



**March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month began as a presidential proclamation in 1987 to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all areas of community life.

It has now grown into a national movement that helps promote the progress that people with developmental disabilities have made through advocacy. DD Awareness Months is also a time to call attention to the barriers to inclusion and participation that still exist, and highlight actions that need to be taken.



**Excerpt from Proclamation 5613**

**National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, 1987**

*By the President of the United States of America*

Nearly four million Americans have grown up with severe physical or mental impairments that have slowed their learning, limited their mobility, inhibited their expression, and rendered them dependent on others for care and assistance.

For many of these people with developmental disabilities there is now the prospect of a brighter future and greater opportunity. Americans are becoming increasingly aware that such disabilities need not keep individuals from realizing their full potential in school, at work or at home, as members of their families and of their communities.

New opportunities have been created through the efforts of those with developmental disabilities and their family members, along with professionals and officials at all levels of government. Working together, they have brought about significant changes in the public perception of young people and adults with developmental disabilities, opening new doors to independent and productive lives.

The Congress, by Public Law 99-483, has designated the month of March 1987 as "National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

*Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of March 1987 as National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. I invite all individuals, agencies, and organizations concerned with the problem of developmental disabilities to observe this month with appropriate observances and activities directed toward increasing public awareness of the needs and the potential of Americans with developmental disabilities. I urge all Americans to join me in according to our fellow citizens with such disabilities both encouragement and the opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential.*

*In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.*

RONALD REAGAN

## **Forming New Connections During COVID**

*Editorial by A. Kathryn Power, Director*

*Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals*

*Printed in this week's Warwick Beacon and Cranston Herald*

While many people can work around COVID's challenges, individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities do not always have the same options. They are more likely to depend on others for supports, including social opportunities and transportation, and more likely to have underlying medical conditions that make exposure to COVID more dangerous.

In other words, they are more likely to be isolated.

It is important to think about this as we observe Developmental Disability Awareness Month – held each March to raise awareness of the importance of inclusion in all areas of life for people with developmental disabilities. With COVID making inclusion more difficult, it's also important to remember that challenges bring opportunities, and I believe it helps to highlight one that a local provider recognized and chose to pursue.

Last summer, as leaders at The Arc of Rhode Island were wondering how they could help clients connect during COVID, they came up with an idea: What if they helped people meet and talk online, not with just anybody, but others who share their interests? And what if someone made the connecting as easy as possible, helping with introductions and getting conversations started?

With their clients urging them on, leaders at The Arc made the idea a reality.

From one group known simply as "Saturday Chat," The Arc's "Circles of Connection" approach to building relationships has grown to more than half a dozen groups, and more are in the works. There are circles that focus on forming healthy relationships, family dynamics, issues for people who identify as LGBTQ, and there is even a group for individuals who are looking not just to get a job but land the right job.

While there are online groups for individuals with behavioral health conditions, they are not as routine for individuals with developmental disabilities. But that has not stopped people from wanting to sign up for Circles of Connection.

"It's been an absolute hit," Ken Renaud, associate director at The Arc of Rhode Island, tells us. "It really is evolving in just the way we hoped it would. People are developing friendships and relationships inside and outside of the circles."

Renaud tells of one participant who was asked by his brother if he would like to go to Newport for the day. Ordinarily, such an offer would have yielded an automatic yes. In this case, however, the yes was conditional– he had to be back by 4 p.m. so he could take part in his Circles meeting.

We need more innovation and collaboration as we continue to cope with the COVID pandemic and champion the interests of individuals with developmental disabilities. It takes all of us – families, providers, advocates, communities, state agencies and others – working together to make life better and provide the work and social opportunities that these individuals need and desire.

Circles of Connection provides a great example. The idea was born at The Arc, with clients offering suggestions and input. But others have also helped, including the Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities Council and the Rhode Island Foundation, which provided funding.

Renaud says new circles that are in the works will focus on topics such as favorite books and financial literacy. The Arc is also planning larger events for Circles members. The first will feature a guest speaker and will focus on wellness and the challenge of COVID fatigue. Who among us isn't feeling some of that?

COVID hasn't made life any easier. But Circles of Connection reminds us that there are answers, when we look for them.

## **The Arc Rhode Island Comes Back Into Action**

The Arc Rhode Island ([ri.thearc.org](http://ri.thearc.org)), a once powerful advocacy organization for those with developmental disabilities, has come back into action during the last two years under the wing of The Arc of the United States. The state organization, which had been dormant for a decade, has grown into an office of four during the last two years. Under the leadership of Joanna Scocchi, it has revived not only its legislative advocacy but it offers support to parents facing special education issues and facilitates partnership-building activities in the community, sometimes one person at a time.

