DD Community Forum

The next DD Community Forum will be held via Zoom on Monday, November 16th 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Go to this link to register: http://www.tinyurl.com/NovDDCommunityForum

If you need help to register call 877-532-5543.

You can also watch the forum at Facebook.com/AdvocatesinActionRI

BHDDH Offices Closed on Upcoming November Holidays

November has three State holidays on which the BHDDH offices will be closed.

Tuesday, November 3 - Election Day
Women were granted the right to vote 100 years ago this year with the passage of the 19th amendment; a wonderful reminder that voting is a privilege and one of the most important rights we, as American citizens, enjoy. Please vote, if you haven’t already.

Wednesday, November 11 - Veterans Day
A sincere thank you for your service to all our veterans!

Thursday, November 26 - Thanksgiving
Here’s hoping everyone enjoys a wonderful (albeit small) celebration of family.
Have a Safe Halloween!

Whatever you do this Halloween, remember the 3W’s, be safe, and have fun!

For more information, see the Reopening RI Tips for a Safer Halloween attached at the end of this bulletin.

3 W’s to reduce risk of COVID-19

Wear a mask  Wash your hands  Watch your distance

Opinion/Power: Accomplishments Go Hand-in-Hand with Opportunities

by A. Kathryn Power, published 10/23/20 in the Providence Journal

A. Kathryn Power is the director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.

In a world obsessed with what we’ve done and what we’ve accomplished, it’s easy to forget that before we can have accomplishments, we need opportunities.

This truth is on display all around us — each time we see others reaching their goals, or sharing stories on how they succeeded.

I recall a “Take Your Legislator to Work” gathering earlier this year at the Red White & Brew coffee shop in North Smithfield. The event happened just before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the tone was upbeat as speakers described how lives were changed when people found work and were able to do something that is meaningful to them, and useful to others.
Their achievements, and the opportunities that led to them, carry an important message for millions of Americans who have physical, emotional, intellectual or developmental disabilities. Along with those we celebrated that day, these are individuals who are challenged in some way with physical activities, or learning, or communicating.

They might have Down syndrome, or be on the autism spectrum. They might use a wheelchair, or have difficulty hearing or seeing. Regardless of the condition, they are challenged by tasks that most people take for granted. This can have a profound impact on their lives, and the lives of parents, siblings and caregivers. Yet to people outside that small circle, their challenges are unknown.

Each October, the U.S. Department of Labor observes National Disability Employment Awareness Month, reminding us of these challenges and the importance of inclusive hiring practices that enable people with physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities to work, have a place to live, further their education and become as self-sufficient as possible. This year’s observance is the 75th, and it also marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as others.

The theme for 2020 is “increasing access and opportunity,” which is all the more critical in the wake of COVID-19. Before the pandemic, individuals with limitations were twice as likely to be unemployed as those who do not have a disability. COVID-19 has widened the gap, causing layoffs and furloughs as well as voluntary decisions to stop working, because individuals with debilitating conditions are more likely to have underlying medical complications that make exposure to COVID-19 more dangerous.

Of course, the pandemic will pass at some point and the need for jobs will be as great as ever. We welcome this. As participants from the North Smithfield event can tell you, no one should be defined by a disability, because having one does not change a person’s innate desire to work or start their own business, be productive, contribute to the economy and be part of something larger than themselves.

In Rhode Island, this is why we pursue a person-centered approach that matches the interests of individuals who have disabilities with the needs of employers, and it’s why we are working to increase employment rates through efforts such as the collaborative cross-disability program, “Let’s Get to Work!”

We know there is great interest, because we see these individuals working as clerks, store managers, business owners, artists, cooks, and the list goes on. The staff list at the Red White & Brew coffee shop and the adjoining Budding Violet gift shop includes owner Sheila Coyne and her son, Michael, who has autism and who, just a few years ago, was looking for work. Today, at 24, he is thriving and thrilled to be running a business.

October is a great time to remember the importance of opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and the value of their contributions.
Update on Contact Tracing from Governor Raimondo
Governor’s COVID-19 Communication of 10/28/20

Rhode Island’s COVID-19 numbers are not in a good place. We’re nearing our own metrics to move back an entire phase, and the projections for our hospitalizations are alarming. We know that hospitalizations tend to follow the same trends as cases a week or two later, and given the current case numbers, that’s a big concern.

