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**Introduction**

Helping Others through Protection and Empowerment of Western New York (HOPE of WNY) is a collaboration of two expert agencies from their respective fields, Community Services for Every1 and the Family Justice Center.

The collaboration has created a charter, narrowed our scope with a focus memo, conducted a needs assessment, and reported on those findings in a formalized report. The following strategic plan is the last required deliverable within the development stage and is designed to address the key findings in actionable steps.

The goal of this collaborative is to improve access to domestic violence services and prevention education for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) throughout the Western New York region. Efforts are being concentrated on this population, in this region, based on the current expertise and services rendered by collaborating partners. Given the size of the Community Services for Every1 staff, efforts will be concentrated among community based services. The Family Justice Center does not currently provide residential options and focusing on community based services is a way to mirror change within both collaborations.

Vision Statement

Building a community…

* Where those in WNY with I/DD, having been subjected to domestic violence are safe, respected, valued, and supported, but not controlled;
* Where the stigma of acknowledging a need for help and barriers to that help, have been eliminated by staff;
* Where representatives from both Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled and the Family Justice Center are able to recognize and address the warning signs of unhealthy relationships; and
* Where staff empower those among the WNY I/DD community towards autonomy.

Mission Statement

HOPE of WNY will improve access to domestic violence services and prevention education for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). This coalition will also ensure those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence are identified and linked to the specialized resources that will help lead them on their journey towards healing.

This will happen through:

* Formalizing the connections between Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled and the Family Justice Center. This will open both organizations’ systems for a fluid exchange of resources and knowledge in order to improve the understanding and awareness among those who come in contact with people in a domestic violence situation to the characteristics of those with I/DD.
* Providing education and outreach that focuses on recognizing and preventing domestic violence for those with I/DD within both organizational structures.
* Increasing the awareness, skills, and comfort level of staff to support those with I/DD involved in a domestic violence situation through identification and obtaining supports for which they are eligible.
* Identifying and enhancing policies and procedures to remove barriers that have limited those with I/DD access to domestic violence services through systemic change within Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled and the Family Justice Center.

This collaboration is defining domestic violence to include a pattern of coercive tactics that are used to gain and maintain power and control in an ongoing, familiar relationship. These forms of abuse include; psychological, emotional, physical, sexual, stalking, threats of violence, and/or economic, and may be used in any combination.

Community Services for Every1:

Community Services for Every1 began serving those with developmental disabilities in 1989. They have dedicated themselves to developing and delivering a comprehensive spectrum of assistance through service coordination, habilitation, pre-vocational, residential, respite, and behavioral intervention programs; specializing in aiding those facing acutely complex challenges and dual/triply diagnosed.

Family Justice Center:

The Family Justice Center delivers comprehensive client services by staff and partners to address offender accountability, safety, healing, and prevention to enable clients and their children to break the cycle and live free from domestic violence.

**Survey of Planning and Development**

Throughout the planning and development phase, the collaboration has created a charter and a memorandum detailing the focus of our vision and anticipated work. Focus groups were held with service recipients from both organizations to discuss gaps in service; with the findings organized in a formal report.

As the final phase of planning and development, our previous work has culminated in a strategic plan; driving the focus for implementation.

**Needs Assessment Summary**

Purpose

The overarching purpose of the Needs Assessment, as described by the Office on Violence against Women was to:

* Provide practical information to those with I/DD involved in a domestic violence situation, and how to improve them;
* Inform the selection of implementation activities;
* Increase buy-in and support for the collaboration’s work.

The findings governed the priorities of this planning process.

Methods and Numbers

Scores from the performance indicators reflected concern from the collaborating agencies around service participants accessing resources, safety, and the overall awareness/dynamics of abusive situations.

Focus groups were used to gather information from service recipients within the disability organization, Community Services for Every1 and from the domestic violence agency, the Family Justice Center. The questions asked during the focus groups were devised using the indicator data as a rubric and were associated with service delivery; not to gather information related to services currently or previously received.

Groups openly described their experiences, knowledge, and opinions providing an in-depth look at services from both Community Services for Every1 and the Family Justice Center. Participants reflected upon both positive and negative aspects of each agency, allowing deeper conversation on areas of growth.

Focus Groups

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Organization | Audience Type | Total Groups | Attended/Registered |
| Community Services for Every1 | I/DD Service Recipients | 4 | 1: 4/11  2: 1/3  3: 0/6  4: 3/6  33% Participation |
| Family Justice Center | Domestic Violence Service Recipients | 4 | 1: 0/1  2: 2/5  3: 2/3  4: 1/0  56% Participation |

Interview

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Organization | Audience Type | Total Groups | Attended/Registered |
| Community Services for Every1 | I/DD Service Recipients | 1 | 0/0 |
| Family Justice Center | Domestic Violence Service Recipients | 1 | 0/0 |

**Summary of Key Findings**

**Key Finding #1**

Policies and Procedures: Collaborating agencies would benefit from policies and procedures to better serve those with I/DD, experiencing domestic violence.

