



DD News and Updates

Newsletter

Volume 33

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**Happy Disability
Pride Month**

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

Website: www.bhddh.ri.gov

Email: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Phone: 401.462.3421

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Community News

Rights Tip



One popular activity of advocacy work is peaceful protests or rallies. These are events in the community large groups of people go to. The events are usually focused on one or a few topics the group wants to raise awareness about. For example, a group of workers might hold a peaceful protest outside their job. They may do this to let their bosses and the public know that the company needs to improve working conditions for workers.

Peaceful protests have a large and important history in our country. They have played key roles in the Civil Rights Movement, disability rights, and more.

There are two things to learn about peaceful protests should you decide to join one some day.

- 1. Your rights to protest.** [According to the ACLU](#), everyone in the country has the right to protest. You can protest in public places like parks, but you should stay out of the street. You can record or take pictures. If you are stopped by police, you do not have to show them your phone or stuff. The police may pat you down if they suspect you have something dangerous. If you are arrested, you have the right to a lawyer. Visit the ACLU website to learn more.
- 2. Accessibility of protests.** Protests often involve long hours of standing or walking in large crowds. They don't often have bathrooms or water stations. If you want to go to a protest but worry about the access challenges, there are things you can do. [The Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund \(DREDF\) shares helpful tips](#). For example, you can go with a friend and let others know where you will be. Or you can set up rest tables with food and supplies to help other protesters. Visit the DREDF website to learn more.

Community News

Sherlock Center Training Series for Professionals

The Sherlock Center is hosting a training this fall. The training is called “Supporting Meaningful Employment (SME) Series.” The SME Series is for staff focused on helping adults with disabilities find meaningful careers. People who go to the training will learn how to better help with:

- Career planning.
- Job development.
- Job retention.

The training includes 12 modules. At the end, people can earn an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Basic Employment Services Certificate.

The SME Series will start in September.

[To learn more and to sign-up, visit the SME Series webpage.](#)



RIPIN Employment Services for Those Who Self-Direct



RIPIN is hosting an online training on August 26th at 6pm. The training is called, “Employment Supports for Those Who Self-Direct.” This event will share employment service options people have available to them.

[To learn more and sign-up, visit the RIPIN employment event sign-up page.](#)

Community News

A Shared Living Story by Living Innovations

Peter & Marie Build a Shared Living Community!



Let me tell you about one of the amazing home providers that I met in my short time employed at Living Innovations. Marie and Peter, along with her son Michael, have been sharing a home in Pawtuxet Village in Warwick, RI for the past 11 years. Over this time, they have become “family” and are all actively involved in their community.

Recently, Marie became ill and was hospitalized. In addition to letting Living Innovations know her situation, Marie was quick to reach out to her community of family and friends. They all knew Peter and Marie and quickly stepped up to offer support to them both. Due to their consistent involvement in their community, Peter was able to remain in his home with support from Marie’s sister, Dianne, (an approved respite provider), who stayed overnight. People from the church where they regularly attend, and many caring neighbors offered to help Peter. Peter was checked upon frequently by Living Innovations and his community. This is a true testament of “It takes a village”. Without Marie’s commitment to Peter and their joint involvement with his community this could have been a difficult situation.

Marie has often stated that she lives in “Hallmark Town”, and I think she and Peter are part of the reason that this idyllic community is so wonderful.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melanie Simmons, Shared Living Coordinator, Living Innovations

