



# Collaboration Charter



*This document is intended to reflect the history, partnership and agreements of the YWCA West Central Michigan, MOKA, Spectrum Community Services, Thresholds, Inc., and Hope Network – Developmental and Community Services. It is a record of collaboration done under a Cooperative Agreement (Award # 2012-FW-AX-K006) with the Office on Violence Against Women Education, Training and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Program.*

Introduction.....	3
Vision Statement .....	5
Mission Statement .....	5
Values and Assumptions .....	5
Overview of Team Organizations .....	7
Lead Organization: YWCA West Central Michigan.....	7
Partner Organization: MOKA .....	8
Partner Organization: Spectrum Community Services .....	9
Partner Organization: Thresholds, Inc. ....	10
Partner Organization: Hope Network Developmental and Community Services .....	11
Contributions and Commitments .....	12
Decision Making Process .....	13
Conflict Resolution Strategy .....	14
Confidentiality Agreements.....	17
Mandated Reporting .....	18
Communication Plan .....	19
Internal communication.....	19
External communication.....	20
Work Plan .....	21
Key Terms and Definitions .....	22
Appendix A – Talking Points.....	27
Background Information Talking Points .....	27
WEAVE Collaboration Talking Points .....	27
Collaboration Partner Organization Talking Points .....	28
YWCA West Central Michigan .....	28
MOKA.....	29
Spectrum Community Services .....	29
Thresholds.....	30
Hope Network Developmental and Community Services.....	30
Contact Information.....	31

## Introduction

Despite tremendous vulnerability, individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) are often underserved when it comes to intervention of sexual or domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> Sexual assault service providers and agencies that serve those with I/DD have historically been designed to meet the needs of two distinct populations and often have little or no contact with each other. This had been found to be the case in our community. Recognizing the pressing need to focus on sexual assault/abuse against women, men, and children with I/DD, the YWCA West Central Michigan (YWCA) launched a local collaborative task force focused entirely on helping better protect and support a population that suffers from victimization at alarmingly high rates.

In the spring of 2011, members of the Kent County Domestic Violence Community Coordinated Response Team (DVCCRT), the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and the Sexual Assault Prevention Action Team (SAPAT) formed the Sexual Assault Intervention/ Prevention of Persons with Intellectual and Development Disabilities Task Force. Over a dozen local agencies which serve the I/DD population including Hope Network, Thresholds, the Arc, Network 180 (community mental health) Kent County Department of Human Service Adult Protective Services and others committed to strengthening the community prevention and intervention response to sexual assault/abuse for persons with I/DD. The Task Force examined the work of other collaborative bodies (Accessing Safety Initiative and Illinois Imagines), and fostered a deeper commitment to meaningful and authentic collaboration among individuals and partner organizations.

To establish a baseline for understanding our disparate organizations, the first several months of meetings consisted of getting to know each other, sharing service information and determining preliminary goals for working together as a group. To develop a common understanding of the needs of sexual assault survivors with I/DD, Carla Blinkhorn, CEO of the YWCA, secured a training grant and contracted with Shirley Paceley of Blue Tower Training and a self-advocate to conduct three full days of training and discussion opportunities. Over 200 family members, direct service providers and management staff from Task Force agencies participated in these trainings. Attendees left with meaningful, effective approaches to better serve their respective clients and loved ones.

An unanticipated consequence of the Blue Tower training was the identification of the broad spectrum of resources required for effective intervention for the diverse groups that fall under the definition of persons with I/DD. Further, the focus of the Task Force was unclear. The Task Force could elect to focus on educational institutions, on appropriate therapy and case management, hiring and supervision of staff, safety and accessibility--all important areas of focus, but too broad, too complex, and too costly for this group. Finally, while many of the agencies had a strong history of working together;

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<sup>1</sup> See National Crime Victimization Survey 2008-2010, Evaluation of Violence Against Women with Physical Disabilities in Michigan, 2000-2001.

a sexual assault /abuse focus identified the difference in language, confidentiality, protocols and expectations. Additional resources and organizational support were needed if the collaborative efforts could continue with clarity and efficiency.

With further deliberation, the Task Force determined that a sub-committee with a clearly defined service population could conduct a needs assessment and develop a strategic plan with clearly defined community protocols that could form the basis for replication across a broader spectrum of service providers and service venues. Thus, in January 2012, the Task Force determined that it would form a sub-committee of a select group of residential service providers and the YWCA. This Residential Services sub-committee of the Task Force now included the current organizations of this WEAVE collaboration: The YWCA, MOKA, Spectrum Community Services, Thresholds and Hope Network.

The selection of the four agencies providing residential services was deliberate. Combined, these agencies provide the majority of direct specialized residential care to individuals with disabilities in Kent County or are providing community supports to them in adult foster homes. These four providers also form the core of the coordination and change-agent work groups for services to individuals with disabilities in the community. In addition, all five agencies, including the YWCA, are nationally accredited and have demonstrated the capacity to assess performance and quality assurance. These agencies have the dedication and infrastructure for facilitating both agency and broad community change.

To further support the collaboration and Task Force subcommittee, the five agencies solidified their commitment through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the YWCA applied for federal funding through the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). In September 2012, the YWCA was awarded funding under the Discretionary Grant Program (Award # 2012-FW-AX-K006). And, in October 2012, the YWCA entered into the Cooperative Agreement with OVW through the Education, Training and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities Program. With this new funding and with support and technical assistance provided through the Vera Institute of Justice, the subcommittee renamed itself WEAVE (Working to End Assault and Violence for Everyone) and began discussions about the scope and focus of the grant and about the lasting and sustainable changes we desired in our organizations.