As we’ve been saying over the past few weeks, the increase in cases is being driven by casual gatherings with family and friends where our guards are down and our masks are off. And the truth is, we’re spending time with too many people. For the next few weeks, while we all work to turn around the trend, I’m asking you to limit your interactions only to those you need to see. Please stay within this closed circle.

On that note, I want to talk to you about a critical component of turning our numbers around in the next few weeks: contact tracing. Right now, we’re in a new phase of fighting this virus, and our contact tracing system is being pushed to its limits. I want to tell you about what we’re doing on the state side to shore up our system and what you can do to help.

As of today, we have 300 total contact tracers, with about 80 of them dedicated exclusively to K-12. This month alone we’ve onboarded nearly 100 new contact tracers, and we’re continuing to staff up in the weeks ahead.

In addition to staffing changes, we’re also looking at how we can streamline the contact tracing process and leverage technology to make our system more efficient and effective. But we also need your help. The reality is that our system is getting stretched primarily because people have way too many close contacts. If you’re following our public health guidance, you shouldn’t have more than a handful of close contacts. If everyone kept their circle small and consistent, then even with hundreds of cases per day, we wouldn’t have any trouble keeping up with the contact tracing.

But that’s not what’s happening. We’re seeing cases with 50 or 60 close contacts. The more close contacts you have, the more you’re likely to spread the virus. It also means that a contact tracing job that should take one person a couple hours could take a team of people a few days to get through. That bogs down our entire system and increases the chances that someone spreads the virus before we can contact them.

We also need Rhode Islanders to be more diligent about logging your close contacts. Download the CRUSH COVID app or use a contact tracing journal so that as soon as a contact tracer reaches out to you, you can provide the information they need immediately. We know we need to step up and improve our system—that’s why we’re bringing on more staff and making changes. But we also need you to help us. Our contact tracing system is only as good as the information we’re given.

Please, take some time today to go over your contact tracing journal and fill in any days you might have skipped. As cases rise, every second will count in our prevention efforts. Reducing your circle and diligently recording your contacts is the easiest way to help us keep our case numbers down.

The State is currently looking to hire 100 case investigators at the Department of Health. If you have customer service experience and can work full-time, including some nights and weekends, for at least the next 6 months, please apply today. Visit health.ri.gov/covidjobs [r20.rs6.net] to learn more.
One Million COVID-19 Tests

Rhode Island reached a milestone this week in our state's response to COVID-19: we've run our one millionth test. It took us nearly six months from our first case to reach 500,000 tests, and it's only taken us another two months to reach 1,000,000. Because of this unprecedented testing effort, we've been able to quickly identify and isolate positive cases. That's more important than ever right now, as our cases are increasing and we're at a crucial crossroads in combatting this virus. If we recommit ourselves to the 3Ws: wearing a mask, watching our distance and washing our hands, and get tested frequently -- even if we don't have any symptoms -- then we can stem the tide of our rising case numbers. It won't be easy, but we can do it together.

Visit the State’s New Virtual Career Center

This November, in partnership with Google and the tech-for-social-impact nonprofit Research Improving People’s Lives, the State of Rhode Island will launch a Virtual Career Center and a first-of-its-kind Artificial Intelligence-powered job-matching tool to help Rhode Islanders who are out of work.

Right now, if you visit BackToWorkRI.com, you can search and apply for 100+ job openings and more than a dozen job training programs that have already been created through Back to Work. You can also chat with “Skipper” – the new virtual assistant – and complete a career recommendation assessment, where you fill out information about your skills and interests to receive personalized notifications when there are job openings that might be a good fit.

The Virtual Career Center will launch on November 30, 2020. Exciting new features and opportunities will be added to this site over the coming months, so check back often!

We're at a critical point in Rhode Island’s fight against COVID-19. Yesterday, we identified 449 new cases – a new peak for our state. We all need to work together, right now, to turn this around.

At a time like this, it's easy to focus on the bad. But the truth is, through all of it, I've never been prouder to be a Rhode Islander. The way in which this state has stepped up, lent a hand to one another, and continued to rally together against this virus inspires me every day.

I know we've been asking a lot of you. We're worried about our health, our families, our businesses, our jobs. And on top of that, we're constantly trying to remember to wear our masks, and keep our distance, and check ourselves for symptoms, and do a dozen other things. It's hard, and it's tiring. But this is a team effort. Rhode Islanders are tough. We're resilient. When we get weary, we lift one another up.

We've seen throughout this crisis that Rhode Island is capable of having the best COVID response in America. We have the best testing apparatus in the country. We led the region in reopening our economy. And we led the nation in reopening our schools, with dedicated testing and contact tracing systems and a first-of-its-kind command center.

