

Wellness and Optimal Health

IDEA 1: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



IN A NUTSHELL:

Health and well-being are basic to people's lives.

Feeling (being) healthy allows people to think about and work on other things that are important to them. Health and well-being cannot be guaranteed, but there are a number of things that we all can do to support good health to the greatest extent possible.

LIVING IT: A SUCCESS STORY LYN'S EXERCISES

Lyn needs regular physical therapy and did regular exercises at her day program's facility. When the day program decided to close its center, the program manager and Lyn's therapist wanted to design a program Lyn and her staff could do in a community-based setting. A staff member assisted Lyn to begin going to the aerobics center at the local community center and the physical therapist helped to redesign the exercises for the equipment that was available at the gym. Now Lyn has a place to do her exercises and an opportunity to meet other people in the community with whom she may become friends.

BRINGING IT TO LIFE: THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

- Appreciate the fact that all of us think about our health and well-being differently. We have our own definitions of what is "healthy" or "unhealthy" and what makes us feel best. Many people with and without disability make decisions to continue to avoid exercise or eat more than we should. People should have the freedom to make fully informed decisions regardless of their disability.
- We can support people to learn about healthy lifestyles and to introduce people to other people who engage in healthy lifestyles. It is much easier to exercise, eat right and quit smoking with the help of friends.
- Help people to get the best medical care whenever they need it. Make sure that people use the same medical resources as others in the community. If the quality of medical care is not very good or there are missing types of care, work to improve it for everyone, rather than

creating a different system for people with disability.

- Consider creative ways to assure that people can meet their medical needs (See the success story above).
- Consider the person's emotional, as well as physical, health. Be aware that many people have been traumatized at some point in their lives and many of their behavioral responses may be due to past trauma. Research community resources to assist people in dealing with trauma and support the person to access needed support.
- Remember that there are many health-related community organizations, groups, and resources, including alternative medicine, which may be helpful to specific individuals or at specific times.
- Understand that medical powers of attorney, family consent statutes or policies, and circles of support can all provide decision making assistance in health care issues. It is best to think about the need for assistance in making decisions before a decision needs to be made.

✓ CHECK IT OUT: GOOD RESOURCES

- See the *Continuum of Care Health Primer for People with Disabilities and Their Direct Support Staff*.
<http://www.unmcoc.org/manual/index.htm>
- America Trauma Society
<http://www.amtrauma.org/>
- *A Good Life* by Al Etmanski
www.agoodlife.org
- DDS Clinical Services Bureau
The CSB is located at 5301 Central Avenue NE, Suite 203, Albuquerque, NM 87108-1514. Call (505) 841-2948 or toll free 1-800-283-8415 or fax at (505) 841-2987 or email AT.Coord@state.nm.us

TRY IT OUT: ACTIVITIES, EXERCISES AND COMPELLING QUESTIONS

- Get together with a few other people and make a list of all of your own behaviors that impact your health. What decisions do you make that might be considered healthy or unhealthy? Why do you continue to engage in any unhealthy behavior? How would you feel if someone expected you not to do it anymore? Listen carefully to the

other people in your group talk about these issues. Think about what you learn. Invite people whose decisions influence the life of a person using services.

- Join with others in your community who are concerned about the lack of affordable, accessible health care options for all community members and think about what your community needs and how you might make that happen. Remember that health is a universal issue and many other people are concerned too.
- Consider having people access medical specialists, (PT, OT, Speech, Nursing...) in the places and ways that other people access these services. Most people, unless seriously ill, go to clinics or offices to meet with these professionals rather than having the professional come to them. Very few medical professionals perform their services in other people's workplaces.