WEAVE met regularly and attended the New Grantee Orientation Meeting and National Disability Conference in Louisville, KY at the end of October 2012. The team participated in the Building the Foundation Webinar series from December 2012 through February 2013 and began interviews for the Project Manager position. In May 2013, a Project Manager was hired and WEAVE began working on this Collaborative Charter and other documents required in this planning and development stage, as well as looking ahead toward the work of assessment and implementation.

## **Vision Statement**

We envision that all individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have experienced sexual assault/abuse will have access to a compassionate and highly skilled array of our organizations' professionals. We will support these individuals through a Culture of Gentleness<sup>2</sup> that permeates our policies and procedures.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of WEAVE is to examine and enhance systems for serving individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse. Through this collaboration we will transform our organizational cultures to be trauma-informed and compassionate by:

- Identifying, developing, and enhancing policies and procedures within our organizations to improve our responses to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have experienced sexual assault/abuse to receive timely information, compassionate advocacy, and respectful support.
- Increasing the awareness, skills, training and competency of supports coordinators, advocates, nurses, therapists, staff and volunteers at our organizations who work directly with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse.
- Weaving a Culture of Gentleness in our organizations and through our interactions with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
- Creating sustainable and systemic changes in our organizations through our collaboration.

## **Values and Assumptions**

WEAVE unconditionally recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of all people as people and values their unique qualities and characteristics.

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<sup>2</sup> The Culture of Gentleness philosophy is attributed to the Center for Positive Living Supports, (<http://www.positivelivingsupport.org/about-us/about-the-center>), who first championed and began practicing it in Michigan in 2008. It is based on the Gentle Teaching tenets and work of Dr. John McGee. The core principles are grounded in a psychology of human interdependence. It asks care givers and care providers to look at themselves and their spirit of gentleness in order to find ways to express warmth and unconditional valuing towards those who are the most disenfranchised from family and community life. It views the care giver role as critical and requires a deep commitment to personal, organizational and social change. WEAVE believes that establishing a deep sense of community and companionship with those we serve is the foundation for meaningful living.

WEAVE believes that safety is a basic human right and that everyone has the right to live free of sexual violence and/or abuse.

WEAVE maintains that freedom is a basic human right, and that all people, regardless of ability, should have the power to act, speak or think without externally imposed restraints.

WEAVE values the promotion of a culture of gentleness and respect within our organizations and through our interactions with all people.

WEAVE commits to ongoing organizational awareness, reflection, and critical analysis in order to create lasting and systemic change among our organizations.

WEAVE adopts a person-centered approach, making the individual the focal point. An individual with an intellectual and/or developmental disability who has experienced sexual assault/abuse will not need to “change” to fit into the existing service delivery system but rather the service delivery system will adapt to each person’s preferences, strengths, capacities, needs and desired outcomes/goals.

WEAVE incorporates people first language when referring to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse.

WEAVE ensures that the information shared within the collaboration is confidential and will restrict access to, and dissemination of, any details that personally identify the individuals served.

WEAVE utilizes respectful and nonjudgmental communication within our collaboration and in all communication with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse. Recognizing that all people have the right to say what they want, we ask that it not be said in an abusive or harsh manner. We will refrain from making judgments based solely on our personal opinions or standards.

WEAVE asserts that individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have experienced sexual assault/abuse will have access to community-based services, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities and/or religion.

WEAVE remains committed to social justice and to sustainable organizational changes that will endure beyond the scope of this collaboration and grant project.

## Overview of Team Organizations

### Lead Organization: YWCA West Central Michigan

25 Sheldon Boulevard SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
<http://www.ywcawcmi.org/>

Phone: (616) 459-4681  
Fax: (616) 459-5423

The YWCA West Central Michigan (YWCA) was established in 1900 and is grounded in the founders' vision of a place dedicated to "the betterment of women and girls." The organization offers the most comprehensive range of services and has leveraged its experience, expertise, resources, and partnerships to confront the human tragedy and public health crisis created by domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and stalking. To help reduce girls' vulnerability to violence and increase their ability to thrive, the YWCA is formally affiliated with Girls Incorporated®, which provides prevention/ intervention services for girls nine to eighteen years old. The YWCA sexual assault services are provided primarily in Kent, Montcalm and Ionia counties. The YWCA's mission is, "Eliminating racism, empowering women and girls and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all."

#### **Caroline "Carla" Blinkhorn, MA** – Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Blinkhorn has been with the organization for 28 years, first as the director of the YWCA Counseling Center for 15 years, and then as CEO. In addition to guiding the ongoing evolution of YWCA programming, Ms. Blinkhorn is also a national program auditor for the Council on Accreditation, as well as a best practice standards auditor for the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board. She is a founding member and past chair of the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, an advocacy and training organization for sexual assault and domestic violence service agencies. She is also a founding member and former Board Chair of Camp Sunshine (a non-profit camp for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities).