For the full article written by Gina Macris, see [olmstead-ddnews.org](http://olmstead-ddnews.org).

## **Council on Quality and Leadership DD Awareness Month Resources**

To recognize Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, the Council on Quality and Leadership has provided a number of free articles, research, guides, webinars, and more below, that help raise awareness about the lives of people with developmental disabilities, put a spotlight on different issues impacting their lives, and offer solutions for improving the services they receive.

### **Resources By Topic:**

- [Rights \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)
- [Person-Centered Practices \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)
- [Community Living \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)
- [Self-Determination \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)
- [Self-Advocacy \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)
- [Ableism/Prejudice \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)
- [Positive Behavior Supports \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)
- [Sexuality \[cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com\]](http://cqlthecouncilonqualityandleadership.cmail19.com)

## **Barrington to Fly the Autism Flag**

Members of the Barrington Town Council voted 5-0 to support flying the Autism Awareness flag from the town hall flag pole during the month of April, although two councilors initially were reluctant to do so. For the full article see: <https://www.eastbayri.com/stories/after-debate-barrington-council-agrees-to-fly-autism-flag,88459>.

## **Resources from NCAAPS' January Recorded Webinar**

### **Doing With, Not Doing For: What it Takes to Facilitate Person-Centered Planning**

With more than 1,700 attendees during the live broadcast, January's webinar, "Doing With, Not Doing For: What it Takes to Facilitate Person-Centered Planning" was NCAPPS' best-attended discussion to date! All the resources from that event are now available. Check them out below and learn for yourself why there was so much interest:



[Watch video](#)

[Download the Slides](#)

[Read the Plain Language Summary](#)

[Review the Supplemental Q&A](#)

[English Transcript](#)

[Spanish Transcript](#)

This webinar is about the skills and abilities (also called competencies) that facilitators need for good person-centered planning. The new NCAPPS resource called "Five Competency Domains" is a friendly tool with the "must-dos" for good planning that keeps the focus on the person.

The five skill areas include:

- Strengths-based, culturally informed, whole person focused
- Cultivating connections inside the system and out
- Rights, choice and control
- Partnership, teamwork, facilitation and coordination
- Person-centered documentation, implementation, and monitoring

These five skill areas can be used in many ways. They can inform hiring, training, and making sure people have good quality supports.



*NCAPPS is an initiative from the Administration for Community Living and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to help States implement person-centered practices. NCAPPS webinars are open to the public, and are geared toward human services administrators, providers, and people who use long-term services and supports. NCAPPS webinars are recorded and archived at <https://ncapps.acl.gov>.*

## March Is Brain Injury Awareness Month

March is a time to acknowledge and support the millions of Americans impacted by brain injury. The theme for the 2021-2023 awareness campaign is More Than My Brain Injury.

Why #MoreThanMyBrainInjury? Many people with disabilities have their lives defined for them. The More Than My Brain Injury campaign gives individuals a chance to overcome those definitions, allowing them to tell their own stories and change the narrative of their lives.



Individuals in need of information, resources, and support after brain injury may speak with a brain injury expert by contacting BIAA's National Brain Injury Information Center (NBIIIC) at 1-800-444-6443.

## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Tuesdays Webinar Series



In observance of Brain Injury Awareness Month and in lieu of the Administration for Community Living's annual in-person Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Stakeholder Day, the Administration for Community Living and Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance and Resource Center are

hosting virtual TBI Tuesdays (1:00 – 4:00pm ET) during the months of March and April.

With an overarching focus on equity, each TBI Tuesday session will highlight the work of the [TBI State Partnership Program](#) grantee workgroups. The sessions will all involve people with brain injury and will showcase resources for stakeholders and federal partners. Each session will include panel discussions, question and answer sessions, and generous breaks in between. You can find more information and register for each session using the links provided below.

TBI Tuesday sessions will be live-captioned and ASL-interpreted. If you require additional accommodations to participate, or if you have any questions about the sessions, contact [tbitarc@hsri.org](mailto:tbitarc@hsri.org).

Register at the links below and check out the [TBI-TARC webpage](#) to learn more!