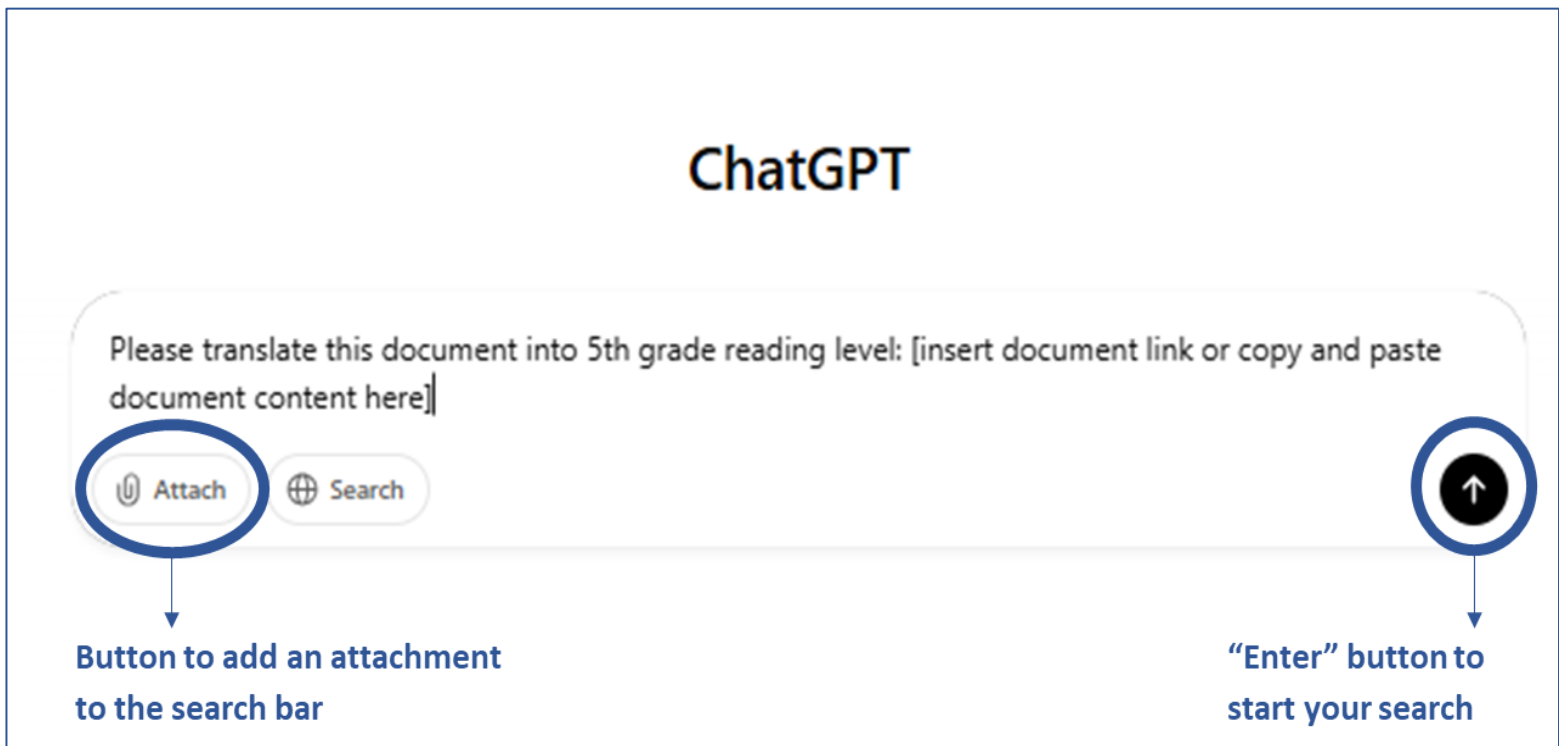
Community Resources

Accessibility Tip

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the latest technology tool. AI is a computer system's ability to do things people do. For example, AI can learn, problem solve, make choices, and more. For this Accessibility Tip, we will teach you one way you can use AI in your everyday life using AI chatbots like [ChatGPT](#).

AI chatbots are online computer chat agents you can ask questions to. You can even ask the AI chatbot how to do things. For example, let's say you come across a letter or article that is hard to read. You need to know what is on the document but can't understand it. You can ask the AI chatbot to translate it into simple language. Here is how you can do this:

1. Open [ChatGPT](#) in your web browser.
2. In the search bar, type something like "Please translate this document into 5th grade reading level." There are many ways you can share the document you want translated. You can include a link to the document. You can copy and paste the information in the document into the search bar. Or you can attach the document file into the search bar.
3. Press "Enter" and the AI chatbot will share the rewritten article in an easier reading level.