#### **Tom Cottrell, LMSW** – Vice President of Counseling Services

Mr. Cottrell has been with the YWCA for 30 years, beginning as a therapist in child sexual abuse programming, then clinical supervisor and later program director. His current position is responsible for oversight of sexual assault, domestic violence and child sexual abuse programming. Mr. Cottrell develops most program-focused policy and procedure for the organization and oversees the continuous quality improvement process.

#### **Christine Drewel, PhD** – Project Manager

Ms. Drewel has been active in the community for twenty years through Special Olympics and has raised a son with intellectual and developmental disabilities, which provides a parental perspective to WEAVE.



## **Partner Organization: MOKA**

4145 Kalamazoo Avenue SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49508  
<http://www.moka.org>

Phone: (616) 719-4263  
Phone: (800) 644-2434  
TTY: (800) 649-3777  
Fax: (616) 719-4267

Established in 1978, MOKA is a non-profit organization whose vision is “to create an inclusive culture where everyone is held in the highest respect, feels safe, is valued and as a result affirms others and works collaboratively toward personal goals and achieving our mission.” MOKA serves over 800 individuals with disabilities annually throughout western Michigan. They offer treatment in specialized community based homes, training and support for independent living, skill building with the goal of employment, skill development and job placement, and family support of children with autism and other disabilities. In Kent County, they serve 62 individuals in specialized licensed residential homes and provide supports coordination services to over 125 individuals living in the community in their family home, their own residence or in general adult foster care homes. MOKA believes in gentle teaching and created a gentle culture to treat the individuals they serve with the greatest respect so they feel safe and affirmed. MOKA’s mission is to “create opportunities for independence and acceptance in our communities by supporting people in: making choices, building relationships, sharing places, developing skills, enhancing reputations, and contributing back to their community.”

### **Thomas Zmolek, MBA - Executive Director**

Mr. Zmolek has served as Executive Director of MOKA since April of 1980. Tom graduated from Western Michigan University with a degree in psychology and an emphasis in Applied Behavior Analysis. He earned his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Grand Valley State University. Prior to working at MOKA, Tom served as Intensive Training Unit Supervisor for the State of Montana at Boulder River School and Hospital in Boulder, working with children and adults with severe behavior challenges.

### **Lee Ann Shedleski-Holmden, BSW - Regional Director**

Ms. Shedleski-Holmden has been with MOKA for over 27 years. She is responsible for oversight and quality improvement for residential, supports coordination and enhanced health care services in Kent County. She has been the chairperson for the MOKA Policy Review Committee since 2002 and is responsible for guiding policy revision and new policy development for the agency. Lee Ann represents MOKA on the local community mental health agency’s Developmental Disability Division Managing Partners workgroup as well as on their Improving Practices Leadership Team (IPLT).





## **Partner Organization: Spectrum Community Services**

3353 Lousma Drive SE  
Wyoming, MI 49548

Phone: 616-241-6258  
Fax: 616-241-6470

<http://www.spectrumhuman.org/SCS/Default.aspx>

Spectrum Community Services, a local non-profit organization and affiliate of Spectrum Human Services, was established in 1976. They specialize in community integration by operating residential group homes that provide services specifically for individuals who have developmental, intellectual and physical disabilities. Spectrum Community Services operates 17 residential treatment homes in Kent County for persons with a developmental disability, serving approximately 100 individuals. Additionally, they provide supports coordination, community living supports and enhanced mental health services to 170 individuals who reside either with their families, in general adult foster care homes or in supported independent living arrangements. The mission of Spectrum Community Services is “to empower, strengthen and enhance individuals, families and communities.”

### **Barb Fowkes, MHSWA – Executive Director**

Ms. Fowkes has worked with people with disabilities for the past forty two years for both the State of Michigan and for Spectrum Community Services. She worked direct services in a state institution and assisted the state in developing the Group Home training curriculum during her last two years working at Plymouth Center for Human Development. Ms. Fowkes has worked in many different capacities within Spectrum Community Services providing direct services and managerial services to people with developmental disabilities and mental health disabilities. She has been in her current position for the last 15 years.

### **Roger DeKuiper, LLP, LMSW – (former) Director of Clinical Services**

Mr. DeKuiper has been with Spectrum Community Services since 2007 and was previously the Clinical Director with Ottawa County Community Mental Health, having been with that organization for 28 years. In his role, Mr. DeKuiper was responsible for determining how Spectrum Community Services interfaces with other providers in the community. He is currently on the Interagency Clinical Team for Network 180, the Out of Home Placement Review Committee, the Developmental Disability Clinical Workgroup and the Comprehensive Continuous Integrated System of Care group for Community Mental Health. Although he has recently retired, Mr. DeKuiper will remain a contractual employee and consultant with Spectrum in order to continue working with the WEAVE collaboration.



**Partner Organization: Thresholds, Inc.**

4255 Kalamazoo Avenue SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49508  
Phone: (616) 455-0960  
Fax: (616) 455-7324  
<http://www.threshnet.org/>

Thresholds, Inc., established in 1972, is a non-profit social service agency that provides services to Kent County residents who have developmental disabilities and to their families. Thresholds serves approximately 900 individuals annually; 115 individuals reside in Thresholds' treatment homes in Kent County and approximately another 700 additional individuals receive support services in adult foster homes and private residences. Thresholds' array of services includes supports coordination, specialized residential support and service, and respite care supports. The core values that guided their formation and that have sustained them during more than 40 years are continuing today with an ongoing emphasis on Person-Centered Planning which builds on an individual's strengths – honoring their choices and abilities. The mission of Thresholds is “to enable adults with developmental disabilities to live as productively and independently as possible in the community.”

