









# Supporting Outside Relationships

By DJ St. John, DSP III

Relationships are a critical part of life as they help us to feel safe, needed, and loved. Relationships come in many different forms from, friends, family, work, and romantic relationships. When it comes to those we support, building and maintaining these relationships can be challenging. It takes a great deal of support from the individual's team in order to maintain communication between each individual, and to arrange transportation for meeting up or hanging out. These barriers require that staff listen to individuals with a compassionate ear and act accordingly.

When individuals reside or attend different providers, they can encounter barriers in maintaining different relationships. These barriers can include transportation, scheduling and maintaining consistent communication. Another barrier is that maybe an individual does not have great self-advocacy skills. In order to overcome this barrier, the support staff need to be compassionate listeners that will help advocate to the team. Although it can be difficult to build or maintain these relationships, it is vital to set this time aside to provide and ensure these supports.

Strive to give the support you would want and need if the tables were turned. If you keep this in mind when supporting others, you will be more willing to climb mountains and make it happen to see the smiles, feel the love, and know the joy created in the most basic need of a lasting relationship, be it romantic or platonic.



"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship."

Brene Brown

# The Value of Volunteering

by BreAnn Holden, DSP

I-REACH 2 values the importance of volunteering in the community and the impact it can have on the individuals we care for. IR2 goes above and beyond to find volunteering opportunities and ways to get our individuals involved as a way to connect with the community and learn new skills. Volunteering is a great way to build useful skills and build relationships with outside members of the community.

Volunteer opportunities give individuals a sense of purpose and belonging. Each site offers a different set of soft skills to work on, and opportunities to develop interpersonal skills in a business environment. Volunteering allows individuals to explore different opportunities to see what type of employment they may be interested in. Beyond building job skills, volunteering encourages outside relationships, as they interact with site supervisors, fellow volunteers, and participants or customers of the site. For many of our individuals, volunteering is an important part of life, and they look forward to making a difference each day.

VOLUNTEERING AT RESCUED TREASURES



MEALS ON WHEELS VOLUNTEERS 10+ YEARS



CLEANING YARDS TO BUY GIFTS FOR CASA KIDS



## NEWS AND OTHER TIDBITS

-Welcome back to Carey Osborn and Bri Sonsoucie who've recently returned to IR2 in the roles of Community Living Managers.

-At the present time we are waiting for Federal and State guidance regarding vaccine mandates.

-October is recognized as National Disability Employment Awareness month. We thank the many employers in Casper who support employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

-IR2 is closed for Thanksgiving, we will close at noon on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Only essential (24 hour supports will be provided on Christmas day)

-Medicaid Chapter 45 rules dictate that

The case manager shall provide written notice of the plan of care meeting to all team members at least twenty (20) calendar days prior to the meeting.

The completed cost-study to fund HCBS services in Wyoming is now available online at <https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WY-DD-SFY2023-Rate-Report-and-Appendices-20210930.pdf>

## Maintaining a Quality Environment During COVID

by Priscilla Baalhorn, DSP

At I-REACH 2 we ran our programs as we had every other day. Individuals navigated their busy schedules freely and everyone seemed so busy with activities, work, and volunteering. Then! Big news hit the world. COVID-19! It seemed like everything changed overnight. We told our people we needed to wear masks. That we couldn't go out in public, and jobs and volunteering were no longer part of our days. Individuals accepted the changes and followed every new protocol that was put in place, but everyone was eager to see the day that we would go back to "normal".

Even after resuming "normal services" we have to exercise caution and awareness. When before we navigated our days freely, as an organization, we now have to take precautions to keep individuals safe. This means adapting to sudden changes in operations and scheduling. With the availability of the vaccine, we were able to start going into the community more freely. We were able to ditch the masks and breathe, but with the increase in cases we were forced to

re-implement old protocols, proving that we are operating under a "new normal".

Looking back over the past 21 months: I'm proud to work for an organization that allows and supports us to strategize solutions for all kinds of issues. And the way our organization developed processes to keep everyone safe. We worked when so many others were at home and unable to work. And we continue to do so.



# I-REACH 2 Fall Newsletter

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