



DD News and Updates

# Newsletter

**Volume 24**

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## Happy Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



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# Division Updates

## DD Community Forum next Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>



[Sign-up for the next DD Community Forum online today!](#)

The forum is next Tuesday, March 18, 2025, from 3:00pm to 4:30pm. This is a free event and is open to anyone interested in joining.

The event will feature updates from the Division and community agencies.

## Your Life, Your Rights Program Trainings

The Division is hosting a free, weekly online training about your rights. Each week for a total of five weeks the program will meet on Tuesday from 10:30am to 12pm. Program dates are:

- Tuesday, April 22, 2025
- Tuesday, April 29, 2025
- Tuesday, May 6, 2025
- Tuesday, May 13, 2025
- Tuesday, May 20, 2025



[Sign-up for the Your Life, Your Rights program online.](#)

## New DD Guidebook Resource

The Division has a new resource called the [DD Guidebook \(PDF\)](#). The purpose of this guidebook is to share information about the developmental disability (DD) service system and options. The guidebook includes information about:



- How to apply for services.
- How to pay for services.
- What a Person-Centered Plan (PCP) is and why it matters.
- What the different services are and how to get them.
- Tips to stay healthy and safe in the community.

# Community News: Local

## Self-Advocacy Conference May 2025



The Advocates in Action RI's 2025 Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference is coming soon. This year's theme is "Try Everything," and it's happening Thursday-Friday, May 8-9, 2025! If you've never been to the Self-Advocacy Conference, this is the year to TRY IT!

Day one of the event is free and will be online. Day two of the event is a Dinner Dance that costs \$30. Visit the [Advocates in Action website](#) to learn more and to sign-up.

## Accessibility Tip

The internet is a great tool! With just one click, you can learn about almost anything you want. Yet, with so much information posted online everyday, it can be tricky to find real facts and truthful information. Just because something is posted online, does not mean it is true. There are two types of false or incorrect information:

1. **Disinformation:** when someone shares false or incorrect information on purpose.
2. **Misinformation:** when someone shares false or incorrect information on accident that they think is true.

There are things you can do to avoid false or incorrect information, such as:

- Find and read the original news article instead of what someone else posts about it.
- Check-out the article in more detail instead of just reading the headline.
- Learn more about the author or company the news piece is from.
- Search for other news stories about the topic to get a better idea of what really happened.

This information comes from BBC. Visit [BBC's webpage on information](#) to learn more.

# Community News: Local

## RI Elder Info

**RI Elder Info** is an agency focused on sharing local resources with seniors, caregivers, and professionals. Their information includes:

- Resources and supports you can search by city/town. These resources and supports include:
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Food
  - Libraries
  - Senior centers
  - Case management
- Printable resources.
- Free online newsletter you can sign-up for.
- Online or in-person support groups, including:
  - Pride in Aging Virtual Café.
  - Stroke Support Group.
  - Grandparents Support Group.



Visit the [RI Elder Info](https://www.bhddh.ri.gov/ri-elder-info) website to learn more.

## Living Innovations: SLA Story



Living Innovations has shared a new Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) success story.

This story is about Eliana. Elaina lived in foster care for many years but chose to live in SLA when she turned age 18. For Elaina's full story, visit the end of this newsletter.

# Community Resources

## March Awareness Month

March is month of great changes. The weather starts warming up, and our days get longer with Daylight Savings. March is also a month of celebration:

**1. Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM)**

Visit [the Arc Rhode Island website](#) to learn the history of DDAM and how you can celebrate.

**2. Women's History Month**

Visit the [Rhode Island Historical Society website](#) for a list of events, art exhibits, and more.

**3. Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month**

Visit [Multiple Sclerosis Association of America's website](#) for a list events and resources.

**4. Brain Injury Awareness Month**

Visit [Brain Injury Association of America](#) or [Brain Injury Association of RI](#) for resources.

## Self-Care

Did you know your thoughts have power? Many scientists have found that how we think about things can make us feel better or worse. If we are in a stressful situation that we don't think we can solve, then we tend to feel worse. Yet, if we are in the same situation but think we can solve the problem, then we tend to feel better.

As the [Mayo Clinic](#) explains, some health benefits to positive thinking are:

- Better coping skills.
- Better mental and physical health.
- Less feelings of pain, stress, and depression.
- Less chances of getting sick from colds and other illnesses.



Thinking more positive does not mean you should ignore feelings of stress, sadness, or anger you may have. Instead, it means you challenge the thoughts you have when you feel this way. Your goal is to remind yourself that no matter what you are feeling or going through, you will overcome it. Believe in yourself and reach out to others you trust if you need help.

# Community Events

## Calendar of Events

Explore upcoming events in your community. Unless noted, these events are free and open to the public. You may have to sign-up a few days before the event to go.

