



DD News and Updates

# Newsletter

**Volume 28**

May 9, 2025

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## Mental Health Awareness Month



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

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# Division Updates

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

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Division launched the Your Life, Your Rights weekly online training. The Division partnered with Advocates in Action to deliver the trainings (thank you to our co-presenters!). Since then, the training program has had three lessons:

1. **DD Bill of rights:** Rights you have when it comes to your DD Services.
2. **Safety Rights:** Rights to be treated well and feel safe.
3. **Fair Treatment Rights (Anti-discrimination):** Rights to be treated fair.

If you missed any of these trainings, don't worry! We are working to create the training recordings and slides to share.

There are two more upcoming trainings:

1. **Healthcare Rights:** Rights to physical and mental health care.  
Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> 10:30am to 12pm
2. **Relationship Rights:** Rights to different relationships.  
Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> 10:30am to 12pm

These trainings are free and take place online using Zoom. You can sign-up for the trainings using the [program sign-up link](#).

We hope you can join us!



# Community News

## Focus Group for Staff

There is an exciting new opportunity for staff. This opportunity is about updating the NADSP Code of Ethics. **NADSP** stands for National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals. The NADSP works to promote strong ethical standards in direct support. **Ethical standards** are rules and guidelines about what staff should and shouldn't do.

Direct Support Professionals and Frontline Supervisors are invited to join a focus group. The focus group will work together to update the NADSP Code of Ethics.

The focus group will last 90-minutes and will take place online. In the focus group, members will:

- Review suggested updates to the Code of Ethics.
- Give feedback based on lived experience.
- Talk about how the Code can support staff in making ethical decisions at work.

As a thank-you, members will get a \$25 gift card by email after the session.

To sign up, visit the [NADSP Focus Group sign-up webpage](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kristin McGill at [nadspcoev2@umn.edu](mailto:nadspcoev2@umn.edu).

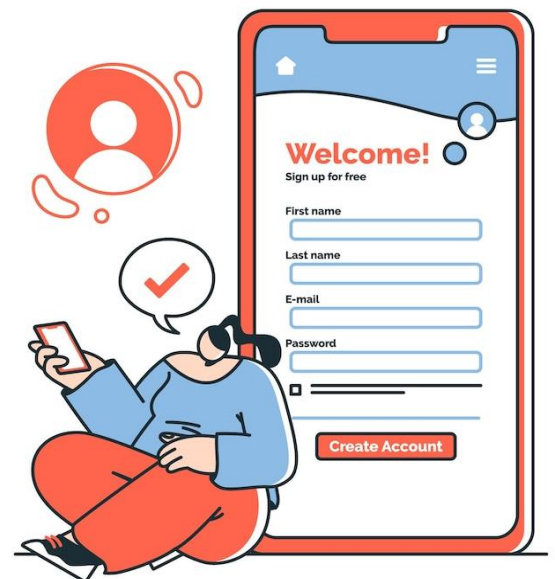
## Elevatus Training

The company Elevatus Training is inviting adults with disabilities age 18 to 24 to join a new class. The class is six weeks long and focuses on sexuality.

The class starts on Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm to 8pm.

You will get \$50 for each class you go to.

To learn more and to sign-up, visit the [Elevatus online class flyer](#).



# Community News

## New Resources from RIPIN

RIPIN just came out with a new resource. The resource is called the [Self-Direct Support Toolkit](#). This toolkit has tools and tips people can use if they self-direct. It is also helpful for people who use agency services. For example, it shares a copy of a person's weekly schedule and a blank version you can use to make your own. It also shares handouts you can use to list your routines, make weekend plans, and more. We encourage everyone to check it out.

RIPIN shared this toolkit for the first time on April 26<sup>th</sup>. While there is no recording of the event, you can find a copy of the [Self-Directed Tool Kit presentation slides online](#).



## Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons

Congratulations to the makers of the film "[Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons](#)"! This film explores the history of how people with disabilities were treated in Rhode Island. It was produced by [Advocates in Action](#) and co-directed by Jim Wolpaw and Bob Macaux.

A congratulations is in order because the film was just shown on TV for the first time! Rhode Island PBS aired the film on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>!



# Community Resources

## Know Your Rights Resources

There is an old saying that “knowledge is power.” This means the more you know, the more control you have over an outcome. When it comes to your rights, the more you know then the better you will be able to protect yourself. Here are a few local resources to help you learn and protect your rights:

1. [Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights \(Commission\)](#). The Commission is a state agency. They focus on making sure fair treatment laws are followed. They offer free training about fair treatment rights the state and federal government must follow. They also have a way for people who have been treated unfairly to report the situation.
2. [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) of Rhode Island](#). The ACLU is a non-profit organization focused on protecting rights and freedom. On their website, the ACLU shares tools to learn your rights in English and Spanish. They also share tips on how you can get active in protecting your rights.
3. [Human Rights Campaign \(HCR\)](#). HCR focuses on supporting fair treatment of all people. Their special focus is on LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, plus) rights. The HCR website shares many resources, including a chance to explore LGBTQ+ rights in Rhode Island.
4. [Center for Justice](#). The Center for Justice works with other community agencies to protect people’s rights. They offer support with many things, including housing rights, immigrant rights, and student rights.
5. [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People \(NAACP\)](#). The NAACP is a nation-wide organization with a [local group in Rhode Island](#). They focus on civil rights and social justice.