Those experiencing domestic violence are deeply impacted by trauma. When compounding cognitive and developmental deficits in someone with I/DD, this exacerbates the difficulty in working with providers. Streamlining policies and procedures between agencies allows for greater user friendliness and confidence when accessing services to reflect the changing needs for service delivery.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Community Services forEvery1* | I/DD  April 2017 | I/DD  October 2017 | I/DD  April 2018 |
| 1.1 Recognizes Violence and Abuse of People with Disabilities as a Priority | 25% | 50% | 50% |
| 6.2 Screening for Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 6.3 Immediate Safety Planning | 0% | 0% | 25% |
| 6.4 Informed Referrals | 0% | 0% | 50% |
| 6.1 Mandatory Reporting | 100% | 100% | 50% |
| 3.2 Confidentiality | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| 3.5 Guardianship | 75% | 75% | 0% |
| 6.6 Serving Victims and Perpetrators | 25% | 25% | 75% |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Family Justice Center* | DV  April 2017 | DV  October 2017 | DV  April 2018 |
| 1.1 Recognizes Violence and Abuse of People with Disabilities as a Priority | 25% | 75% | 50% |
| 1.2 Promotes Accessibility | 25% | 50% | 25% |
| 3.2 Accommodations | 25% | 100% | 25% |
| 4.4 Inclusive Materials | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| 3.1 Eligibility | 25% | 100% | 25% |

**Key Finding #2**

Collaboration and Communication: Improvements in communication and collaboration among partners would reduce gaps within traditionally siloed systems of services for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

Navigating service systems can be confusing and a daunting process. Indicator scores and focus group sessions indicated weakness among areas of communication and collaboration, making the process more problematic when it is experienced. Collaborations with relevant partner agencies should support the flow of information to better serve those seeking services. Expanded partnerships will bridge potential gaps in accommodating needs.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Community Services for Every1* | I/DD  April 2017 | I/DD  October 2017 | I/DD  April 2018 |
| 2.1 Collaboration with a Domestic Violence Agency | 75% | 75% | 50% |
| 2.6 Participation in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration | 0% | 0% | 25% |
| 6.4 Informed Referrals | 0% | 0% | 50% |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Family Justice Center* | DV  April 2017 | DV  October 2017 | DV  April 2018 |
| 2.1 Collaboration with a Disability Organization | 75% | 75% | 50% |
| 2.5 Participation in Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration | 100% | 100% | 25% |

**Key Finding #3**

Education and Awareness: Increase training efforts are needed to expand knowledge and understanding on the issues at the intersection of intellectual/developmental disabilities and domestic violence between collaborating agencies.

Information obtained from focus group sessions and the indicators, reflects the need for greater education to promote awareness for proactivity in situations. Staff and volunteers should be well versed in the individual nuances of those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence and cross-trained by the agencies.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Community Services for Every1* | I/DD  April 2017 | I/DD  October 2017 | I/DD  April 2018 |
| 5.2 Direct Service Staff Training | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| 5.3 Practical Learning Opportunities | 0% | 25% | 25% |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Family Justice Center* | DV  April 2017 | DV  October 2017 | DV  April 2018 |
| 5.2 Direct Service Staff Training | 75% | 100% | 75% |
| 5.3 Practical Learning Objectives | 50% | 50% | N/A |
| 3.3 Full Participation | 50% | 75% | 75% |
| 6.1 Community Outreach and Education | 50% | 50% | 100% |
| 5.4 Volunteer Training | 0% | 0% | 100% |

**Key Finding #4**

Safety and Accessibility: Gaps were highlighted in comfort, safety, and accessibility with collaborating partners, hindering service provisions to those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

Indicator scores and session participation reflect a concern for safety, accessibility, and comforting environments.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Community Services for Every1* | I/DD  April 2017 | I/DD  October 2017 | I/DD  April 2018 |
| 1.1 Recognizes Violence and Abuse of People with Disabilities as a Priority | 25% | 50% | 50% |
| 4.2 Appropriate Disclosure of Space | 50% | 50% | 25% |
| 4.1 Communicates Safe Space | 0% | 0% | 25% |
| 4.3 Victimization Oriented Communication Boards | 50% | 50% | 0% |
| 6.6Serving Victims and Perpetrators | 25% | 25% | 75% |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Family Justice Center* | DV  April 2017 | DV  October 2017 | DV  April 2018 |
| 1.1 Recognizes Violence and Abuse of People with Disabilities as a Priority | 25% | 75% | 50% |
| 1.2 Promotes Accessibility | 25% | 50% | 25% |
| 3.2 Accommodations | 25% | 100% | 25% |
| 3.4 Service Animals | 0% | 100% | 25% |
| 4.4 Inclusive Materials | 25% | 25% | 25% |