Event	Date & Time	Location	Sign-up
“What, Wait! You Want Me to Talk About Sexuality?” by Elevatus Training	Wednesday, April 15, 2025, 2 other dates from 3-4pm	Online	<a href="#">Elevatus Training free online workshop sign-up webpage</a>
“PLAN Special Needs Trust” by the Arc Rhode Island	Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 5pm	Online	Visit the <a href="#">PLAN webinar sign-up page</a>
“Work Pays! An Introduction to Youth SSI Work Incentives” by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 12pm	Online using Zoom	<a href="#">Work Pays online sign-up webpage</a>
“Family Leadership Project 2.0” by Best Life RI and Starfire	Monday, March. 24, 2025, with monthly sessions to Sept. from 6-7pm	Online	Visit the <a href="#">Best Life RI website</a> to sign-up
“Meet the DD Comms Team” by RIPIN	Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 6pm	Zoom	<a href="#">Sign-up for the “Meet the DD Comms Team” event online</a>
“23rd Annual Imagine Walk & Family Fun Day!” by the Autism Project	Sunday, April 27, 2025, at 10am	Goddard Memorial State Park	<a href="#">Autism Project Annual Imagine Walk sign-up webpage</a>
“Annual Breakfast” by RIPIN	Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 8-10am	Crowne Plaza, Warwick	<a href="#">Annual Breakfast online sign-up webpage</a>

# 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](http://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](http://988lifeline.org)



### For More about the Division

Want to find out more about the Division? Visit the [Division's webpage](#). You will find information on services, resources, and more.

To contact Division staff, review the Contact List attached to this newsletter. You can also find a full list of staff on the [Division's Contact Us webpage](#).

You are always welcome to send general questions to [BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov). Please do not email critical issues.

The Division is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM.

**Website:** [www.bhddh.ri.gov](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov)

**Email:** [BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

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Miranda Reyes	Case Manager	601-7852	<a href="mailto:mreyes@childandfamilyri.org">mreyes@childandfamilyri.org</a>
Kayla Rogers	Case Manager	595-3717	<a href="mailto:krogers@childandfamilyri.org">krogers@childandfamilyri.org</a>

### Healthcare Connects Case Managers

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
Amlfi Rosario	Director		<a href="mailto:amalfir@healthcareconnectsri.com">amalfir@healthcareconnectsri.com</a>

### East Bay Community Action Program (CAP) Case Managers

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
Irina Spivak	Director/Supervisor	318-3629	<a href="mailto:ispivak@ebcap.org">ispivak@ebcap.org</a>
Deborah Navarro	Case Manager	208-3338	<a href="mailto:dnavarro@ebcap.org">dnavarro@ebcap.org</a>
Haley Betters	Case Manager	296-7258	<a href="mailto:hbettters@ebcap.org">hbettters@ebcap.org</a>



# Your Life, Your Rights Program

Join the Division's free, weekly online trainings about your rights. Program dates are:

- Tuesday, April 22, 2025
- Tuesday, April 29, 2025
- Tuesday, May 6, 2025
- Tuesday, May 13, 2025
- Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Trainings are from 10:30am to 12pm.

Sign-up for any or all the trainings you are interested in.



**DD Bill of Rights:**  
The rights under your DD Services.



**Safety Rights:**  
Rights to be treated well and feel safe.



**Antidiscrimination:**  
Laws on fair treatment



**Healthcare Rights:**  
Rights to physical and mental health care.



**Relationship Rights:**  
Rights to different relationships.

Use the [program sign-up link](#) or scan the QR code to sign-up



# A Shared Living Story

## Finding her Faith in an SLA

Eliana had spent most of her childhood in foster care with her older sister and brother. Her brother left the home as soon as he could. Her older sister chose to move into a shared living arrangement (SLA) as soon as she turned 18. Eliana had to wait until she too aged out of DCYC care and could make a choice for herself. She chose an SLA, and it has been a life changer!

While in her first SLA, she made new friends and started her own crafts business. She also reconnected with her older sister. After several years in her first Living Innovations SLA, Eliana decided it was time to find a new home. The SLA parted on great terms and still stay in touch.

She was successfully matched with Christina and her life has turned around. Eliana describes Christina as kind, loving and sweet. They go to church together on Sundays and Eliana now has wonderful new friends there. Her face lights up when talking about her decision to have an adult baptism. “I am glad that I did it. It gives a whole new meaning to everything in life”.

Eliana and Christina had a fabulous vacation in New Orleans this past year including Bourbon Street, airboat rides and Noah’s Ark! This is another example of how SLA’s offer great opportunities to see the world.

Eliana thinks that other people should try an SLA. She said, “You can live with someone who will help you with your needs and help you get what you need”. When speaking about her own SLA home provider she again lights up with “She is definitely fun to hang with. She helpful and knows me very well”. She laughs about how her SLA home provider tries to get her to eat better.

Eliana has a home and family of her choice. She has also found her faith.

This story was shared by Living Innovations. For more information about shared living, and more stories of success please visit the [Living Innovations website](#).