**Tom Ferch, CPA - President, Chief Executive Officer**

Mr. Ferch has been the President and CEO of Thresholds since 2002. Prior to assuming that role, Tom was the Chief Financial Officer. He is a Certified Public Accountant, who has also served in the capacity as an Auditor and Administrative Vice-President.

**Fred Ward, LLP, LMSW – Director of Clinical Services**

Mr. Ward has been with Thresholds for 31 years in a variety of capacities; Psychologist/ Supports Coordinator, Clinical Supervisor, and now, Director of Clinical Services. He is responsible for the overall clinical direction and quality improvement activities of the agency. He coordinates and organizes clinical training for professionals and supports coordination staff. Mr. Ward is the staff liaison to the Program Committee of the Board of Directors; playing a significant role in shaping organizational policy. Mr. Ward represents Thresholds on the community's Developmental Disability Clinical Work Group and the Change Agent Group.



## **Partner Organization: Hope Network Developmental and Community Services**

3075 Orchard Vista Drive SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
<http://www.hopenetwork.org/>

Phone: (616) 301-8000  
Fax: (616) 301-8010

Hope Network is a non-profit Christian organization founded in 1963 serving individuals with disabilities of all, or no, religious affiliations, with a focus of empowering people to achieve their highest level of independence. Hope Network Developmental and Community Services (DCS) provides a continuum of specialized care for those with brain and spinal cord injuries, mental illness, and developmental disabilities. Hope Network DCS support services include transportation, subsidized housing, and workforce development that utilizes Hope Network owned manufacturing facilities for on-the-job training. Hope Network DCS Specialized Residential Services, with 20 homes in Kent County, will be the division partnering with this project. The mission of Hope Network is, "In Christian service, Hope Network empowers people to overcome challenges to achieve their highest level of independence."

### **Phil Weaver, President and Chief Executive Officer**

Mr. Weaver joined Hope Network in 2006. Prior to that, he was President and CEO of Goodwill of Greater Grand Rapids. During his 22 years in the public and private sectors, he held several positions in Human Resources, Organizational Development/Strategy, and Executive Operations Management with Stryker Corporation, Ford Motor Company, Triple S Plastics and Eimo Americas. He also served on School Board for more than 11 years, and is serving or has been a member of the Alliance for Health Board, United Way Finance Committee, the Employers Healthcare Council, Genesis Board, Michigan Association of Rehabilitation Organizations and is the chair of several nonprofit corporations within Hope Network.

### **Jerry DeRuiter, Executive Director**

Mr. DeRuiter joined Hope Network in 2012 as Executive Director for Business Solutions. In 2013, he was promoted to the position of Executive Director of Hope Network's Developmental and Community Services Division. The Developmental and Community Services Division serves the needs of developmentally disabled consumers and their families in Michigan and Georgia. Prior to joining Hope Network, Jerry served as Executive Pastor for Kentwood Community Church, President/CEO of Arbor Circle, Executive Director of Grand Rapids Child Guidance Clinic, Mayor City of Kentwood and elected to the Kent County Board of Commissioners. Jerry has served on many boards and committees including the Kent County Board of Public Health and Community Mental Health Board.



## Contributions and Commitments

As outlined in our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the partners in this Collaboration Charter are committed to making sustainable and systemic changes and contributions in our organizations to better serve individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse. In support of our vision, mission and values, we recognize and appreciate each other's work and contributions.

Partners on WEAVE commit to:

- Serving as agents of change within their organizations
- Attending and actively participating in scheduled meetings
- Sharing their individual voices and the perspectives of the organization each represents
- Responding in a timely manner to requests for information, feedback, product development and other aspects of the grant project
- Maintaining regular communication and sharing information between and among other partner organizations as well as within their own organizations and leadership structures
- Ensuring that the resources committed to this process by their organizations are sustained

The Lead Organization (YWCA West Central Michigan), in addition to the commitments above agrees to:

- Making fiduciary decisions after consultation with the collaboration team members regarding the collaboration's budget.
- Hiring, terminating, and supervising the Project Director. (Individual WEAVE partners can provide input to the direct supervisor on performance evaluations, concerns, and decisions on hiring)
- Negotiating MOU partnerships
- Providing WEAVE partners with information about budgetary decisions and working to ensure collaborative support
- Serving as the liaison to the Kent County Domestic Violence Community Coordinated Response Team, the Sexual Assault Response Team and the Sexual Assault Prevention Action Team, and facilitating communication between collaborative bodies

The Project Manager, in addition to the commitments above, is responsible for:

- Scheduling and facilitating collaboration meetings
- Ensuring all members understand the concepts under discussion
- Determining level of agreement before moving on to new issues
- Distributing meeting minutes and agendas
- Coordinating communication among partners

- Securing feedback from partners in developing draft and final documents and materials for the project
- Developing quarterly executive summaries for distribution in partner organizations and the larger community
- Consolidating group agreements and proposed language into draft format for review by the partners
- Providing guidance and leadership to the collaboration to keep the project moving forward
- Serving as the liaison to the Vera technical assistance staff and the OVW Project Office

## **Decision Making Process**

WEAVE defines consensus as “general agreement or concord; harmony,” and we will use consensus to make decisions that impact the project or the direction of the project. We recognize that we will occasionally have issues on which we disagree and acknowledge that “agreement” and “resolution” are separate. If it becomes clear that the collaboration partners are unable to come to a consensus, the collaboration will work to find what *can* be agreed upon and seek a resolution.