# Community Resources

## Accessibility Tip

Next Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, is Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD). GAAD focuses on teaching others about accessibility. The goals are to make sure people understand:

- Why it is important for everyone to be able to find and use information.
- How to make information accessible so people can find and use it.
- Why it is important to include people with all abilities.
- How to include people with all abilities.

Visit the [GAAD website](#) to learn more about this event. You also get to learn from people with disabilities on how accessibility has helped them reach their goals.

Visit the [Deque website](#) for a list of free trainings about accessibility. You will also learn about the Deque University Scholarship for People with Disabilities. This is a free online class about accessibility open to people with disabilities.

For another interesting take on accessibility, visit the [ACCESS ACES blog](#). In a new blog post, the author shares what people with disabilities must give up or go through to use websites. The post is called, “What Disabled People Have to Give Up in the Name of Accessibility.” This is helpful for anyone that shares information online.



# Community Resources

## Self-Care and Mental Health

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health is how well your mind is working so you can cope with stress, learn, and do things you enjoy.

There are many ways you can take care of your mental health. Many of these ways also help you take care of your body, or physical health. For example, getting enough sleep and eating healthier foods can improve both your mental and physical health.

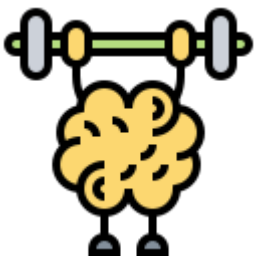
Here are some ways you can take care of your mind and body:



1. Try to get at least 7 hours of sleep each night. It may help to read or journal before bed instead of using the internet or social media. Visit the [Mayo Clinic](#) for more tips on better sleep.



2. Make small changes to your diet so you eat more fresh foods. Many of the tasty foods we eat are processed. Processed foods are things like canned foods, chips, soda, cereal, and more. They are foods often made in factories with unhealthy ingredients. Make small changes to your diet each day. Start by switching out your favorite snack for something fresh like berries or veggies. For more tips on healthier eating, visit [Healthline](#).



3. Do something that gets your body moving. This may be dancing, lifting weights, going for a walk, and more. For those of us with limited mobility, we may try modified workouts. This can be chair exercises, water exercises, or using adaptive exercise tools. Visit the [Choose PT website](#) for more ideas.

For anyone that needs mental health support now, help is available. You can call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](#). If you are a member of the LGBTQ+ community, you can also visit the [Trevor Project](#).

# 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
“Family Employment Awareness Training-Youth (FEAT-Y)” by Sherlock Center	Tuesdays and Wednesdays, May 12 and 15 from 4:30-6pm	Zoom	FEAT-Y <a href="#">online-sign-up</a> .
“Rhode Island’s Workforce Development Initiative” by Advancing Employment	Tuesday, May 13, 2025, 2-3pm	Online	<a href="#">Learn more and sign-up on the Advancing Employment website</a> .
“2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Mental Health Fair” by Providence Schools	Wednesday, May 14, 2025, 4-6pm	41 Fricker St, Providence	Visit the <a href="#">Providence Schools website</a> . No sign-up needed.
“Wellness Fair” by The RI Nurses Institute Middle College Charter High School	Wednesday, May 14, 2025, 10am-2pm	150 Washington St., Providence	Visit the <a href="#">RI Nurses Institute Middle College Charter High School website</a> . No sign-up needed.
“Supporting Meaningful Employment: Job Retention and Coaching” by Sherlock Center	Thursday, May 15 to June 12, 2025, at different times	Sherlock Center, Rhode Island College	<a href="#">Sign-up for the Supporting Meaningful Employment series online</a> .
“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> .
“Georgia’s Disability Justice Journey and Employment” by Advancing Employment	Tuesday, May 20, 2025, 2-3pm	Online	<a href="#">Learn more and sign-up on the Advancing Employment website</a> .
“SSDI Overview” by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 12-1pm	Zoom	<a href="#">SSDI Overview online sign-up</a> .

# Community Events

## Calendar of Events Part 2

Event	Date & Time	Location	Sign-up
"Annual Breakfast" by RIPIN	Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 8-10am	Crowne Plaza, Warwick	<a href="#">Annual Breakfast online sign-up webpage.</a>
"Friendships at Work" by Advancing Employment	Tuesday, May 27, 2025, 2-3pm	Online	<a href="#">Learn more and sign-up on the Advancing Employment website.</a>
"Let's Talk About Money" by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 4:30-6:30pm	Sherlock Center, Rhode Island College	<a href="#">Learn more and sign-up on the Talk About Money event page.</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.
"Scoop, Snack, Chat: A Sweet Social Gathering" by RIPIN	Wednesday, June 26, 2025, 4pm-6:30pm	imPOSSIBLE Dream, Warwick	Sign-up details will be shared soon.

This Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> is Mother's Day! To all the mothers, Happy Mother's Day!



# 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](https://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.



## 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	

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### Unit 3

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