**Overview of Short-Term Initiatives**

After discussing the key findings correlating to the indicator data and focus group sessions, a site visit was conducted with the Vera Institute and the Office on Violence against Women. This two-day discussion encompassed the trends in findings and prospective goal areas for experiencing the most growth for sustainable change within and across agencies. The collaboration has chosen to proceed with three main initiative areas:

*Initiative 1: Build the comfort and enhance staff capacity at Community Services for Every1 and the Family Justice Center to best respond to those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.*

*Initiative 2: Enhance organizational capacity within and across agencies to serve those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.*

*Initiative 3: Expand and deepen the partnership of collaborating agencies.*

The collaboration recognizes change will take time. Although the grant is scheduled to terminate on September 30, 2019, the collaboration is committed to working an additional twelve months to achieve these important initiatives. Activities have been scheduled across a span of twenty-four months to reflect this.

The collaboration values staff and key stakeholder buy-in to the process. Work groups will be created with representation from both agencies in order to facilitate and deepen the relationship within and across departments. A key facilitator from the collaboration will lead the work group discussions, with the collaboration monitoring all key activities within the groups. Work groups will proceed in correspondence with their specifically tasked goals, within the required time frame.

Recruitment for work group members will be based on area of specialization. The collaboration will discuss members within their respective organizations they feel would provide the most knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of each activity. A conversation will occur by the collaboration member with the prospective party. The party will become privy to the grant and collaboration. If the prospective party is interested, they will be sent to the baseline training for more in-depth education on the collaboration; its mission, vision, and values surrounding those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

Separate work groups will be utilized for the following activities:

* Policies and Procedures
  + Development of an Accommodations Policy and Procedure for the Domestic Violence Agency
  + Evaluation of the Incident Reporting Policy for Enhancement of Referrals
* Resources
  + Development of a Resource Guide
  + Creation of Accessible Outreach Materials
  + Mapping Communal Resources
* Tool Development
  + Review and Update for Danger Assessments
  + Development of a Universal Safety Planning Tool
  + Development of a Universal Domestic Violence Screening Tool for the Developmental Disability Agency
* Safety and Access Review
  + Development of a Safety and Access Review Process

A formal Memorandum of Understanding will finalize the commitment of the collaboration to ensure sustainability in providing safe and accessible resources for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

**Initiative #1**

*Build the comfort and enhance staff capacity at Community Services for Every1 and the Family Justice Center to best respond to those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.*

The surveys and focus group research conducted by the collaboration identified gaps in knowledge with collaborating agency staff on issues around those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence, specifically recognizing when domestic violence is occurring and the way to appropriately address it. The goal at the end of the twenty-four month period is to close these gaps by developing and providing the training for staff to:

* Be able to identify signs of domestic violence;
* Understand the scope of intellectual/developmental disabilities;
* Have a working knowledge of how domestic violence impacts those with I/DD and the issues unique to this community;
* Understand the importance of trauma and its impact when dealing with service delivery;
* Recognize staff’s internal barriers when dealing with trauma and the importance of self-care to mitigate its vicarious effects;
* Be able to identify appropriate resources within the community for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence;
* Have accessible danger assessments and a working-knowledge of implementation;
* Understand safety planning and have a safety planning tool specifically for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

Activity 1.1

Develop a Baseline Training

*Description:* The collaboration recognized the need for a standard baseline-training for staff, volunteers, and stakeholders within the collaborating agencies to provide an overview of domestic violence and its impact on those with I/DD. Service users during focus group sessions, as well as indicator scores mirrored this information. Staff will learn to recognize signs of domestic violence and the issues unique to those with I/DD, including; vulnerability and risk factors. The training will also cover information on the agencies, staff’s legal role in mitigating abuse, and provide resources for assistance. Trauma will be discussed not only as it relates to victims, but also the triggers and vicarious effects as providers. The collaboration will bring together area experts, including service recipients from both agencies to develop curriculum for this training. Once the baseline training is created, the collaboration and additional experts will be used to conduct on-going research and development of the training.

*Audience:* It is important for all involved within each organization, from front-line providers to administrative personnel, to understand how to recognize domestic violence and understand the safety issues/factors specific to those with I/DD to be trauma-informed with all aspects of service-delivery. This training will also be provided for all those involved in any work groups created under this Strategic Plan prior to engaging in the activities for community-based staff within the partner organizations.

*Results:* Staff across the collaboration should have an increased comfort and capacity for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence, leading to improved interactions among collaborating agencies and increased satisfaction with service delivery.

