benefits and how they can work for you and your healthcare needs.

Many in the I/DD community are eligible for both benefits but often do not know they are able to qualify and receive both services at the same time. This is a unique opportunity to become familiar with the healthcare services available to you as resident of Rhode Island. At this event you will hear from Shamus Durac, a Senior Attorney and Health Policy Analyst.

You do have to register for this event by visiting the [online registration page](#).

and will need to RSVP by **Monday, May 20, 2024**, to attend virtually via Zoom.

In this interview, you will learn:

- How to become "dual-eligible" for Medicare and Medicaid
- Benefits of dual-eligibility
- Options for dual-eligible health coverage

Community News

The new Access Rule and how it will impact you: part 1

The **Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services (Access Rule)** is a policy or movement. The goal of the Access Rule is to improve access to care and quality of care to people getting Medicaid services.

History Behind the New Access Rule you may want to know:

- [Executive Order 14009](#) was passed in 2021. This order protected Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Its goal was to make good health care accessible and affordable for everyone.
- [Executive Order 14070](#) was passed in 2022. This order told agencies to increase the availability of affordable health coverage, improve its quality, strengthen benefits, and help more people sign-up for good health insurance.

Goals of the Access Rule:

- Focus on making sure people getting Medicaid can access covered services.
- Make health outcomes better for people getting Medicaid across both **fee-for-services (FFS)** and **managed care delivery system**, including **home-and community-based services (HCBS)** systems.

Key Points:

- The **Medical Care Advisory Committees (MAC)** meets periodically to discuss various topics related to healthcare access, quality, and affordability This committee includes 25% of people from the **Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)** .
- States are required to create a **Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC)**, is made up of Medicaid recipients, their families, and/or caregivers. It makes sure that Medicaid programs consider the lived experience and perspectives of people, their families, and caregivers when making decisions.
- States must make information about MAC and BAC activities publicly available, including bylaws, meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, and membership lists.
- At least two MAC meetings per year must be open to the public, including a public comment period.

Community News

The new Access Rule and how it will impact you: part 2

Now that we understand the new Access Rule and what States must do under the new rule, let's learn what it means for people getting Medicaid.

What this means for to you:

- The Access Rule will strengthen home and community-based services (HCBS). HCBS make community living possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). This is important because community living is a civil right. HCBS make it possible for people to live in their own homes, stay connected to friends and family, and participate in the community in ways that are meaningful to them. (ACRL, 2024)
- The Access Rule helps make sure the services and supports people get work best for them. The rule does this by:
 - Setting rules for direct care workers.
 - Adding health and safety protections.
 - Improving the quality of care.
 - Makes information more available to the community.

Resource to learn more about the Access Rule: [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov)

Discovering Your Leadership Conference For HHS Workers



Speaker(s): Anthony Rodriguez PhD, Huckel Inclusive

Audience: All staff levels

Registration Link: [Conference registration page](#)

This is a conference at the University of Rhode Island (URI) opportunity for session will introduce Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and discuss the cognitive effects on our brains when we work within a psychologically safe environment to build a positive framework to begin organizational culture change with dialogue, respectful communication, and civil discourse; and explore content through small-group exercises and case studies.

Report Suspected Abuse

QA Hotline 401-462-2629

Mandated Reporting

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

To report abuse and serious incidents call the BHDDH Quality Assurance (QA) Unit hotline at (401) 462-2629. The hotline is open 24-hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and financial exploitation.

BH Link is Here for You

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.

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 a risk of immediate danger.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org



For More Information on DD Initiatives

Newsletters: sign up and view old newsletters on our [News and Updates webpage](#)

Consent Decree: <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>

Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM): [EOHHS CFCM website](#) or [DD Initiatives-CFCM](#)

RI DSP State Workforce Initiative: <https://riswi.org/> or [DD Initiatives-SWI](#)

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Contacting DDD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Send general questions to BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov.

Please do not email critical issues.

