



DD News and Updates

# Newsletter

**Volume 27**

April 11, 2025

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**AUTISM**  
A W A R E N E S S

You can sign-up to get your own copy of this newsletter for free online.

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# Division Updates

## Division Workgroups

Last Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, we put out a [special edition newsletter](#). In this newsletter, we introduced our four new workgroups:

1. Guidance about Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM) and Independent Facilitation (IF).
2. Individual Support Plan (ISP) Guidance (also called a Person-Centered Plan (PCP)).
3. Guidance About Goods and Services.
4. Guidance about Adults with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) Who Are Aging.

We would like to grow the Guidance about Adults with I/DD Who Are Aging workgroup. We would like to enlist adults with I/DD over age 62 and live on their own, in a Shared Living Arrangement (SLA), or with family. The person's family members may also join.

The next workgroup session is on Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, from 10:30am to 12pm. The session will take place online using Zoom. The goal of this meeting is to create a document explaining how older adults can get support.

If you would like to join this workgroup, please contact Steven Seay by email at [Steven.Seay@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:Steven.Seay@bhddh.ri.gov) or phone at 401-462-6609.



# Division Updates

## Sign-up for the Your Life, Your Rights Program

Join the Division's free, weekly online trainings about your rights. You can sign-up for any or all the trainings you are interested in. Use the [program sign-up link](#) to join the program.



### DD Bill of Rights:

The rights under your DD Services.

Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>  
10:30am to 12pm



### Safety Rights:

Rights to be treated well and feel safe.

Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>  
10:30am to 12pm



### Fair Treatment Rights (Anti-discrimination):

Rights to be treated fair.

Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>  
10:30am to 12pm



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

Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>  
10:30am to 12pm



### Relationship Rights:

Rights to different relationships.

Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>  
10:30am to 12pm



### QR Code to Sign-Up:

Hold your cellphone camera up to the QR code. Don't take a picture. Click the link that pops up.

# Community News

## Your Voice, Your Rights: How to Advocate for Laws

As you learn more about your rights, you might wonder how to protect them. One important way is to speak up for what you believe. This is called **advocating for your rights**. You can do this in your town, state, or even at the national level. It means working with others to support or stop laws.

Before a law is made official, it is called a **bill**. It's best to speak up about bills before they become laws, because changes can still be made. But even after a bill becomes a law, you can still advocate for or against it.

Here are some ways to do that:

- **Talk to lawmakers:** Tell them why a law or bill is a good or bad idea. Share your personal story and explain how the law or bill could help or harm you. You can call, email, write a letter, or meet them in person.
- **Spread the word:** Teach your community by sharing facts and stories from other people. This helps others understand why the law or bill matters.
- **Join groups that support your cause:** Many organizations work to protect people's rights. They offer events and resources to help you make a difference.

Speaking up and working with others can help shape the laws that affect our daily lives.

There are many groups you can join to help protect your rights. Two good places to start are [RIPIN](#) and the [Arc Rhode Island](#).

## Impact Newsletter



The University of Minnesota has a free newsletter you can sign-up for. It is called Impact. The Impact newsletter is published three times a year. It shares tips, research, and stories about people with disabilities and their families.

There is one story shared in the latest Impact newsletter we want to let you know about. The story is called "[Urgency, Gratitude, Engagement: Navigating Self-Direction in Rhode Island](#)." It was written by Laura McGreevy, who works at RIPIN. The story talks about RIPIN's Self-Directed Support Program. You can read the story, or have it read out loud online, to learn more about the program.

You can [sign-up for Impact online](#).

# Community News

## Get to Know RIPIN

RIPIN is one of the Division's community partners. RIPIN offers many great resources, like:

- Helping people complete their application for developmental disability services.
- Helping people find the services they need and that service providers work together.
- Offering trainings to people with disabilities, their families, and providers.