*Resources:* Staff time will be utilized to plan, develop, and conduct/attend the baseline training. Trainers will be knowledgeable in the topic, pulling from existing research within the discipline. Additional experts may be accessed as consultants.

*Structure:* The collaboration will participate in the development of the baseline training. Kelly Kinderman, Vice President of Program Support and Development with Community Services for Every1, will be tasked in leading this activity based on her existing expertise. The collaborative will participate in the tasks under the activity. Research will be implemented with trainers versed in the arenas of I/DD and domestic violence. Although first seeking internal experts, outsourcing may be utilized for consultants within the field. Research will be completed in the wake of both arenas following the learning objectives established by the collaboration. Curriculum will address the nuanced definitions of violence and the culture within the diverse communities involved.

*Sustainability:* Trainings will be structured by the collaborative with implementation during existing new hire/volunteer orientations with periodic reviews to ensure sustainability at each agency.

*Deliverables:* All training curriculum and outreach materials will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 1 – 6 for existing staff/volunteers. Any participation within the work groups established under the Strategic Plan will need to complete this baseline education prior to engagement. Training will be ongoing for newly acquired members of each organization.

Activity 1.2

Develop a Resource Guide

*Description:* The collaboration will create a comprehensive directory of appropriate resources for domestic violence victims with I/DD, including the services provided at each partner agency. This resource guide will focus on community resources that have the expertise and are equipped to assist with the I/DD community and/or domestic violence. These resources could include areas of housing, language access, counseling, employment, financial, and legal for staff and service recipients. Work groups will research and develop a listing of programs to comprise a user-friendly guide to expedite and improve the referral process.

*Audience:* This directory is being created to assist service providers giving them a readily accessible guide of accessible resources for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence; in one localized area. Those receiving services will receive quicker and more appropriate referrals.

*Results:* A comprehensive resource guide will be readily accessible for all involved staff of the collaborative and made available to additional community service providers. All resources listed in the guide will be previously vetted for accessibility and experience within the arena of I/DD and domestic violence for expedited, accurate referrals.

*Resources:* This will require staff hours from the work group for research of services outside the scope of the collaboration’s partners to complete the guide. Budget adjustments will be made as necessary for printing and dissemination.

*Structure:* Staff at the collaborating agencies will create the resource guide within the designated work groups with the Project Manager leading discussions. Feedback will be solicited by stakeholders and incorporated into the comprehensive guide with a marketing plan and timeline for rollout.

*Sustainability:* A Memorandum of Understanding will be created to ensure future sustainability. The Project Manager will be tasked with annually reviewing the guide to ensure relevancy and accuracy. If applicable, cost may be calculated for materials and technical assistance. Future funding, by way of other grant proposal requests may be explored through the resources.

*Deliverables:* All resource guide materials and the comprehensive directory will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to dissemination.

*Completion:* Months 9 – 13

Activity 1.3

Review and Update Danger Assessments

*Description:* Lethality assessments allow advocates to identify victims of domestic violence at highest risk and connect them with local services, to assist with protection. Currently, the Family Justice Center uses an empirically tested lethality assessment. Domestic violence providers within the Western New York region refer to it as a danger assessment and will be the terminology going forward. Although the tool is evidence based, it has not been empirically validated for those with I/DD, posing challenges with accessibility. The collaboration recognizes disparities in accuracy of responses to the danger assessment questions because of the difficulty in comprehension. Using feedback from the focus groups, a guide will be created for advocates at the Family Justice Center providing accessible language options for each question to ensure understanding for those with I/DD.

*Audience:* The tool will be initially designed for domestic violence advocates at the Family Justice Center with hopes of being made available to other agencies throughout the Western New York region that use a danger assessment.

*Results:* The creation and use of the guide for domestic violence advocates will improve the accuracy of the responses to the danger assessment. The more accurate responses will allow the advocates to better assist clients in developing a safety plan to address the concerns identified by the danger assessment.

*Resources:* The work group will spend time conducting research of danger assessment tools specific for those experiencing domestic violence within the I/DD population. Staff time will be needed for participation in trainings and work groups to create this tool. A budget may need to be allocated for a designer or graphic illustrator to alter the existing format and develop a complimentary guide.

*Structure:* Listening sessions will be held to elicit feedback for properly updating the tool specifically for those with I/DD. Work groups will break down potential barriers evident when using this assessment; identifying participants and questions to ask during each session. After sessions are complete, feedback will be calculated into changes for an abridged guidance tool. The revised assessment and guide will be piloted with a follow-up evaluation. Staff utilizing the tool will be trained in the importance of the assessment with an understanding of potential barriers and alternate language provided through the guide.