[March 9: Outreach to All - Brain Injury within Underserved Populations](#)

[March 16: Sustainable Partnerships - Forging Relationships that Last](#)

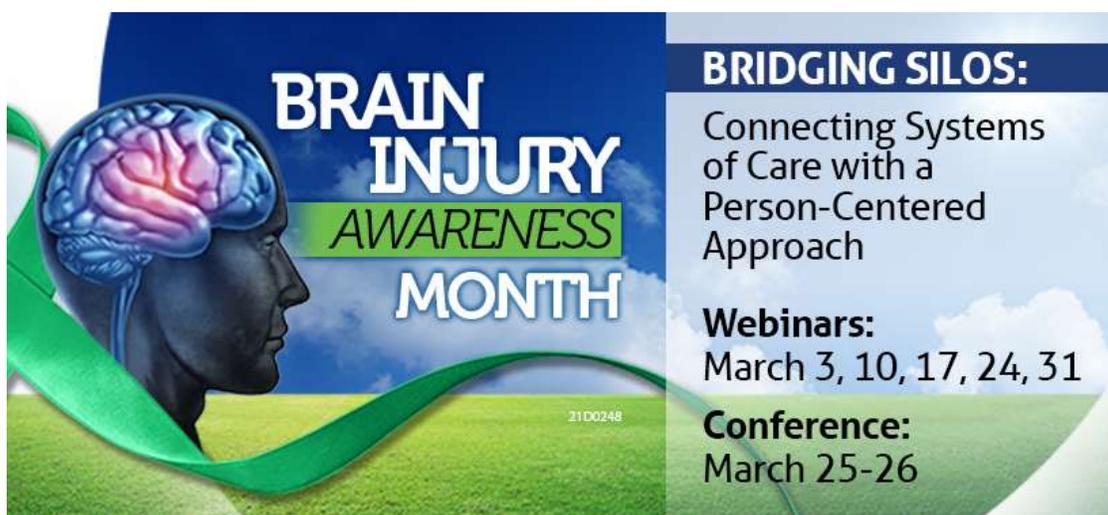
[March 23: Return to Learn - Equal Access to Education for Students with Brain Injury](#)

[March 30: Justice for All - Serving Individuals with Brain Injury Across the Justice System](#)

[April 6: Maximizing the Effectiveness of Advisory Boards Through Full Participation](#)

## **Bridging Silos: A Virtual Conference and Weekly Webinars for Brain Injury Awareness Month**

In recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is hosting a virtual conference and webinar series in March. The events celebrate the achievements of people living with a brain injury and provide awareness and education about brain injuries and treatment options. Individual links are provided below, but the complete [conference schedule](#) and [webinar series schedule](#) are also available.



### **Conference**

The 2021 Texas Brain Injury Conference is March 25 and 26. State and national experts will discuss topics that include health disparities and racial equity for brain injury treatment, brain injuries related to strokes and cardiovascular disease, the emotional needs of brain injury survivors, and education.

[March 25: Virtual Conference Session #1](#)

[March 26: Virtual Conference Session #2](#)

### **Weekly Webinars**

Texas HHSC is also hosting a weekly one-hour webinar series each Wednesday throughout March. The webinars will focus on various topics, including brain injuries related to substance use or domestic violence and how brain injuries affect the veteran population. The conference and webinars are free and open to the public.

[March 10, Webinar: Co-occurring Disorders: Substance Use and Brain Injury](#)

[March 17, Webinar: Brain Injury Among the Veteran Population](#)

[March 24, Webinar: Correlations with Domestic Violence and Brain Injury](#)

[March 31, Webinar: Bridging the Silos — National and State Initiatives](#)

## Digital Detox

Excerpted from <https://www.bphope.com/5-reasons-reconsider-relationship-smartphone-digital-detox-bipolar-disorder/>

Are we too attached to our digital devices? That question has been debated for almost as long as the iPhone has been around, giving rise to the first National Day of Unplugging in 2010. (This year's annual observance of "a 24-hour respite from technology" starts at sundown on March 5.)

Back then, the dialog revolved around stress—the way cell phones and home computers encroached on personal time and the psychological toll of being constantly connected.

That's more relevant than ever, given mobile Web access on smartphones, laptops, and tablets.

Meanwhile, Facebook spawned a social media world of all-consuming blogs, posts, and newsfeeds. And there's a decade's worth of research documenting mental health concerns related to personal tech. (There's even an academic acronym: PSU, for problematic smartphone usage.)

The much-discussed specter of "mobile phone dependence"—not an actual diagnosis—has given rise to terms such as *nomophobia* (no-mobile-phone-phobia), *textxiety* (feeling bad about not getting text messages, especially immediate replies), and *FOMO* (fear of missing out).