RIPIN also focuses on self-directed supports. They have many events and resources about self-direction that may be helpful. To get started learning about RIPIN, check-out the following:

- [Self-directed supports webinars](#)
- [Community Guide](#)
- [Events calendar](#)



## Sherlock Center Work Benefits Videos

The Sherlock Center just shared a new video series! This video series talks about the benefits people can get from their jobs and the incentives which are extra rewards that encourage them to work. There are six videos in the series, with topics such as:

- How to manage benefits
- How to work when you have SSI or SSDI
- Savings account options you can choose from

To learn more and access the videos, visit the [Sherlock Center website](#).

# Community News

## Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons Movie on RI PBS



[Rhode Island \(RI\) PBS](#) will show the movie “Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons.” This is a true story about the Ladd Center in Rhode Island. It shows how people with disabilities were treated in the past and how attitudes have changed over time.

RI PBS will show the movie on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 8:00pm.

Visit the [Ladd Film website](#) for updates.

## Community Provider Network of Rhode Island (CPNRI) Video

[CPNRI](#) is a community agency offering support to those with disabilities. Some of their work includes:

- Working at the [Rhode Island State House](#) to support change
- Training for staff
- Grants to fund new projects

[CPNRI also has a YouTube Channel](#) where people with disabilities can share their stories of art, music, and more. One of CPNRI’s new videos is about [a women with a disability that gets a new job at Home Depot](#). In the video, Brenda, shares a little about her work in the garden center at Home Depot. The video is short (about one and half minutes) but powerful because you get to learn about Brenda and the joy she gets from work.



# Community Resources

## Part-Time Job Opportunity at Sherlock Center



Sherlock Center has a new part-time job opening. The job title is National Core Indicator (NCI) Survey Interviewer.

The NCI survey gathers information to better understand and improve supports for those with disabilities. The survey is done once a year.

The NCI Survey Interviewer job is short-term and will end around June 2025.

People with disabilities and their family members are welcome to apply. Anyone interested must apply by next Tuesday, April 15, 2025. To learn more, and apply, review the [NCI Survey Interviewer job flyer](#).

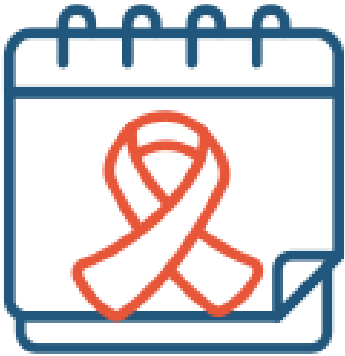
## Community Resource List

It is always a good idea to learn about the resources in your community. Here are a few resources we may not have shared yet that may offer helpful information:

1. [Immigrant Coalition of Rhode Island](#). They share resources on education, health, legal rights, and other important services.
2. [The Arc Rhode Island Building Inclusive Futures](#). This Arc program helps people with disabilities as they transition from child to adult life.
3. [Brown Medicine Geriatrics GUIDE Program](#). This is a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) program. It helps people with dementia by providing better support. In this program, people with dementia and their families or caregivers work with a team of healthcare providers. This team creates a care plan and helps connect them to important services.
4. [SAGE Advocacy and Services for LGBTQ+ Elders](#). They share information about many topics, like equal housing, caregiver support, and more.

# Community Resources

## April Awareness Month



April is the awareness month for many important topics, including:

1. [National Autism Awareness Month](#).
2. [National Minority Health Month](#).
3. [National Parkinson's Awareness Month](#).

Some ways to celebrate awareness months are to:

- **Learn about the topic.** Read articles, watch videos, or talk to people who know about the issue.
- **Share real stories.** Listen to and share the experiences of people affected by the issue.
- **Take action.** Support organizations that make a difference. You can donate money, volunteer your time, or help spread their message.

## Accessibility Tip

**Earth Day is Tuesday, April 22, 2025.** Taking care of our planet is important. It helps keep our environment clean, safe, and healthy for everyone. Small actions from each person can add up to big changes.