*Sustainability:* Once the guide is created and being implemented at the Family Justice Center, the collaboration will make it available to the other local domestic violence providers using the danger assessment. This will ensure uniformity in service delivery for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence, regardless of which agency provides the service. This universal instrument will be incorporated into current practices with a training rollout on implementation for standardization with the available handbook for additional reference.

*Deliverables:* All materials for the listening sessions, user guide, and danger assessment will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 10 – 21

Activity 1.4

Develop a Universal Safety Planning Tool

*Description:* Safety planning is vital to ensuring the protection of those experiencing domestic violence. A safety plan empowers the victim’s autonomy and voice during the process, while simultaneously providing safe, actionable steps to take during times of crisis. The Family Justice Center has a tool in existence for safety preparedness; however, it will be modified to ensure language is accessible and available for those with I/DD to be used at Community Services for Every1.

*Audience:* A universal instrument will be created for the collaboration when providing safety planning to those accessing services.

*Results:* In modifying the current tool from the Family Justice Center for accessibility, safety is projected to increase for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

*Resources:* Staff time will be used for work groups in creating the tool. Budget modifications may be needed for printing and dissemination.

*Structure:* It is important to have universal understanding and implementation of the tool. The work group will evaluate the Family Justice Center’s screening instrument and modify as needed for accessibility. Training will occur to understand any modifications, as needed.

*Sustainability:* This information is projected to be distributed across other domestic violence providers to ensure future uniformity in service delivery. Training on the instrument will occur as needed.

*Deliverables:* All safety planning tools will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 11 – 24

**Initiative #2**

*Enhance organizational capacity within and across agencies to serve those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.*

The collaboration conducted surveys and focus groups with people among both agencies, including staff and those supported. In doing that, the collaboration has identified gaps in organizational capacity, specifically in the area of accessibility to those with I/DD, incident management, safety planning, recognizing, and screening. Our second goal across the next twenty-four month period, will address the capacity of each organization through:

* Creating accessible outreach materials;
* Developing a universal domestic violence screening tool and policy for the developmental disability agency;
* Developing an accommodations policy and procedure;
* Evaluating/modifying incident reporting policies; and
* Developing a safety and access review process for the agencies.

Activity 2.1

Create Accessible Outreach Materials

*Description:* The collaboration identified the need to improve outreach material, including print and website content for accessibility. Additionally, the manner wherein the print material is distributed, for example, how and where to distribute information to enable greater reach to those in need as well as community education. It became clear that many who would benefit from domestic violence support services are unfamiliar with what is available to them and/or are unclear whether they are able to receive services from the Family Justice Center. The community as a whole, lacks information on what domestic violence is and who it affects, another area that will be addressed by improved outreach materials and web content. Understanding the complexities of domestic violence is vast; therefore, ensuring outreach materials are written in plain language, yet comprehensive is essential. It is important the materials also address that services are safe and responsive to individual needs. During this activity, we will identify key marketing materials and website content and revise as needed; including design and copy with an accompanying fact sheet on the Family Justice Center.

*Audience:* Information used for outreach should feel clear, safe, and accessible for those accessing services.

*Results:* The improvement of outreach material and website content will increase accessibility for those needing assistance, and will allow for earlier intervention, increased safety, and community education.

*Resources:* Design and printing cost will be allotted into the budget. Employee time and experience will be invested.

*Structure:* Work groups comprised of staff, service recipients, and stakeholders will be created to review the current materials and locate potential gaps. Additional objectives identified by the collaboration will guide the work groups to developing new, accessible materials and website content.

*Sustainability:* The Project Manager in conjunction with the Community Relations Specialist position at Community Services for Every1 will review the materials and web content on an annual basis and/or update content if significant changes occur in the service industry.

*Deliverables:* All outreach materials will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 9 - 24

Activity 2.2

Develop a Universal Domestic Violence Screening Tool and Policy for Community Services for Every1.

*Description:* This activity will focus on defining and providing uniformity through a formalized instrument on how to screen for domestic violence by providers of Community Services for Every1. The creation of the tool will be done in conjunction with the Family Justice Center. Adverse Childhood Experience scores will be utilized as one way of reducing future victimization with research conducted by domestic violence experts on screening and intervention. What is experienced in childhood, positive and negative impacts adulthood through health, victimization, and perpetration. Knowing these risk factors is the first step towards prevention. Additional information will be pulled from existing screening tools to ensure the tool is comprehensive and accessible.

*Audience:* Staff in both organizations will be educated on risk factors for domestic violence with I/DD and educated on the use of universal screening procedures for service recipients at Community Services for Every1. The Project Manager and Development Director will complete annual reviews past the grant completion.

*Results:* In utilizing a universal screening procedure, it is anticipated earlier interventions will occur, in turn reducing increased risk to the client. As a result, it will also improve access to services for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence, likely increasing referrals for support.