I believe there’s nothing Rhode Islanders can't do. So let’s also be number one in mask-wearing. Nearly every state in America has increasing cases right now. Let’s be a model for the country on how to turn things around when they’re trending in the wrong direction.

We’re all part of the same team with the same mission – building Rhode Island’s resilience to COVID-19. It’s easy to feel strained under the pressure of this pandemic. Even something as small as a text or phone call goes a long way. If we can all lift a little of someone else’s burden, we will continue to be resilient as a state.

I want to assure you that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. This isn’t going to last forever. So let’s stay at it a little bit longer in order to get there as soon as possible.

We’re all in this together.

-Gina Raimondo, Governor
Understanding Trauma to Support Your Family Member
During COVID-19 – Spanish Session
Saturday, November 21, 2020
10:00 - 11:00 AM
This one-hour Zoom presentation will be presented in Spanish only.

Presenter: José Nicolás González Soler, M.Clinical Psychology
The session is designed for Spanish-speaking family caregivers of adults with disabilities to better understand trauma responses they and their loved ones may be experiencing during this time of COVID-19. This webinar will provide proactive strategies that may help maintain well-being for family caregivers and others in their home as we all settle into fall and winter routines that provide for safety while adding meaning to our lives.

OUTLINE:
2. What trauma responses look like.
3. Prevention: setting up environments that are trauma sensitive.
   Strategies to minimize the impact COVID related trauma on you and your loved ones.

Webinar questions: Contact Iraida Williams at iwilliams@ric.edu

For accommodation requests or registration questions, contact Elaine Sollecito.
Email: esollecito@ric.edu
Voice: 401-456-2764
TTY or Spanish via RI Relay: 711

3-Digit Lifeline Bill Signed into Law

Across the United States, 911 is the number to call in the case of emergencies, 211 is the number for local community services, and 511 is the number for transportation information.

On October 17, the “National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020” was signed into law, designating 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

The existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 10-digit number (1-800-273-TALK) and it has seen a rise in call volume in recent years. 988 will allow people in emotional or mental distress to speak with a trained professional quickly, instead of using a number that people often cannot remember during a crisis.

The Federal Communications Commission had already picked 988 as the number for this hotline and aims to have it up and running by July 2022.
Mandy Harvey and Voya Celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month with a Virtual Concert

Watch the Virtual Concert Experience Celebrating the incredible talent of people with disabilities!

Watch Now [r20.rs6.net]

Voya, Disability:IN, and Mandy Harvey recently celebrated disability employment inclusion with a virtual concert that aired Tuesday, October 20.

Through song and other forms of creativity, Harvey and Voya share an ongoing commitment to spreading positivity and to serving people with disabilities as well as with their direct support professionals. Harvey, who lost her hearing when she was 18 years old as a result of a connective tissue disorder called Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, serves as an advocate for the deaf and disabled community.
2200-Year-Old Cat Picture

Fascination with cats isn’t a new Internet fad! A 120-foot drawing of a lounging cat has been found in Nazca, Peru. The drawing is estimated to have been done around 200 BCE.

Nazca is one of the most famous and archaeologically significant sites in Peru. In an area that covers about 170 square miles (about the size of Kent County), ancient people created hundreds of drawings in the ground, called geoglyphs, of humans, animals, and objects by removing black rocks to reveal the white clay below. They have remained for so long because the area is one of the driest places on Earth. There is little wind and a near-constant temperature of 77° F.

What makes the Nazca Lines so interesting is that these designs and figures are so large they can only be seen from above, such as from a hilltop or from the air. The cat was almost lost because it’s on a steep hill prone to erosion and used by tourists to view the Lines.

Drone photography has led to several discoveries in recent years. In 2019, researchers from Japan, aided by satellite photography and three-dimensional imaging, unearthed more than 140 new geoglyphs at the site.

For at least 2000 years this cat was relaxing on a hillside in Nazca, Peru. JHONY ISLAS/AP
If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, 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. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465) If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)
Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources
Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;
Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov
Website https://health.ri.gov/covid/

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information
Website cdc.gov/coronavirus
Includes a link to ASL videos

BHDDH Information on COVID-19’s Impact on DD Services and the DD Community
Website bhddh.ri.gov/COVID

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)
Website https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/
Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email callcenter@ripin.org

Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials
Website https://www.advocatesinaction.org/
Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren’t receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at bhddh.ri.gov, select What’s New, then go to bottom and click on DD Community Newsletter. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture at right.