As indicated in our values above, we will utilize respectful and non-judgmental communication while reaching consensus. We will take the time to reach consensus because our decisions will impact not only the project direction itself but also the interactions of WEAVE partners, their organizations, and the larger community. We believe that consensus decision-making is integral to our growth and builds trust and commitment within WEAVE and our organizations. All partners will have an equal voice in approving or identifying changes for all decisions that require consensus.

### **Decision making process when formally meeting**

We will start by taking necessary time to explore the issue until each partner’s opinions are heard and understood by the others, especially if those opinions are in opposition to each other or in opposition to other opinions voiced.

We will ensure that a thorough checking-in process occurs throughout all decisions and discussions. During the course of checking-in, it will be determined that either all partners agree and are ready to move on from the topic being discussed, or that consensus has been reached in the case of formal decision making. This tracking will be done by requesting each team member to verbally indicate where they stand with the decision or topic:

- “I agree”- Used when the individual is ready to move on from the topic; used when the individual is in agreement with the decision.
- “I need more information/further discussion”- Used when the individual would like the conversation to continue to gain more information and is not yet ready to move on; used when determining if the conversation should be postponed while partners collect further information and reflect on the discussion independently before returning to the table to make a final decision.
- “I disagree and I am willing to move on” – Used when the individual is not in agreement with all or part of the decision, but the reasons are minor, and/or will not ultimately change the direction of the project or collaboration; the individual agrees that the decision is resolved.
- “I disagree”- Used when the individual is in disagreement with the decision, charging the collaboration partners to either determine an alternative decision or determine how the group can best work together or move forward without coming to consensus on this topic or decision.

Any person can call for a “check-in” at any point in the discussion process to verbally poll the group and determine whether partners are in agreement and/or that consensus has been reached. Additionally, the Project Manager is charged with periodically ensuring that everyone agrees and/or that consensus has been reached before moving on, and also with making a final inquiry regarding consensus and resolution prior to moving on to the next issue.

When a decision is being made or discussed, relevant information and data from the organization will be freely shared within the confidentiality parameters of each organization. If a partner needs particular information to be kept confidential within the WEAVE collaboration, that team member will state this explicitly during the discussion.

Decisions that are made by the collaboration will be documented and tracked in the meeting minutes under a specific section called “Decisions Made.” During the normal course of our discussions and collaboration, if there is a significant or philosophical conflict that we cannot reach consensus on, we will engage the following strategy for conflict resolution.

## **Conflict Resolution Strategy**

WEAVE recognizes that we all have diverse and extensive knowledge, experience and values for working with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and sexual assault/abuse issues. We also recognize that we each bring our own unique perspectives, opinions, and voices to the table as strengths for our collaboration, organizations, and community. However, we are aware that at times conflict will arise

and may pose challenges and barriers to our ability to successfully work toward our common goals.

WEAVE has discussed and anticipates that any conflict that may arise will likely fall into four separate areas:

- Actions that violate the Memorandum of Understanding commitments
- Personality conflicts
- Performance/behavior that breaks the agreements and/or tenets found in this Collaborative Charter
- Philosophic or strategic differences that are not otherwise resolved through the decision making process

We recognize that different kinds of conflict may have different resolutions, and we commit to utilizing any conflict as a catalyst for our growth and mutual understanding.

Thus, WEAVE agrees to the following framework to manage conflict. We will productively move any conflict we experience toward honoring individual opinions, allowing space for voices to be heard, and finding a resolution upon which we all agree.

### **Framework for addressing conflict**

All collaboration partners commit to this Conflict Resolution Strategy and steps. We bring an expectation of transparency to our work and a shared commitment to our values. Collaboration partners will be open to each person's perspective, trust the motivation of that person, and recognize the importance of this topic to that individual. The collaboration will demonstrate this by thoroughly listening (including non-verbal cues/body language), allowing equal air time for each individual, watching for interrupting, and self-monitoring one's own biases and feelings. The collaboration will also demonstrate this through respectful questions to gain more insight. Partners will avoid blame of any individual. All partners will work to put personal interest for being right aside and acknowledge that the resolution of conflict is for the betterment of the collaboration.

In their book *Communication, Conflict, and the Management of Difference*, (McGraw-Hill, 2007), Littlejohn and Domenici acknowledge, "The key to effective conflict management is to take a step back, look carefully at the process, and build a more effective framework in which to manage the difference." WEAVE partners will build such a framework by focusing on the following four skills, remembered by the acronym SLOW:

1. **S**etting a positive and collaborative tone
2. **L**istening and acknowledging feelings, emotions and experiences
3. **O**bserving and organizing from an outside/objective perspective
4. **W**orking to find a creative and mutually agreeable resolution

Collaboration partners will remember and acknowledge that conflict is an important step toward a more successful collaboration, and that even if an agreement is not reached, the collaboration is motivated to work through conflict completely. Our collaboration will focus on specific issues, not the personalities of the persons involved. If there are underlying issues or a “core” to the conflict, we will name and address these issues.