Here are five more reasons to stay smart about your screen time.

### #1 Blue Light & Bad Sleep

Computers, tablets, smartphones, and flat-screen TVs give off "blue light," or wavelengths in the blue band of the visible light spectrum (as in the rainbow). Blue light is a major cue for biological processes known as circadian rhythms. In modern life, using digital devices in the evening extends exposure to blue light and interrupts the body's normal progression toward sleep.

If reading on your tablet is part of your bedtime routine, try listening to audio books, podcasts, or meditation apps instead. Or go radical and pick up a printed book or magazine, since sleep experts recommends keeping devices out of the bedroom altogether.

**Quick tips:** Set night filters on your devices to reduce blue light exposure in the evening. Turn off screens an hour before bedtime. Get outside in the morning to help your circadian rhythms reset.

### #2 Negativity & Emotional Risk

When you're adrift in the sea of 24/7 information and entertainment, there's no telling when a rogue wave may upend you—an unfortunate scene in a TV show, an upsetting newsfeed, or a controversial comment on social media. "You've probably heard what's likely the media buzzword of the past year: *Doom scrolling*—endlessly scrolling your social media feed to see the negative stuff out there," says Ken Yeager, PhD, director of the Stress, Trauma and Resilience (STAR) program and a professor in the department of psychiatry at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Yeager says spending too much time in that headspace can make the world seem like "a less safe place."

National Day of Unplugging is an awareness campaign that promotes a 24-hour respite from technology annually observed the first weekend in March. For more than a decade, schools, religious institutions and businesses have inspired healthy life/tech balance for their communities. Participation is open to anyone who wishes to elevate human connection over digital engagement. Join the National Day of Unplugging from sundown-to-sundown March 5-6, 2021.

Because the human brain evolved to be especially alert to threats, negative content has a stronger emotional impact than feel-good information. “We’re hardwired to see the negative because that helps with survival, but it can take a toll by dragging down your mood, self-worth, and view of yourself in the world,” Yeager says. “The negative screams at you, but the positive only whispers. You really have to teach yourself how to hear the whisper.”

**Quick tips:** Be conscious of the emotional cost of staying informed and connected. Give yourself a break from platforms that are particularly heavy. Set limits on time spent scrolling through negative content and set an alarm to enforce them. Make conscious choices about entertainment that is less likely to be triggering for you.

### **#3 Social Media & Self-Worth**

Sometimes positive content—in the form of other people’s posts about their family’s achievements and pictures of their lovely homes or enviable vacations—can have a negative backlash.

**Quick tips:** Recognize negative self-talk when you’re in comparison mode, and remind yourself that social media is largely an altered version of reality. Find ways to use your screen time to contribute, create, or pursue goals.

### **#4 Screen Time & Mood**

Sometimes the issue isn’t what you access, but how long you spend on your phone, tablet, and computer. A 2016 study of college students found a link between increased social media use and increased rates of depression—as well as anxiety, loneliness, and impulsivity.

**Quick tips:** Practice being “unavailable” sometimes, like in the days before communication devices went mobile. Try leaving your phone behind for short periods, perhaps when you’re walking the dog or working in the yard. Challenge yourself to a day without social media.

### **#5 Missed Opportunities & Mental Wellness**

The year the iPhone came out, chewing gum sales decreased drastically because people stopped looking around while at the checkout counter and stared at their phones instead. Smartphones have become a boredom buster in many situations. We hop on when idling in line, at a stoplight, in a waiting room. But there’s no doubt the devices replace more constructive activities as well.

Staying glued to the screen distracts from having quiet space to re-center, spend quality time in nature, or be present with the people and things you love, whether it’s your dog, kids, or significant other. Having your attention constantly diverted by pings, posts, and texts takes away opportunities for “accumulating positives”—sitting outside watching the birds or taking in the feeling of the sun on your skin. Embracing those small moments of pleasure can nourish mental wellness.

The key is to be mindful about your choices. Are you looking for a lighthearted lift, taking a break to rest and regroup, or “comfort consuming” to bury your emotions? Distraction qualifies as a recommended technique for dealing with down moments, but passive screen use won’t give you the same mood boost as getting a little exercise or accomplishing something small.

**Quick tips:** Mute notifications that alert constantly. Limit screen use while participating in other activities so you won’t miss moments that create contentment and happiness. Pay attention to why you’re on your device and whether some other pursuit would be better fertilizer for your mental health.