Contacting DD Staff

DDD has put extended hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers on the next page. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.
During business hours (Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00), for questions or support
(401) 462-3421
Para español, llame
(401) 462-3014

For emerging or imminent care related questions,
Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and weekends 8:30am-10pm
(401) 265-7461

Send general questions to the AskDD email address. Please do not email critical issues.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

For medical or healthcare related emergencies, call your Primary Care Physician or 911
Tips for a safer Halloween

Staying home and avoiding contact with people you don’t live with is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. If you risk trick-or-treating this year, follow these tips to help lower the chances of catching and spreading COVID-19.

**Safer activities and trick-or-treating**

- **Trick-or-treat and celebrate only with people you live with.** Any time you’re near people you don’t live with, wear your mask and watch your distance. Do not host or attend a Halloween party.
- **Stay home and do not hand out candy if you have COVID-19 symptoms**, if you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or if you are in quarantine or isolation.
- **Trick-or-treat before dark** so you can keep a safe distance from other trick-or-treaters.
- **Use hand sanitizer** before and after choosing pumpkins or picking apples.
- **Remember the 3 Ws!**
  - Wear a mask that’s at least two layers thick and fits snugly but comfortably over your nose, mouth, and chin without any gaps.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Or carry and use hand sanitizer that’s at least 60% alcohol.
  - Watch your distance by staying at least six feet apart from others.
- **Trick-or-treating tips**
  - Leave individually wrapped goodie bags lined up at least six feet from your door for kids to grab and go. Do not hand out candy from a bowl.
  - Go trick-or-treating with your children to make sure they do it safely.

**Safe Halloween costume masks**

- **A Halloween costume mask alone will not protect you and others from COVID-19.**
- Wearing a costume mask over a protective face covering can be dangerous if the costume mask makes it hard to breathe.
- The safest option is to wear face paints and a Halloween-themed protective face covering.

**Safe Halloween-themed activities**

- Take part in an online pumpkin carving or costume contest.
- Display Halloween-themed decorations in your home or yard.
- Organize a neighborhood contest for outdoor Halloween-themed decorations.
- Plan a Halloween scavenger hunt for people you live with.
- Decorate your own Halloween or fall-themed face masks.
- Prepare a Halloween-themed meal or bake Halloween treats for people you live with.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT ONLINE Classes for People with Disabilities, Families and Community Agencies

NEXT CLASS STARTING November 10, 2020

Do you know a person with a disability who has a hobby or idea for a possible business or who needs more support for an existing business? If so, our FREE ONLINE ZOOM Business Classes can help the person to learn all about self-employment and available resources to build their business idea and their financial future!

These are unprecedented times due to COVID-19 but there are opportunities for people with disabilities to safely pursue employment by owning their own business! Entrepreneurship is the choice to do things that have real meaning for the person. It is something people can control themselves, the ability to sell something they really love to make a living. This pandemic presents an opportunity and a good time for people with disabilities to safely pursue self-employment and be a business owner! Here’s what Michael Coyne, business owner of “Red, White and Brew Café” in North Smithfield, RI has to say:

WHY CHOOSE SELF-EMPLOYMENT?

1. I love being my own “BOSS”, meeting new people and spending my time working on something I really enjoy every day!
2. I decide my own flexible work schedule and hours.
3. The Classes helped me to learn skills for problem solving, creativity, communication, decision-making, and self-advocacy. I met other great people with disabilities who also own their own businesses.
4. I have assistance through my personal support network and my Business Team who are there to help me with my business.
5. I am no longer “volunteering” my time at a job, but instead I have my own business making money and have increased my income!

The RI Developmental Disabilities Council, in partnership with CWE and others developed a FREE Business Development Series of 6-8 Classes, now ONLINE through ZOOM Meetings. The first Class is Tuesday, November 10, 2020 from 1:00 pm-2:00 pm and others scheduled every week or two. We want to assist people to learn the right business skills and access resources to become profitable RI business owners!

The Classes provide practical business advice, resources and ongoing support to participants, families and staff through experienced Business Advisors. Business experts know how to work with people to develop good business plans, marketing ideas and set goals the person can achieve in the industry he/she launches.


To Register for this Class or For More Information Call Claudia Lowe at 738-3960 or Sue Babin at 523-2300. (Participation Is Limited!)