### **Steps for addressing the conflict**

If a conflict arises between specific partners of the collaboration, the individual partner(s) will address the conflict transparently and openly with the specific individual. This will include the nature and reason for the conflict, any specific details, and also potential solutions. Once conflict has been discussed and resolved by individual collaboration partners, they will then bring the conflict to the entire collaboration to ensure all are kept informed of independent discussions.

Collaboration partner(s) experiencing conflict that affects the entire collaboration will request that the topic be put on the meeting agenda and/or transparently communicate the conflict with all partners, as appropriate. This will involve the nature and reason for the conflict, any specific details, and also potential solutions. Partners will avoid discussion of the conflict outside of the collaboration and will maintain the integrity of the conflict resolution process.

### **When resolution cannot be attained**

If a resolution cannot be found, partners will agree to postpone the discussion for the purpose of allowing time to reflect and obtain any additional relevant information on the topic to make a more informed decision. Any partner can suggest moving to this phase, and all partners must come to consensus on postponement. Everyone will agree to a future date/time to re-address the conflict for resolution.

### **Seeking outside support**

If, after further discussion, a resolution is still not reached, the partners in WEAVE will seek support from outside the collaboration. Depending on the nature of the conflict, we will pursue one of the following options:

- If a conflict leads to unresolved concerns, such issues may be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee Member of that specific collaboration partner to determine the best intervention and outcomes. (Some examples include if a person is consistently late, not completing work assignments in a timely manner, or issues that violate other agreements found in this Collaboration Charter.)



- If a resolution cannot be found, the collaboration may seek help from the Vera Institute of Justice for consultation and guidance.
- If a resolution cannot be reached with the consultation of Vera, the Vera Associate may seek the assistance of an additional staff member from Vera or engage the Office on Violence Against Women, as needed.
- If a resolution cannot be reached through the additional support of Vera or OVW, an outside mediator may be necessary.

### **If an executive committee member has a conflict with the collaboration's work**

In the course of routine updates, if an executive committee member from any of the partner organizations brings forward a conflict that will impact the collaboration's work, WEAVE will discuss the conflict and develop a plan to address the concern. This may include inviting the executive team member to the next scheduled WEAVE meeting.

If a resolution is not found, the collaboration may invite other executive committee members, Vera, or outside mediation as needed.

## **Confidentiality Agreements**

As stated above in our values, "WEAVE ensures that the information shared within the collaboration is confidential and will restrict access to and dissemination of any details that personally identify the individuals served." We will be mindful of who we talk to, when, and about what, always keeping in mind that information about and interactions with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse is both confidential and bound by law (see Mandated Reporting section below). In short, WEAVE will honor the confidentiality of the individuals we serve as well as of our collaborative efforts, and we will follow Michigan Law.

Beyond that general concept of confidentiality, the partners recognize that each participant, whether as an individual or as a group, will have specific confidentiality requirements. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Funding requirements
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) requirements
- Professional/ethical requirements for individual professions such as counselors, social workers, physicians and attorneys

In addressing potential systems changes, such as unwelcoming culture, prejudices, policies and procedures, WEAVE will address these issues as they are identified, and will do so confidentially among our collaborative. When discussing concerns that relate to specific collaborative partners, or other external agencies, partners will not share this information beyond WEAVE, except as reflected in the agreed upon content and format of the Communication Plan, Needs Assessment Report and resulting Strategic Plan.

## **Mandated Reporting**

After reviewing and discussing Michigan's confidentiality statutes, we remain committed to maintaining individual confidentiality for WEAVE partners as well as survivors and staff.

- Discretion and care is necessary to avoid use of specific identifiers.
- We are mindful that anyone at any time could be experiencing abuse.
- We will not share the personal stories or experiences of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have experienced sexual assault/abuse with others outside of the group.

These confidentiality statutes and provisions shall not be violated unless otherwise allowed by law.

When we meet with groups and individuals as part of our collaborative process, including possible aspects of the needs assessment and implementation phases, we realize that discussion may bring up past and current trauma related to abuse. Before this occurs we will explain:

- Our mandated reporting requirements
- How we will assist people in accessing supportive and legal services if desired.

The partners agree to comply with all mandatory confidentiality requirements for both member organizations and service providers. These requirements include, but are not limited to, Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 600.2157a (Definitions; Consultation between Victim and Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence Counselor; Admissibility), MCL 333.18513 (Confidentiality of Communication), MCL 333.18117 (Privileged Communications; Disclosure of Confidential Information), MCL 333.18237 (Psychology: Confidential Information; Disclosure; Waiver), MCL 600.2157 (Physician-Patient Privilege; Waiver), 42 USC 13925(b)(2)(B)(ii) (Nondisclosure of Confidential or Private Information), MCL 330.1748 Sec. 748 (Mental Health Code: Confidentiality) and 400.14304 (Adult Foster Care Licensing; Resident Rights, Licensee Responsibilities) Rule 304 (q) (Confidentiality of Records).

WEAVE has reviewed and discussed Michigan's mandatory reporting statutes, and will work with the "vulnerable" (terminology applies only when specifically referencing this

law) adult community in full compliance with all applicable mandatory reporting requirements, which will include but is not limited to MCL 400.11, (which provides the definition of “Vulnerable Adult”), MCL 750.411 (which defines duty to report injuries) and MCL 330.1946 (which addresses confidentiality).