- Join [Rhode Island Clean Water Association \(RICWA\) for Earth Day Cleanup 2025](#). This is a free, volunteer event. You will work with other volunteers to clean our local beaches. The event is on **Saturday, April 26, 2025, at 9am**.
- Visit the [Litter Free Rhode Island website](#) for a list of events and resources about cleaning our communities.
- Volunteer with the [Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council](#). They are hosting a take-action event for Earth Day on **Thursday, April 17, 2025, 10am to 12pm**.
- Explore the [Aquidneck Island Earth Week website](#) for a list of events and activities, like Earth Week Bingo.



# Community Resources

## Self-Care: Life is Full of Challenges

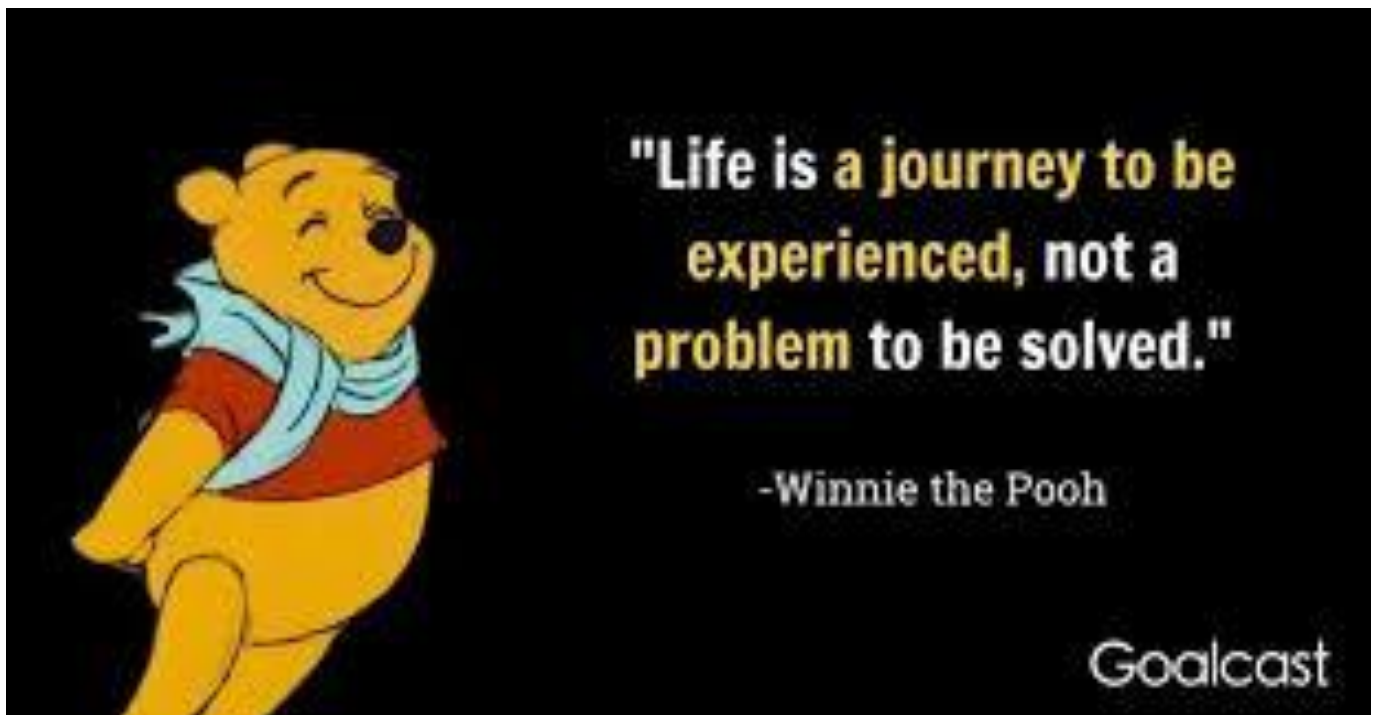
**Life is full of challenges.** Some of them we can overcome with time and effort. Others are bigger than us and beyond our control. No matter the challenge, we have a superpower that helps us get through tough times—**our thoughts**.