# ACTION CALENDAR: MINDFUL MARCH 2021



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Set an intention to live with awareness and kindness	2 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world outside	3 Start today by appreciating your body and that you're alive	4 Notice how you speak to yourself. Try to use kind words	5 Take three calm breaths at regular intervals during your day	6 Bring to mind people you care about and send love to them	7 Have a 'no plans' day and notice how that feels
8 Eat mindfully. Appreciate the taste, texture & smell of your food	9 Take a full breath in and out before you reply to others	10 Get outside and notice how the weather feels on your face	11 Stay fully present while drinking your cup of tea or coffee	12 Listen deeply to someone and really hear what they are saying	13 Pause to just watch the sky or clouds for a few minutes today	14 Find ways to enjoy any chores or tasks that need doing
15 Stop, breathe and just notice. Repeat regularly during the day	16 Get really absorbed with an interesting or creative activity	17 Look around and spot 3 things you find unusual or pleasant	18 If you find yourself rushing, make an effort to slow down	19 Cultivate a feeling of loving-kindness towards others today	20 Celebrate the International Day of Happiness <a href="http://dayofhappiness.net">dayofhappiness.net</a>	21 Listen to a piece of music without doing anything else
22 Walk a different route today and see what you notice	23 Tune in to your feelings, without judging or trying to change	24 Appreciate your hands and all the things they enable you to do	25 Focus your attention on the good things you take for granted	26 Notice when you're tired and take a break as soon as possible	27 Have a device-free day and enjoy the space it offers	28 Appreciate nature around you, wherever you are
29 Notice what is working today and be thankful that this is so	30 Mentally scan down your body and notice what it is feeling	31 Notice the joy to be found in the simple things of life				

"Mindfulness means that we commit fully in each moment to be present" - Jon Kabat-Zinn

## ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



[www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)

Happier · Kinder · Together

Learn more about this month's theme at [www.actionforhappiness.org/mindful-march](http://www.actionforhappiness.org/mindful-march)



## 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](http://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](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov)

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

### Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

*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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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.



DD Community Newsletter  
SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

## 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.

**401-462-3421**

**WEEKDAYS DURING BUSINESS HOURS FOR:**

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS
- QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES

During business hours (Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00), for questions or support  
**(401) 462-3421**  
 Para español, llame  
**(401) 462-3014**

**401-265-7461**

**AFTER HOURS ON WEEKDAYS FOR:**

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

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

**401-265-7461**

**ON WEEKENDS FOR:**

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Send general questions to the AskDD email address. Please do not email critical issues.  
[BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

**E-MAIL THE DIVISION**

**BHDDH AskDD @BHDDH.RI.GOV**

**HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!**

**WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:**

- NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS about Your Services and Supports
- GENERAL QUESTIONS about Your Services or the RI DD System

**911**

**FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL 911 RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!**

For medical or healthcare related emergencies, call your Primary Care Physician or 911

**CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR**

**CALL FOR:**

- ROUTINE Healthcare Questions
- NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care

**FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE**  
**DON'T go to their office unless they tell you to!**

# Circles of Connections

Now more than ever, people are looking for ways to connect with each other. Join **The Arc Rhode Island** for a safe and easy way to do this with Circles of Connections!



## If you're looking for:

1. New friends and an online circle of support
2. A way to learn new things
3. A listening ear, advice, or help navigating complicated systems
4. A way to make sure you are getting all the services and supports you or your family need
5. Advocacy skills to help you live the life you want

## Circles of Connections is for you!

People with disabilities, parents and foster parents, siblings, other family members, and allies are all welcome. Participants will be matched based on shared interests and topics.

### Groups can help you understand:

- ✓ Adult services
- ✓ Eligibility
- ✓ Transition services
- ✓ Family dynamics
- ✓ Mental health
- ✓ Special education eligibility and advocacy

*“In our very first circle meeting Victoria and I began a friendship. We both have fiancé's and both of us have a small business.” - Kerri*

*“Being a Group Leader means I'm able to meet, hear, and make sure peoples voices are heard.” - Deanne*

## How To Join

Signing up is easy. Simply fill out our membership form at [ri.thearc.org/circles-of-connections](https://ri.thearc.org/circles-of-connections) and you will be placed in an online group of 5 – 6 people in your community. You will be led by a Group Leader who is there to encourage friendships, be a resource, and mentor your group.