Website: www.bhddh.ri.gov

Email: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Phone: 401.462.3421

ESPAÑOL: 401.462.3014

Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts 2/16/2024

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

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Vacant				

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JOIN US

on May 20th

FROM 6-7PM

SCAN TO REGISTER



4th

Installment of our
FREE MONTHLY LEARNING SERIES

FAMILIES

at the Center
of a **Connected Community**

4 Commitments of Community Building

It's always exciting to try something new. And it can also be difficult. Making a commitment to try something we've never done before might make a huge difference in our lives. In this session, we'll explore Starfire's "Four Commitments of Community Building Projects," which help carve out creative space for people with disabilities and their families that feels safe and manageable for everyone.



RHODE ISLAND
Developmental Disabilities Council
Charting a New Course

starfire

Link To Register

<https://bit.ly/3UnUryc>

Need to connect?



nithya@starfirecouncil.org



east bay **community action** program

THE BRIDGE TO SELF-RELIANCE

EBCAP's May is Mental Health Month Events 2024

Mental Health and Substance Crises- Available Emergency Services and Rhode Island Mental Health Law:

- May 9, 2024, 2:00-3:00pm Kimberly Epler, LICSW, East Bay Center,
- 2 Old County Rd, Room 10, Barrington RI 02806

An Exploration of Grief: Healing After the Death of a Loved one and Finding Meaning in the Face of Loss:

- May 9, 2024, 4:00-5:00 pm Felicia Desmarais-Toupin, LMHC, LCDP
- Adams Farley Counseling Center 2nd Floor Conference Room, 610 Wampanoag Trail, East Providence, RI 02914

The Family Role in Recovery from Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

- May 15, 2024, 2:00-3:00pm Andrea Rand, LICSW,
- 6 John H. Chafee Blvd, Community Room, Newport, RI 02840

Auricular Acupuncture uses in Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment

- May 17, 2024, 2:00pm-3:00pm Alisha Shankar, BSN, RN
- East Bay Center, 2 Old County Rd, Room 10, Barrington RI 02806

Mental Health Disparities in the LGBTQIA+ Community

- May 20th 2:00-4:00pm, Quinten Foster, MS
- The Dennis Roy Building, Community Room, 100 Bullocks Point Ave, Riverside, RI 02915

The Impact of Legalization of Drugs on Substance Use Disorders: An Exploration of How Changes in Drug Policy Affect Public Health, Crime Rates, and the Prevalence of Substance Use Disorders.

- May 21, 2024, 2:00-3:00pm Michelle Black, LCDP
- Adams Farley Counseling Center 2nd Floor Conference Room, 610 Wampanoag Trail, Riverside, RI 02914

Opioid Overdose Awareness: What are Opioids? What is an Overdose? How Can We Help?

- May 23, 2024, 3:00-4:00pm Leanne Craven, LICSW, LCDP
- East Bay Center, 2 Old County Rd, Room 10, Barrington RI 02806

MENTAL HEALTH FAIR

Join us for our first ever Providence Schools Mental Health Fair
Hosted by PPSD Students: *Henry Pardo, Rexella Bishop, Nurisbel Santana, Jaziah Marsden, and Simone Punchak*

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024 4:00-6:30PM

LOCATED AT 41 FRICKER ST, PROVIDENCE, RI 02903

IN THE PCTA FIELD HOUSE

We will have:

- Live music
- Give Aways
- Guest Speakers & Vendors on Different Topics
 - Yoga taught by local instructors
 - Food & Light Refreshments
 - & MORE

**Help Break the Stigma around Mental Health.
By doing this we are creating a Safer
and Healthier Tomorrow!**

Providence
Schools

Neighborhood
Health Plan
OF RHODE ISLAND™



YOU'RE INVITED

Join Us for the National Summit To Increase Social Connections

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 | 1:00-4:00 PM ET
 Wednesday, May 15, 2024 | 1:00-3:30 PM ET

Given the importance of elevating innovative approaches to help older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers stay engaged and connected, [Commit to Connect](#) and [engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults](#) are again joining forces to co-host the [National Summit to Increase Social Connections](#).

This virtual summit will bring together national, state, and local leaders — including United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy — working across sectors to address social isolation and loneliness. The summit will spotlight creative technology solutions and innovative programs that you can adapt to the needs of people in your community, along with tools and resources that can help you leverage technology to foster social connection.