WEAVE has reviewed the confidentiality laws and mental health code. As required by law, we will report suspected child abuse and/or vulnerable adult abuse and will follow existing policies of our respective organizations.

## **Communication Plan**

### **Internal communication**

WEAVE values transparency and open dialogue for all interactions. It is the responsibility of all partners to share relevant information within the collaboration in a timely and accurate manner. It is also the responsibility of the partners to disseminate information, executive summaries and updates to their respective organizations and leadership structures accordingly.

There will be an agenda for each WEAVE meeting that will include routine sharing of relevant information, events and updates. Members agree to keep each other informed of any issues that might impact the collaboration. Minutes will be taken at all WEAVE meetings and will include any decisions made and any open action items. Action items will be included on the agenda for follow-up or closure at the next meeting. The Project Manager is responsible for creating and distributing the minutes and agendas for each meeting via email. Minutes will be verified and approved, or revised if needed, at the following meeting.

WEAVE values and encourages communication that:

1. Is transparent, honest and direct
2. Is respectful and appropriate
3. Is positive, constructive and flexible
4. Includes varied perspectives and innovative ideas
5. Is inclusive and uses and promotes “People First” language
6. Acknowledges the individual expertise that each member brings to the collaboration
7. Promotes learning and increasing awareness and understanding of each member’s strengths and challenges
8. Resists defensiveness
9. Is frequent and timely

WEAVE is dedicated to making all efforts to ensure transparent communication during all phases of the collaboration. We have created a digital Dropbox for team members

and the executive committee members, which provides access to the drafts of our documents, minutes and agendas, and other resources used during the process of our collaboration.

## **External communication**

WEAVE is dedicated to reinforcing the vision, mission, and values of their collaboration, as well as to honoring our Confidentiality Agreements. It is important that all communication accurately and consistently expresses the collaboration's attributes, such as its name, work, purpose, and way it is perceived by the community it aims to support. Communication includes, but is not limited to, newsletter articles, brochures, advertisements, press releases, crisis communication, event information, mass emails, website content, and presentations. The aim of all communication is to provide the community with a consistent message of integrity regarding the work and mission of the collaboration. Appendix A provides guidelines and expectations for all external communication directed toward the media or for the purpose of public communication (such as presentations and announcements at meetings and training programs).

The collaboration has created talking points (see Appendix A) which provide the following information:

- Background information about OVW and the grant
- The talking points for communicating about ongoing work of WEAVE
- Talking points for each partner organization
- The contact list with appointed contacts for all communication requests from each organization and their contact information

The talking points have been reviewed and approved by all collaboration partners and appointed communication contacts from each organization. It is our expectation that all individuals will communicate from the approved talking points. If further information is requested, the individual will refer the request to the Project Manager.

## Work Plan

WEAVE anticipates a productive and rigorous schedule for our collaboration. While the following schedule indicates our goals, we recognize that in order to create meaningful conversations and a stable and sustainable foundation for our project, this Work Plan may require some flexibility.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>
OVW Grant Awarded	September 2012	September 12, 2012
Attend Louisville, KY New Grantee Orientation Meeting and National Disability Conference	October –November 2012	November 1, 2012
Participate in Building the Foundation Webinars	December 2012 – Ongoing	Ongoing
Search, Recruitment and Interviews for Project Manager	December 2012 – April 2013	April 30, 2013
Hire Project Manager	May 2013	May 6, 2013
Develop Collaboration Charter	May – July 2013	July 15, 2013
Develop Needs Assessment Plan	July – August 2013	August 30, 2013
Implement Needs Assessment Plan	September – December 2013	December 31, 2013
Compile Findings and Analyze Data	December 2013 – January 2014	January 2014
Needs Assessment Report	January 2014	January 15, 2014
Vera On-Site Visit for Strategic Planning	February 2014	February 4-6, 2014
Create Strategic Plan	February – March 2014	March 1, 2014
Implement Strategic Plan	March – December 2014	December 31, 2014
Build Sustainability Plan and Project Evaluation	January–September 2015	September 2015

## Key Terms and Definitions

WEAVE recognizes that individuals and organizations may hold differing ideas about the meaning of the terms and definitions we use. In support of our values to commit to ongoing organizational awareness and to utilize respectful and non-judgmental communication, we have discussed the following terms and have reached consensus on these definitions.

**ableism:** A pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people with disabilities. A system in which people without disabilities maintain supremacy over people with disabilities through a set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures, rewards, privileges and benefits of the society that are available to individuals according to their presumed level of ability. Ableism operates on an individual, organizational, institutional, cultural and societal level.

**abuse:** Harm or threatened harm to an adult's health or welfare caused by another person. Abuse includes but is not limited to; non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or maltreatment. (MCL 400.11a- Reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult. As used here and elsewhere, MCL refers to Michigan Compiled Laws)

Note: This statutory definition is not intended to be all inclusive; other forms of abuse exist, such as withholding or over utilizing medications, isolation, and verbal, emotional and financial abuse. Perpetrators of abuse may include family members, dating partners, professional caregivers (personal assistants, agency staff, etc.) or other acquaintances. (see also: sexual abuse)

**assault:** An action, threat or attempt to hurt another individual. It can be physical, verbal, or psychological in nature. (see also: sexual assault)

**autonomy:** A person's ability to make independent choices; self reliance.

**caregiver:** A person who provides direct service care to another, both formally, such as a hired Personal Care Attendant or Supports Coordinator, or informally, such as an unpaid family member or friend.