*Resources:* Staff time for work groups will be resourced for the development of this instrument.

*Structure:* The work group will utilize the needs assessment data to evaluate current safety planning measures, noting any gaps, and create the tool for use with those with I/DD. Once the tool has been developed, Community Services for Every1 will pilot its use. The collaboration will review the feedback received from the pilot group, revise the tool based on recommendations and establish a guidance document to train staff on its use. The collaboration will identify experts in domestic violence to train staff on the importance of universal screening and provide guidance for how and when the tool should be implemented.

*Sustainability:* A policy will be created to solidify future sustainability within the developmental disability agency.

*Deliverables:* All domestic violence screening materials, guidance/training document, and policies will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 10 – 24

Activity 2.3

Develop an Accommodations Policy and Procedures

*Description:* An accommodations policy will provide proper procedures to aide in accessibility for those with I/DD seeking services at the Family Justice Center. The collaboration will identify current policies and procedures around responding to accommodations. Gaps will be discussed by work groups with stakeholder input incorporated into the new design in defining, modifying, and enhancing the new accommodation policies. Existing policies will be used as a guide.

*Audience:* Staff at the Family Justice Center will have a clear policy and procedure for accommodations when someone with I/DD is seeking services.

*Results:* By defining accommodations and creating a policy to address the likelihood of experiencing issues when requesting accommodations, ultimately there will be increased assurance that those with I/DD will receive the support needed. Developing policies and procedures will ensure client comfort when services are sought.

*Resources:* Staff time and experience will be resourced for this task. Existing accommodation policies from other disability grant program recipients will be reviewed.

*Structure:* The collaboration will review types of accommodations that would be requested and ensure the agency will be able to accommodate the need. Agency employees will be educated on the accommodation request policy and their responsiveness. Staff will work within groups to review current material for accommodations, making changes as needed to ensure a responsive, appropriate, policy and procedure.

*Sustainability:* Policies and procedures will ensure future sustainability.

*Deliverables:* All accommodations policies and procedures will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 11 – 24

Activity 2.4

Evaluate and Modify Incident Reporting Policies to Enhance the Referral Process

*Description:* Community Services for Every1staff will review the existing policy and procedure for reporting incidents to define when referrals to Domestic Violence Support Services should be made. The collaboration has agreed that when someone is identified as experiencing domestic violence, Community Services for Every1 will refer to the Family Justice Center. When someone is identified as potentially having a cognitive or developmental disability, the Family Justice Center will contact Community Services for Every1 to assist with service delivery. The revised policy will address the referral process for those seeking services. This in turn will address the need for timely, responsive service delivery.

*Audience:* Staff with each agency will be versed in the incident management and referral process for both agencies.

*Results:* Providing for fluid referrals from Community Services for Every1 to the Family Justice Center and vice versa, this should heighten responsiveness and comfort when accessing necessary services.

*Resources:* Staff time and experience will be resourced for this task.

*Structure:* Community Services for Every1 will evaluate the current incident management policy to address the referral process for someone experiencing domestic violence. Once revisions to the policy are made, it will be reviewed with the Quality Management Department at Community Services for Every1 to ensure recommendations are made within the incident management process. Additionally, the Family Justice Center staff will be informed on policy to ensure awareness, should referrals increase. Collaborating agency staff will evaluate their partners reporting process to see what information is able to be streamlined. An evaluation will occur for any gaps, soliciting necessary feedback for the re-design. Rollout will be determined with changes made following the evaluation period. Work groups will review and revise referrals to ensure potential domestic violence incidents are adequately followed through with appropriate resources. Staff will be educated on execution to ensure safety with the policy revised as necessary.

*Sustainability:* Policies and procedures will ensure future sustainability.

*Deliverables:* All referral materials will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 12 – 24

Activity 2.5

Develop a Safety and Access Review Process for Each Agency

*Description:* The collaboration will create an annual safety and access review at each agency based on indicator scores. A review of existing safety and access tools will be decided upon and adapted to best suit the needs of the collaborating agencies. The collaborating partners will conduct a thorough safety and access review for each of their agencies. Upon completion, issues will be noted within a barrier removal plan.

*Audience:* The Family Justice Center and Community Services for Every1 will assess their programs for safety and accessibility.

*Results:* A thorough review of safety and accessibility in each facility will allow for safer, more accessible services to those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

*Resources:* A safety and access tool will be identified for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence and adapt to the individual needs for each partner. The collaboration will draw upon the tools created by previous Disability Grant Program recipients. Staff time will be utilized to conduct a review with a barrier removal plan compiling the needs of each organization and outline additional resources.