The summit is a free event, but you must register to participate! Visit the [event page](#) for more information and the full agenda.

This event will include CART closed captioning and ASL interpretation. Contact info@committtoconnect.org with any questions.

Register for the summit

[Commit to Connect](#) is a cross-sector initiative, established by ACL in partnership with the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health and coordinated by USAging, to reach people who are socially isolated. The aim of the collaboration is to connect people living with isolation with programs and resources to build the social connections they need to thrive.

Funded by ACL and administered by [USAging](#), [engAGED](#) aims to expand and enhance the aging network's capacity by identifying and disseminating resources and strategies that increase social engagement for older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.



[ACL.gov](https://acl.gov)

Advancing independence, integration, and inclusion throughout life

Please do not respond to this e-mail. [Contact the Administration for Community Living](#).

[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

**Register
Today!**
[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

Event: 2024 Annual Breakfast
Date: May 23, 2024
Time: 8:00-10:00 AM
Location: Crowne Plaza, Warwick

Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of **RIPIN's 2024 Annual Breakfast** – a gathering that unites families, professionals, advocates, and community leaders. Join us on **May 23, 2024**, at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick for an inspiring morning celebrating community impact and empowerment.

What to Look Forward To:

- Awards honoring individuals making exceptional contributions.
- Inspirational stories from families and caregivers sharing their journeys.
- Networking opportunities with professionals from diverse sectors.

Reserve Your Seat or Sponsor the Breakfast Today!

Registration is officially open, and spaces are limited! Don't miss out on this opportunity to be a part of the impactful experience. For interested organizations, we offer **Sponsorship Opportunities** [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#) at various levels. Visit the **Landing Page** [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#) for more information about the event.

RIPIN Annual Breakfast Landing Page
[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

Secure your tickets today and join us in making a difference in the lives of Rhode Islanders.

[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

Our sponsorship levels offer you an opportunity to contribute to the work being done at RIPIN every day.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

- Family Service RI
- Rhode Island Health Center Association
- Lifespan Community Relations
- Pace Organization of Rhode Island
- Hospital Association of Rhode Island
- American Lung Association
- Tarzwell & Trubiano Law
- Clifton Larson Allen LLP
- Wood River Health
- Stephen Brunero

RIPIN is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. Please contact communicationsteam@ripin.org to request disability accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreters, alternative formats). Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

[\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

Founded in 1991, RIPIN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that helps thousands of Rhode Islanders each year with health care, special education, and healthy aging. RIPIN uses a model of peer professional support—more than three-fourths of RIPIN's staff are caregivers of a loved one with special health care or special education needs. For more information about RIPIN and its mission, please visit the organization's website at www.ripin.org [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#).

Connect with us!

 [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)  [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)  [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)  [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)  [\[r20.rs6.net\]](#)

Supporting Meaningful Employment: Job Retention and Coaching

Job Retention and Coaching is one of three SME mini-certificate series offered to earn an ACRE certificate. This is an in-person training series instructed by professionals with experience managing and supporting employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



To earn a certificate, learners are required to attend the modules and mentor/fieldwork sessions and satisfactorily complete one fieldwork assignment. Each module takes place from **9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on May 16, 23, 30 and June 6 and 20** at the Sherlock Center. The mentor/fieldwork sessions take place from **9 to 11 a.m. on May 9 and June 27** using Zoom.

Sessions are offered free of charge to participants working for a Rhode Island organization or school, including Self-Directed Supports staff/representatives.

Register at bit.ly/3Q7sLuK

If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL interpreter), materials in an alternate format (e.g. large print) or information in a language other than English to fully participate in this event, please indicate your request on the registration form.

For registration questions, email Vanessa Hollands at vhollands@ric.edu or 401-456-8072.



Rhode Island Statewide Workforce Initiative

SupportWise Workforce Data Summary for Reporting Period July 1, 2023–December 31, 2023

Easy Read Report

This report is about the staff paid to support people with disabilities in Rhode Island. It shares information about Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Frontline Supervisors (FLSs). It is meant to show if the statewide work in Rhode Island is making a difference. It shares information for employers, families, and self-advocates.