Community Resources

Self-Care

Most of us will agree that technology has done great things for us. It has allowed us to meet new people from across the world, helped scientists find new treatments, and so much more! Yet, like with all great things, we need to balance our technology use. This is because spending too much time online playing games or going on social media can cause us harm. It can lead to:



- Trouble sleeping
- Feelings of depression or anxiety
- Low confidence and self-esteem

Luckily, there is something we can do to protect ourselves. We can go on digital detoxes, which are just periods of time where we don't use technology as much. Here are a few ways you can go on a digital detox:



- Schedule time each day to use technology. For example, you can give yourself 2 hours each day to use technology. The rest of your day can be spent doing other things.
- Choose one week or weekend a month to stay off social media. Spend time with people or in nature instead.
- Make it a rule that you stop using your cellphone or tablet 1 hour before you go to bed.
- Download an app to help you limit screen time. Some apps can help you set limits and even block distracting apps.



According to [WebMD](#), digital detoxes helped people feel more clam, focused, rested, and confident. Give a digital detox a try if you think you've become too attached to things like social media.

If you or someone you know needs support now, 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
“Accessibility is Beautiful 2025 & FRINGEPVD! Together for one amazing day!”	Saturday, July 26, 2025, 11am-3pm	The Steel Yard, 27 Sims Avenue Providence, RI 02909	Accessibility is Beautiful event page.
“Working With Benefits - Yes, You Can!” by Sherlock Center	Wednesday, July 30, 2025, 12-1pm	Zoom	Working With Benefits sign-up webpage.
“Introduction to Person-Centered Thinking” by Sherlock Center	Tuesday to Thursday, Aug. 5 to 7 11am-1pm	Zoom	Person-Centered Thinking training sign-up.
“Supporting Meaningful Employment: Job Retention and Coaching” by Sherlock	Thursdays, August 7 to September 4, 2025, at different times	In-person	Join the Job Retention and Coaching training program online.
“Black and Aging Health and Wellness Fair” by Butler Hospital	Friday, August 8, 2025, 9am-1pm	West End Community Center 109 Bucklin Street Providence, RI 02907	Open to the public; no sign-up needed
“Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Overview” by Sherlock	Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 12-1pm	Zoom	SSDI Overview sign-up webpage.

Community Events

Calendar of Events Part 2

Event	Date & Time	Location	Sign-up
“Top Concerns as People with IDD Age” by IDD Perspectives	Thursday, August 21, 2025, 1-1:30pm	Online	Top Concerns event online sign-up.
“3 rd Annual Resource Fair & Backpack Drive” by the Arc Rhode Island	Friday, August 22, 2025, 11am-3pm	The imPOSSIBLE Dream, Warwick	Backpack Drive event flyer.
“Employment Services for Those Who Self-Direct for 2025” by RIPIN	Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 6:00 PM	Online	Employment Services event sign-up.
“Work Pays! An Introduction to Youth SSI Work Incentives” by Sherlock	Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 12-1pm	Zoom	Work Pays sign-up webpage.
Latin Expo 2025 that features a job fair by Latina 100.3 FM	Saturday, October 25, 2025, 11am - 4pm	Farm Fresh RI at 10 Sims Ave, Providence	Open to the public; no sign-up needed



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 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. 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

Main Phone: (401) 462-3421	Website: https://bhddh.ri.gov/
Fax Phone: (401) 462-2775	Behavioral Health Link (BH Link): 988
Spanish Phone: (401) 462-3014	Report Abuse: (401) 462-2629
TDD: (401) 462-3226	

Administrative Team

Name	Job Title	Phone	Email
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Tracy Levesque	Associate Director, Clinical and RICLAS	462-0209	Tracy.Levesque@bhddh.ri.gov

Social Caseworker Units

Unit 1

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Unit 2

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Unit 3

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Eligibility Unit

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SIS Unit

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Residential

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