Start building your Circle and join today!  
[ri.thearc.org/circles-of-connections](https://ri.thearc.org/circles-of-connections)

# Social Connections Among Older Adults and People With Disabilities

## NCI-AD DATA SPOTLIGHT



**14%**

of respondents said they are  
**often sad or depressed**



People who lived on their own or in the family home were **most likely** to often feel sad or depressed

Social isolation can have negative impacts to older adult physical health, including high blood pressure, heart disease, and early mortality<sup>1</sup>. Loneliness also has an impact on mental and emotional health, as older adults experiencing loneliness are at increased risk of depression and cognitive decline.<sup>2</sup>

Older adults and people with physical disabilities are at particular risk of social isolation due to potential health limitations, lack of accessibility, and loss of support networks. Consider the impact social connections can have on long-term services and supports outcomes, keeping in mind social distancing protocols are largely still in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Information in this document comes from the more than 14,000 older adults and people with disabilities across 16 states who took part in the 2018–19 NCI-AD™ Adult Consumer Survey.

Learn more about NCI-AD [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pnas.org/content/110/15/5797.full>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>

# Social Connections Among Older Adults and People With Disabilities

## NCI-AD DATA SPOTLIGHT



**45%**

of respondents live alone



**61%**

Usually like how they spend their day



**85%**

have family or friends\* that are involved in their lives



**87%**

Are always able to see or talk to family or friends\* when they want to



**50%**

Are as active in their community as they want to be

Most common reasons people were not as active as they wanted to be:

**Health limitations, transportation, and cost**

*\*who they do not live with*

### Here is how some states have responded to social isolation since COVID-19:

- [http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/nasvad/files/Social%20Isolation%20Resource\\_10142020.pdf](http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/nasvad/files/Social%20Isolation%20Resource_10142020.pdf)

### For more information on NCI-AD and to see all NCI-AD public reports, visit:

- <https://nci-ad.org/>

### More information on social isolation and loneliness:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>
- <https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-isolation-loneliness-older-people-pose-health-risks>
- <https://www.agingcare.com/articles/loneliness-in-the-elderly-151549.htm>
- <https://www.sbp-journal.com/index.php/sbp/article/view/1507>



# Family Employment Awareness Training

We invite families to participate in a FREE four-part series about employment in the community for youth (14-21 years of age) with developmental disabilities.

**ONLINE SERIES USING ZOOM**  
**MARCH 9, 16, 23 & 30, 2021**  
**3:30 - 5:00 PM**

*"FEAT was an eye opening experience. I wasn't sure my son was employable. But now, I have become very excited about some job ideas for my son."*

-Family member

## SESSION DETAILS

*Families are encouraged to attend all sessions of this four-part series, but it is not required. Each session will be a live, interactive training using Zoom. Sessions will not be recorded.*

### SESSION 1: MARCH 9, 3:30-5:00 PM—PART 1: BUILDING THE DREAM OF EMPLOYMENT

- o Introduction to Employment in RI
- o Panel of Youth successfully employed in RI

### SESSION 2: MARCH 16, 2021, 3:30-5:00 PM—PART 2: BUILDING THE DREAM OF EMPLOYMENT

- o Supported and Customized Employment
- o Hear more possibilities!

### SESSION 3: MARCH 23, 2021, 3:30-5:00 PM—Planning the Transition to Employment

- o Role of the Family in Planning for Employment
- o School Role in Planning for Employment (Transition IEP)

### SESSION 4: MARCH 30, 2021, 3:30-5:00 PM—Accessing Adult Supports for Employment

- o Office of Rehabilitation and Division of Developmental Disabilities
- o Related Supports

*"I learned that there are many more resources to support my daughter's future employment than I realized."*

- Family member

### **ALL PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:**

- Training materials and resources
- Opportunity to network with families, employees and entrepreneurs

**TO REGISTER:** Register online or by mail, fax, or phone. Complete the attached registration form or go to [www.sherlockcenter.org](http://www.sherlockcenter.org) to download.

**Online:** <http://bit.ly/2vAxyLi>

**Mail:** Sherlock Center/RI College, 600 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Providence, RI 02908, Attn: Elaine Sollecito

**Fax:** 401-456-8150 **Phone:** 401-456-2764

### **FEAT Questions / Requests:**

Claire Rosenbaum, [crosenbaum@ric.edu](mailto:crosenbaum@ric.edu) or

Iraida Diaz Williams, [williams@ric.edu](mailto:williams@ric.edu) (bilingual in English/Spanish)

### **Language Accommodation**

If you or someone you know is interested in learning about FEAT and needs information presented in a language other than English, please contact the Sherlock Center. Depending on interest and available resources, sessions may be scheduled in alternative languages.