Paul V. Sherlock Center

On Disabilities / Rhode Island College



About the Employers

The information in this report is from 34 employers in Rhode Island. All of them serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs). Most provide support where people live. Sometimes, these were group homes (68%). Other times DSPs provided support in people's homes (65%). Nearly all organizations (95%) provided support in places other than where people lived, like where they worked.

About the DSPs

On December 31st, 2023, 3,058 DSPs were working for these employers. Most were female (66%) and most were either White (43%), Black/African American (38%), or Latino/Hispanic (10%). These DSPs were usually between the ages of twenty-one and forty (46%) or forty-one and sixty (37%).

Most DSPs who worked for these employers had been there for less than three years. Slightly less than half had been a DSP for more than three years.

How Long DSPs Stay



How Much Were DSPs Being Paid?

On December 31st, 2023, the average wage for all DSPs was \$20.82/hour. New DSPs were paid \$20.25/hour on average. New DSPs earned almost as much as DSPs who had worked awhile. In 76% of organizations, DSPs could earn bonuses when they did great work. Bonuses are extra pay.

Almost all employers (91%) offered DSPs paid time off. This could be vacation or sick time. About the same number of agencies provided DSPs with health insurance. For both of these benefits, the agencies varied in deciding who could get them, and who could not. Sometimes, full-time staff received better benefits than those who worked part-time.



Frontline Supervisors

On December 31st, 2023,, the 34 organizations employed 310 frontline supervisors (FLSs). FLSs guide and direct DSPs and also provide direct support. Half (50%) of organizations paid FLSs hourly, 38% paid them a set amount each year, and 19% paid some hourly and some annual. Some FLSs got extra pay when they worked direct support (56%), and others did not (44%).

Fewer FLSs were male, not White, and/or spoke a primary language other than English compared to DSPs. Men and people of color had less opportunity to be promoted to the FLS. Organizations should hire and maintain a diverse group of FLSs.

The Problem of Turnover

In Rhode Island over a third of new DSPs left before they had worked six months. Another twenty percent left before they had worked a full year. About two-thirds of DSPs left because they either needed to or wanted to. Too many DSPs who left were fired (32%). A common reason that DSPs leave their jobs early is that they don't understand the job before they start. Other problems include not receiving enough training and supervision when they were new on the job, or not feeling welcomed by others. DSPs are terminated because they didn't

follow the rules or were not a good fit. One of the biggest problems in Rhode Island seems to be that employers are not choosing the right people.

On December 31, 2023, 14% of full-time DSP jobs in Rhode Island had no one to fill them. That meant other DSPs had to work more to keep everyone safe and healthy. It also meant that many people were not able to do things they wanted. Sometimes part-time people could have helped, but 20% of those jobs had no one to fill them. Working more hours can be hard for DSPs and takes them away from their families. Paying overtime is expensive for employers.

The report had both good news and challenging news.

GOOD NEWS

- Starting and average wages have increased a lot since December 2022. Starting wages have gone from \$18.87 in 2022 to \$20.25. Average hourly wages have grown from \$18.94 in 2022 to \$20.82.
- In the 6 months studied, the number of DSPs in Rhode Island grew from 3,013 to 3,058. This is an additional 45 DSPs.
- On the last day of 2023, 34% of DSPs in RI were male - that is high compared to other states and the national data (25%).



- The number of DSPs leaving their jobs has decreased. Turnover was 21% in 2022 and 17% at the end of 2023.
- The number of DSP jobs unfilled has decreased. Vacancies were 17% in 2022 and 14% at the end of 2023.

CHALLENGING NEWS

- Almost 1/3 of the agencies had fewer DSPs on December 31st, 2023 than on July 1st, 2023.
- During this same time, 35% of agencies had to stop accepting new referrals because they did not have enough DSPs.
- Too many DSPs are being hired who end up getting fired soon after.



What do we need to do about this?

- Keep getting data from employers so we can see if the changes are good or bad.
- Figure out how to get data from individuals and families who self-direct and employ DSPs.
- Share this report with other people so they can see our progress.
- Work with employers to reduce the number of staff that leave within 6 months.