We can't control everything that happens, but we can control how we think about it. The way we think affects how we feel and what we do. For example, if we work hard toward a goal but keep falling short, we can look at it in two ways:

1. "I keep failing to meet my goal. I will never make it." Or,
2. "I have not met my goal yet. I know if I keep working hard, I will meet my goal someday. Until then, I will enjoy myself as I get closer and closer to my goal."

Which one do you think will help you stay motivated and feel better? If you said the second one, you're right!

A positive mindset helps us stay focused and keep going—even when things feel tough. Every step forward brings us closer to success!



If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).

# Community Resources

## Self-Care to Manage Tough News: Simple Ways to Stay Calm and Connected

Sometimes, the news can feel overwhelming. If you're feeling stressed or upset by what you see or hear, here are some ways to take care of yourself:

### Tips to Handle Overwhelming News

- **Limit your news intake** – It's okay to take breaks from the news. Try checking updates only once or twice a day instead of constantly.
- **Choose trusted sources** – Stick to reliable news outlets that focus on facts instead of scary headlines.
- **Choose easy-to-understand sources** – Some news can be confusing or upsetting. Look for sources that explain things clearly.
- **Talk to someone** – Share your feelings with a friend, family member, or support worker. Talking can help you process what's happening.
- **Focus on what you can control** – If the news makes you feel helpless, find small ways to help, like volunteering or supporting a cause.
- **Use calming activities** – Listen to music, do a favorite hobby, or spend time outside to relax.

### Helpful Resources

- [A Guide for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#) – Offers advice on navigating challenges and finding support.
- [Coping Strategies for Adults with Disabilities](#) – Provides stress management tips, including hobbies and support systems.
- [Supporting Family Caregivers of Adults with I/DD](#) – Resources for caregivers, including self-care strategies.

Taking care of your mental health is important. If the news ever feels like too much, remember that you can step away and focus on things that bring you peace. Let me know if you'd like more suggestions!

# Community Events

## Calendar of Events

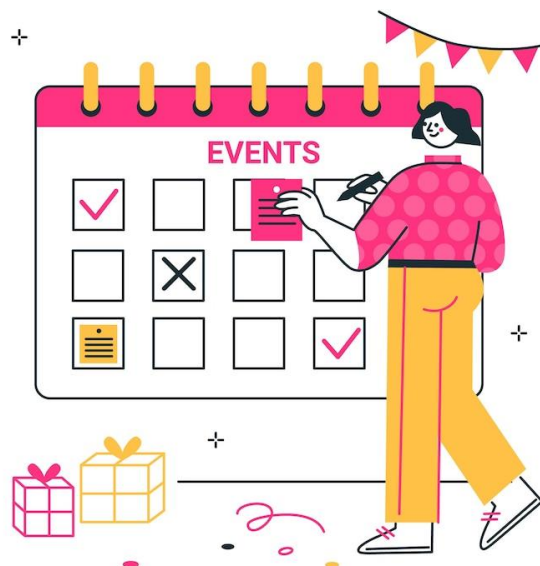
Explore upcoming events in your community. Unless noted, these events are free and open to the public. You may have to sign-up a few days before the event to go.

