

WESTMORELAND  
COUNTY'S  
LIFESHARING  
COALITION

Having a  
place to go is  
HOME,

Having  
someone  
to love  
is  
FAMILY,

Having both  
is  
A  
WONDERFUL  
LIFE!

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INVOLVED**



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# Lifesharing; What's it All About?

ISSUE 6

WINTER SPRING 2015

## 2014 Pennsylvania Lifesharing Conference

Once again the Lifesharing Conference\* held October 20-21, 2014 in State College, PA was a great success, with over 250 attendees. The speakers and sessions were pertinent and informative. The Keynote speaker, Al Condeluci, presented on the impact of social capital in one's life. The opportunity to choose from multiple sessions, provided a more individualized experience. I particularly enjoyed the session presented by an individual receiving services from Kencrest, Kevin, regarding fire safety. It was exciting to watch and hear him share with us. He was well prepared with handouts and a PowerPoint presentation. The Monday evening social was especially enjoyable. The appetizers, music, and dancing were nice icebreakers for everyone involved. This was only the second such event, but it is definitely well worth the time and effort of all of the volunteers that made it happen. Hopefully, this conference opportunity will continue annually for many years to come.

*Written by; Debbie Brewer, Program Specialist-Passavant Memorial Homes*

\*For conference presentation information, please visit:

<http://www.palifesharing.com/LifeSharingConference.html>



From Left: Ian Legeion (NHS Human Services), Dawn Brown, WCSI, Jamie Walker



## Exciting NEW Trainings Available to YOU!

Training is now available for community services direct support professionals and providers who support individuals with dual diagnosis, (those with both a mental health diagnosis and a diagnosis of intellectual disability). The training series, called the *ODP Dual Diagnosis Curriculum*, is a joint initiative by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and has been developed to provide information that can aid caregivers in the understanding of the struggles and triumphs of those supported. Trainings will bring awareness to the complexity of dual diagnosis and the factors that need to be considered to provide the best support.

Training topics range from the history of mental health and intellectual/developmental disabilities; service and supports, common medical and mental health diagnosis and treatment, to promoting respect and improved quality of life and communication with medical and mental health professionals. There is no requirement to take all of the trainings.

These trainings are consistent with the content developed by NADD, the National Association for Dual Diagnosis for their Competency-Based Direct Support Professional Certification Program. According to NADD, "certification in this area validates and provides assurance to individuals served, colleagues, and employers that a direct support professional has met the standards established by NADD for providing services to individuals with IDD/MI." (NADD, 2014). Certification can be obtained through standardized testing developed and offered by NADD.

The entire curriculum is being offered over the first six months of 2015. The series of bi-monthly trainings is offered in a syllabus format with presentations scheduled at Westmoreland Case Management and Supports (WCSI) only. For more information and locations in other counties, please contact the HCQU at [www.hcqu.apshealthcare.com](http://www.hcqu.apshealthcare.com) or, call 1.888.321.5861 and ask for the training specialist, Barb Plummer.

*Written by; Margie Grieser, RN, CDDN, SW PA Healthcare Quality Unit*

## Navigating the Process of Becoming a Lifesharing Provider Family

Many have heard of Lifesharing at this point, and over the past several years, more and more people have become educated about the benefits. The purpose of this article is to further enlighten individuals and their support systems as well as those contemplating opening up their homes on the steps that are taken between the time the decision is made to open up your home and when an individual can begin living in that home.

**1.) Select an Agency.** There are several wonderful agencies that provide Lifesharing services. It's important that you feel comfortable with the agency that you select because they will work closely with you to get you started in Lifesharing and will continue to work with you as long as you provide Lifesharing services.

**2.) Information Gathering.** The agency will collect some information on your family make-up, interests, hobbies and activities to determine what type of individual would be the best match for you. If you are an active person that loves to go out in the community, your best match would not be an individual that prefers to stay at home.

**3.) Required Documents.** You will be asked to obtain your clearances: child abuse, criminal, and FBI, and your physical and TB Test will be completed.

**4.) Home Study.** The agency will determine if your site meets PA 6500 code. Other agencies might come out and observe how your home runs at different times of the day as part of the "home study". If your home would need any

repairs or changes to bring it in line with 6500 code, you would need to complete them before the agency could return to complete the self-licensing process.

**5.) Training.** You will participate in at least 24 hours of training on intellectual disabilities, family dynamics, community participation, individual service planning and delivery, and relationship building. You will also be trained in CPR and First Aid, including Heimlich techniques. The agency will provide information on other items in regards to regulations and paperwork specific to that agency.

**6.) Self-Licensing.** The agency will revisit your home to complete the self-licensing process, checking the home against the list of items that the state provides. If no deficiencies are noted, the agency will submit the self-licensing tool to the state. The state usually returns a license within 2 to 3 weeks. After the agency receives the license for your home, they will then submit your site to PROMISE for enrollment. This step of the process is very important. It enables the agency you've selected to bill for the services the individual residing in your home receives and without this step being completed, the individual cannot move into your home. This process time can vary but agencies are currently experiencing a 6 to 9 month wait time for sites to be enrolled.

**While all of the above is occurring, the agency you've selected is working to find the right match for you!**

## What is Lifesharing? Find out More!

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**The Mission of Westmoreland County's Lifesharing Coalition is to increase awareness, so that Lifesharing is a commonly recognized concept for providers, Supports Coordination Organizations, individuals and the community as a whole. We aim to encourage people to expand their family circle by inviting others to share their homes, their families, and their lives.**



### Do you have something to say?

Any suggestions or questions, please contact Jamie Walker  
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**We would love to hear from you!**