*Structure:* A safety and access review will be completed by allied agencies within the collaboration. The collaboration will review current safety and access procedures and establish a periodic review formalized in policy. Gaps in service delivery will be discussed with feedback incorporated into the barrier removal plan. Identified staff will be trained on how to complete the process to ensure quality and regulatory standards.

*Sustainability:* Annual reviews will occur based on established standards by identified staff. The process will be formalized in policy and a Memorandum of Understanding.

*Deliverables:* The barrier removal plan from the safety and accessibility tools will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 7 - 9

**Initiative #3**

*Expand and deepen the partnership of collaborating agencies.*

Indicator and focus group session data has shed light on the need to expand and deepen the partnership among the agencies. This will occur within the next twenty-four month period through:

* Developing work groups to increase staff buy-in;
* Developing learning communities; and
* Exploring and developing a shared understanding of resources throughout the Western New York region for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

Activity 3.1

Develop Work Groups

*Description:* To encourage interagency cooperation, work groups will be established to complete the activities identified on pages 11 and 12 of this Strategic Plan. Work groups completing the activities will spread the labor among the collaborating agencies, while promoting the sharing of agencies knowledge and responsibilities with a multi-disciplinary perspective on deliverables. In turn, it is expected the combined work groups will increase the buy-in within and across the agencies to the importance of the collaboration.

Work groups will be led by an agency representative and comprised of HOPE committee members and the L.E.A.D.E.R.S. self-advocacy group from Community Services for Every1, with staff and on-site partners at the Family Justice Center. Goals of these work groups will be identified by the collaboration, along with the frequency and duration of each group. The work group leader will report back outcomes to the collaborative to review and provide feedback on.

*Audience:* A diverse representation of staff, volunteers, and service recipients from each agency will comprise the work groups.

*Results:* Work groups will aid in the labor of activity completion. Additionally, integrated work groups will increase ownership and buy-in to the common mission, vision, and values of the collaboration, guiding future sustainability and building relationships among collaborative staff.

*Resources:* Those participating in the groups will leverage their talents and experience as a resource.

*Structure:* The collaboration will discuss additional staff/volunteers/stakeholders that may be interested in participating in the work groups and/or are needed to ensure activities are successfully completed; i.e. community safety, incident reporting, and community resources. It is expected each member of the intended work group will have a level of expertise and experience in the activity being addressed, paving the way for further trust. Work group participants will all receive a baseline training on the mission, vision, and values of the collaborative prior to attending and participating in any work group sessions. A discussion will also include how and when to recruit members for the work group. The work groups being created:

* Policies and Procedures
* Resources
* Tool Development
* Safety and Access Review

*Sustainability:* The collaboration is committed to the development of future work groups and materials as needed, beyond the scope of the grant. The collaborative agencies will review the materials developed, minimally on an annual basis to determine if changes need to be occur.

*Deliverables:* Work group training established in Activity 1.1, along with deliverables and recruitment information, will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 1 – 24

Activity 3.2

Develop Learning Communities

*Description:* Learning communities will bring experts to the table from their respective fields to guide the education and conversation of staff on topic areas around mandated reporting, confidentiality, and other topics of interest to staff. Participation in facilitated discussions will explore the philosophical understanding of issues and deepen/expand the knowledge of areas at the intersection of I/DD and domestic violence. Learning communities will enable participants to learn from the presenter, as well as each other on best practices. This is projected to improve their understanding and abilities to achieve the common goals of the collaborative.

*Audience:* Agency members will be able to learn through the conversation of experience, guided by experts on varying topics.

*Results:* Partners are anticipated to feel more knowledgeable in particular topic areas through shared understanding.

*Resources:* Collaborating members will identify key experts to provide training and education with budget adjustments to secure these figures as needed. Staff will use their time to learn through the community conversation.

*Structure:* The collaboration will identify the goals for these learning communities and the topics to be covered including, but not limited to; education, awareness, and training for areas of mandated reporting and confidentiality. The format for rollout will be determined by the collaboration including in-person trainings and virtual platforms including an evaluation for participation and effectiveness.

*Sustainability:* Learning communities will be reviewed for effectiveness. If determined participants find the sessions effective, collaborating agencies are committed to provide additional trainings as a resource beyond the grant period. At a minimum, the collaborative will review sessions offered to determine whether changes are needed.

*Deliverables:* Approval by the Office on Violence against Women will occur for any learning community sessions, plans, and recruitment information.

*Completion:* Months 10 – 17

Initiative 3.3

Mapping Community Resources

*Description:* Mapping of community resources will deepen the collaboration through creating partnerships and building a shared understanding of the issues plaguing those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence. The collaboration will define what we consider part of the community by geographic region, and identify partners within these areas that may come into contact with those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence. The community resource guide will include information on housing, child care, financial assistance, employment, and/or legal services. The hope is that this community resource guide will be an easy to use navigation tool and will result in expedited referrals to services that could support someone with I/DD leaving a domestic violence situation.