This project is funded by DLT’s and the Governor’s Workforce Board’s “Real Pathways RI” initiative.
This newsletter provides a quick summary of some of the latest work incentives resources available to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries in Rhode Island. All resources mentioned in this newsletter can also be found on the Sherlock Center’s website.

**RI's Able: A Financial Tool for Beneficiaries**

RI's ABLE is a financial tool that helps people to save for qualified disability expenses without losing their eligibility for certain assistance programs, like SSI and Medicaid. An account can be opened with as little as $25! Complete details and application forms are available at www.savewithable.com [r20.rs6.net].

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month!

To celebrate, the Sherlock Center recently interviewed Chris Civitolo, Director of 529 Savings Programs, from the Rhode Island Office of the General Treasurer on the many benefits of having an ABLE account.

Watch the interview to learn about eligible expenses, how to open an account, and the many ways RI's ABLE can help you to save for the things you need.

*To learn more about National Disability Employment Awareness Month at* [https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam][r20.rs6.net]

Managing Extra Pay and Bonuses

During Covid-19, many essential workers have been rewarded with a higher hourly rate of pay or one or more bonuses. While this is certainly well-intentioned, it may affect individuals with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Title II benefits such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Childhood Disability Benefits (CDB), or Disabled Widow’s or Widower’s Benefits.

**LEARN THE FACTS!**

Download one of the following factsheets available from the Sherlock Center website.

- Managing Extra Pay and Bonuses/SSI (English PDF) [r20.rs6.net]
- Managing Extra Pay and Bonuses/SSI (Spanish PDF) [r20.rs6.net]
- Managing Extra Pay and Bonuses/Title II (English PDF) [r20.rs6.net]
- Managing Extra Pay and Bonuses/Title II (Spanish PDF) [r20.rs6.net]

**IMPORTANT!**

Beneficiaries are required to report changes in earned income (wages) and bonuses to Social Security. Changes in monthly income should also be reported to the RI Department of Human Services and housing offices.

View all Factsheets [r20.rs6.net]
Next Online Information Session  
October 30, 2020

Location: Online via Zoom with subtitles  
Time: 9:30 - 10:30 AM

Register Online [r20.rs6.net]

These free online sessions provide an opportunity for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries to ask questions about the topics listed below and more.

- Ticket to Work
- SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

Other Resource & Services

The Sherlock Center provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries.

For basic information about SSA work incentives or to request benefit counseling services, call the SSA Ticket to Work HelpLine at 866-968-7842 (Voice) or 1-866-833-2967 (TTY).

Stay Connected!

www.sherlockcenter.org [sherlockcenter.org]  
www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/workincentives.html [ric.edu]

Join Our Mailing List [r20.rs6.net]
Comprensión del trauma para ayudar a su familiar durante COVID-19: Estrategias de comportamiento positivo para los cuidadores

Un seminario web gratuito para los cuidadores de adultos con IDD que viven con la familia.

Esta presentación está diseñada para que los cuidadores familiares comprendan mejor las respuestas al trauma que ellos y sus seres queridos puedan estar experimentando durante este tiempo de COVID-19.

Presentado por: José Nicolás González Soler, M.Clinical Psychology
Este seminario web proporcionará estrategias proactivas que pueden ayudar a mantener el bienestar de los cuidadores familiares y otras personas en su hogar mientras todos nos adaptamos a las rutinas de otoño e invierno que brindan seguridad al tiempo que agregan significado a nuestras vidas.

CONTORNO:
1. Conceptos básicos del trauma
2. Cómo se ven las respuestas al trauma
3. Prevención: creación de entornos sensibles al trauma
4. Estrategias para minimizar el impacto del trauma relacionado con COVID en usted y sus seres queridos

Noviembre 21, 2020
10:00-11:00 am
ZOOM WEBINAR
Se requiere registro anticipado usando el enlace a continuación.


Después de registrarse, recibirá un correo electrónico de confirmación con información sobre cómo unirse al seminario web.

Solicitudes de alojamiento y asistencia con el registro: comuníquese con Elaine Sollecito en esollecito@ric.edu 401-456-2764
TTY o español a través de RI Relay: 711
Preguntas del taller: Iraida Williams, iwilliams@ric.edu

Los detalles del seminario web están disponibles en www.sherlockcenter.org

El Centro Paul V. Sherlock sobre Discapacidades, RI College, ofrece este seminario web con la ayuda de una subvención para el Mejoramiento de la Comunidad de la Oficina Ejecutiva de Salud y Servicios Humanos de RI.