Event	Date & Time	Location	Sign-up
“Introduction to Person-Centered Thinking” by Sherlock Center	Tuesdays and Wednesdays, April 15, 16, 22, 23 10 - 11:30am	Zoom	<a href="#">Person-Centered Thinking online sign-up.</a>
“What, Wait! You Want Me to Talk About Sexuality?” by Elevatus Training	Tuesday, April 15, 2025, and 2 other dates from 3-4pm	Online	<a href="#">Elevatus Training free online workshop sign-up webpage.</a>
“Self-Direction for the Long Haul” by Applied Self-Direction	Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 2-3pm	Online	<a href="#">Self-Direction for the Long Haul online sign-up.</a>
“Self-Directed Supports Network Online Meeting” by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 7-8:30pm	Online	<a href="#">Self-Directed Supports Network meeting online sign-up.</a>
“Self-Directed Toolkit” by RIPIN	Saturday, April 26, 2025, at 10 am	Zoom and in-person	Learn more on the <a href="#">RIPIN Self-Directed Toolkit event page.</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>
“SSI Overview” by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 12-1pm	Zoom	<a href="#">SSI Overview online-sign-up.</a>
“Family Employment Awareness Training-Youth (FEAT-Y)” by Sherlock Center	Tuesdays and Wednesdays, May 5, 8, 12 and 15 from 4:30-6pm	Zoom	FEAT-Y <a href="#">online-sign-up.</a>

# Community Events

## Calendar of Events

Event	Date & Time	Location	Sign-up
“Mental Health Support for Consumers with I/DD” by RIPIN	Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 6pm	Zoom	Learn more on the <a href="#">RIPIN Mental Health Support for Consumers with I/DD webpage</a> .
“SSDI Overview” by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 12-1pm	Zoom	<a href="#">SSDI Overview online sign-up</a> .
“Annual Breakfast” by RIPIN	Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 8-10am	Crowne Plaza, Warwick	<a href="#">Annual Breakfast online sign-up webpage</a>
“Work Pays! An Introduction to Youth SSI Work Incentives” by Sherlock	Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 12-1pm	Zoom	<a href="#">Work Pays online sign-up</a> .
“Family Leadership Project 2.0” by Best Life RI and Starfire	TBD monthly sessions through Sept. from 6-7pm	Online	Visit the <a href="#">Best Life RI website</a> to sign-up



# 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.

# A Shared Living Story

By Living Innovations



What could be more wonderful than news that you just had your first grandchild? Most people's instincts are to drop everything and run, but Patti could not do that. Patti is a shared living provider to her sister Lori, and Patti's grandchild was in Germany! Respite would take time to set up. Patti turned to her Living Innovations Coordinator, Mallory for help.

"Respite" is a service offered to every Shared Living Arrangement (SLA) home provider. It is a way for the home provider to get some relief from the responsibilities of providing care. It can be used as needed by the home provider. It can be for an occasional hour here or there, or as in Patti's situation, it can be for many days or weeks.

Living Innovations is one of the few agencies in Rhode Island that vets, trains and contracts with each respite provider. As independent contractors of the agency, there were many choices for respite care for Patti to choose from. Each person doing respite has been through a clearance process, as well as having completed a state required training (and more). Currently there are dozens of qualified respite provider willing to help an SLA family.

Mallory was able to help Patti and Lori make a choice about the best respite provider for Lori and the introductions have started. Patti is relieved to know that the agency would be there to help her. She states, " I trust Living Innovations and their process for contracting providers who are safe, reliable, and experienced."

Not only has respite planning started, but plane tickets are being purchased. Patti stated "You are always there for Lori and us! We all appreciate your support and care. Thank you for making the trip to Berlin possible, to see my daughter and grandson !!!

Living Innovations, a service of Mosaic, has many qualified respite providers for their SLAs as well as for people living with their family. If you have a respite need, please call 401 732-0304.



## Division of Developmental Disabilities Staff Contacts

<b>Main Phone:</b> (401) 462-3421	<b>Website:</b> <a href="https://bhddh.ri.gov/">https://bhddh.ri.gov/</a>
<b>Fax Phone:</b> (401) 462-2775	<b>Behavioral Health Link (BH Link):</b> (401) 414-5465
<b>Spanish Phone:</b> (401) 462-3014	<b>Report Abuse:</b> (401) 462-2629
<b>TDD:</b> (401) 462-3226	

### Administrative Team

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#### Unit 2

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### Unit 3

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