*Audience:* Providers and service recipients will benefit from the shared understanding of resources.

*Results:* Expanded and deepened partnerships among partner agencies through a shared understanding of the scope and reach of services.

*Resources:* Staff time will be resourced for this task.

*Structure:* The collaboration will discuss barriers to accessing resources within the community and discuss why this is important to bridge the gap/deepen the collaboration. In defining this information, we are expanding shared knowledge of available resources in how the community provides support. We will learn the available resources and provide a comprehensive list within a formalized guide.

*Sustainability:* A staff within the collaborating partnership will be tasked annually with ensuring information is current and will be included in the Memorandum of Understanding to ensure relationship sustainability.

*Deliverables:* All material will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 6 - 9

Activity 3.4

Leverage Technology for the Promotion of Warm Referrals

*Description:* Technology will be explored that could ease and promote warm-referrals between partner agencies through virtual consultation and referral. Service recipients will have an option of being able to see and speak directly to the point of contact, rather than merely receiving a business card with a number to call. This should not only improve the referral process for the purpose of expediting linkage to service, it should also limit the potential of re-traumatization, offering a safe and accessible alternative to an on-site visit. Examples of technology being evaluated for consultation and referrals; Skype, ezTalks, and Zoom.

*Audience:* Staff providing services will be able to utilize the technology during service delivery to ease recipients and assure comfort when providing referrals.

*Results:*  The process of identifying technology is anticipated to ease the referral process for comfort, allowing for satisfaction of services to be increased and reduce unsafe situations for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

*Resources:* The assigned work group will evaluate technology for pros and cons with the collaboration determining what will be most effective within each agency’s budgetary constraints.

*Structure:* Available technology options will be identified while analyzing the pros and cons for each platform with safety being a main concern. The collaboration will identify who will use the technology for virtual meetings and the referral process. Staff will be able to access this resource as a means of warm referrals for service recipients and staff/volunteers/stakeholders to promote comfort. A review process of the technology will occur with feedback driving change, as needed.

*Sustainability:* A Memorandum of Understanding will be created detailing the use of technology and any anticipated cost for sustainability beyond the grant period.

*Deliverables:* All materials, technology expenses, and platforms will be approved by the Office on Violence against Women prior to application.

*Completion:* Months 4 - 12

Long-Term Initiatives

The initial goals and initiatives will enhance the relationship with collaborating partners to drive sustainability among the collaborative. Many initiatives will be introduced within the aforementioned period but will be vaster in scope then the timeframe; viz., advanced trainings, ongoing assessments, safety/access review, barrier removal, policies and procedures. It is the collaboration’s anticipation this work will permeate the culture of the organizations for lasting improvement. Formalized policies and procedures will be created to solidify the work began through this grant period.

Although this work is currently limited to the active collaboration, it is our goal to share the lessons and change learned within this project with the rest of the Western New York region for universal safety and accessibility within organizational structures. We strive to make safety and access commonly discussed arenas when accessing services at similar agencies throughout the region.

We anticipate growth in additional partners with future funding and will continue to seek additional streams of monetization to carry out this work; including the leverage of resources for further promotion of trust and buy-in.

Sustainability

The collaboration is dedicated to ensure long-term access for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence through enacting policies and procedures for sustainability. A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed, ensuring future cooperation and sustainability despite potential staff turnover and funding.

Conclusion

Collaborating partners are dedicated to closing the gaps within service delivery to promote the safety and accessibility concerns posed by indicator scores and focus group sessions for those with I/DD experiencing domestic violence.

The rollout of these initiatives will increase collaboration and enhance staff capacity to promote sustainable change within and across systems in accomplishing the collaboration’s mission and vision.

Work Plan

HOPE of WNY has created a charter, outlining the guiding principles of the collaboration and developed a focus memo to narrow the scope for change. A needs assessment was designed to look at potential gaps in service based on indicator data; with the report summarizing the findings. Information within the needs assessment report governed the strategic plan’s development to implement sustainable change throughout each respective agency.

February 2017 – May 2017 …………………………..….. Creation of the Collaboration Charter

May 2017 – July 2017 ……………………………. Submit Charter and Create the Focus Memo

July 2017 – January 2018 ………………………...........…… Planning of the Needs Assessment

February 2018 ….…………………...…………………….………… Sessions with Participants

February - May 2018 …...…………………. Develop and Submit the Needs Assessment Report

June – August 2018 …..………………….……..……………………………. Strategic Planning

November 2018 ……………………………….…………….…………… Submit Strategic Plan

December 2018 – September 2019 ………….…………..…….....…………….. Implementation