**Center for Independent Living (CIL):** a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living services. (Section 702 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

**collaboration:** According to the Fieldstone Alliance<sup>3</sup>, collaboration is "a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/>

achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone.” This relationship includes commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and awards.

**confidentiality:** The ethical principle and legal right that a professional will hold all information relating to a client in confidence, unless the client gives consent permitting disclosure or unless disclosure is required by the law.

**culture:** The values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore, and institutions that a group of people, who are unified by race, ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion, share; the way of life shared by the members of a group.

**Culture of Gentleness:** The philosophy attributed to the Center for Positive Living Supports<sup>4</sup>, who first championed, formalized and implemented it in Michigan in 2008. It is based on the Gentle Teaching tenets and work of Dr. John McGee. The core principles are grounded in a psychology of human interdependence. It asks care givers and care providers to look at themselves and their spirit of gentleness in order to find ways to express warmth and unconditional valuing towards those who are the most disenfranchised from family and community life. It views the care giver role as critical and requires a deep commitment to personal, organizational and social change. WEAVE believes that establishing a deep sense of community and companionship with those we serve is the foundation for meaningful living.

**disability:** There are many definitions of disability. However, regardless of the definition, the individual typically will experience a functional limitation in a major life area. Disability occurs in the interaction between a person, his or her functional ability, and the environment.

**disclosure:** The act of sharing personal information which might, under other circumstances, be kept secret. The information shared may lead someone to suspect some form of abuse or neglect has occurred. WEAVE will follow mandated reporting laws, build in advocacy opportunities, and ensure that problem solving issues “of concern” do not violate confidentiality or self-determination.

**intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD):** Disabilities that that are severe or chronic, and are attributable to a mental or physical impairment or a combination of mental and physical impairments. Typically, they manifest before the individual attains age 22, are likely to continue indefinitely, and result in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency, and they reflect the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or genetic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.positivelivingsupport.org/about-us/about-the-center>

planned or coordinated. (from the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000)

**mandatory reporter:** A professional who is required by law to make a report to federal, state, or local agencies when abuse, neglect or violence have occurred. Oftentimes, such reporters include health care workers, welfare workers, teachers or social workers, residential service workers, and law enforcement personnel. Laws vary by state.

**mandatory reporting:** Laws that require reporting suspected abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults. Refer to Mandatory Reporting section of this Charter for further clarification.

**mission:** According to the Commission of Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International,<sup>5</sup> an organization's reason for being. An effective mission statement reflects people's idealistic motivations for doing the organization's work.

**natural supports:** Emotional or direct support by family, friends and/or non-paid assistance to individuals with disabilities

**Person First or People First Language (PFL):** Language that puts the person before the disability and defines disability as an attribute not the totality of the person. PFL uses language to promote dignity and respect and to rid language that marginalizes people from society. (from Disability is Natural by Kathie Snow).

**Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** A complex health condition that can develop in response to a traumatic experience that causes a person to feel intense fear, horror or a sense of helplessness. PTSD can cause severe problems at home or at work. Anyone can develop PTSD – men, women, children, young and old alike.

**respect:** A positive feeling of esteem for a person or other entity, and also specific actions and conduct representative of that esteem, such as holding one in high regard or showing honor, consideration, or courtesy for that person. WEAVE respects all people, diversity and the beliefs and rights of others. Courtesy, politeness, manners and constructive criticism are representative of respect.

**safety:** The condition of being protected against physical, social, spiritual, financial, political, emotional, occupational, psychological, educational or other types or consequences of failure, damage, error, accidents, harm or any other event which could be considered non-desirable.

**self-determination:** "Speaking up for one's own rights and responsibilities and empowering ourselves to stand up for what we believe in. This means being able to choose where we work, live, and our friends; to educate ourselves and others, to work

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.carf.org/home/>



as a team to obtain common goals; and to develop the skills that enable us to fight for our beliefs, to advocate for our needs, and to obtain the level of independence that we desire.” (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, 1996)

**sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse violates a person’s trust and feeling of safety. It includes anything that introduces sexuality as part of a relationship and is unwanted or developmentally inappropriate.

**sexual assault:** includes a wide range of victimizations, including rape or attempted rape. These crimes include completed or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between the victim and offender. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such things as grabbing or fondling. Sexual assault also includes verbal threats and voyeurism. The relationship between the assailant and the victim is not a factor in determining whether sexual assault has occurred. Functionally, sexual assault may include behaviors that are not identified as criminal within the Criminal Sexual Conduct statute of Michigan, yet are still exploitive and harmful.

**sexual harassment:** A form of sex discrimination. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassment applies to employment environments only. (See sexual assault)

**social justice:** Referring to the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity. Creating a society that understands and values human rights and that recognizes the dignity of every human being.

**stakeholder:** According to the Commission of Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International,<sup>6</sup> “Individuals or groups who have an interest in the activities and outcomes of an organization and its programs and services. They include, but are not limited to, the persons served, families, governance or designated authority, purchasers, regulators, referral sources, personnel, employers, advocacy groups, contributors, supporters, landlords, business interests and the community.”

**stalker:** Someone who obsessively pursues another person. Someone who executes stalking behavior and breaks stalking laws.

**supports coordinator:** a person who assists individuals who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities or co-occurring disorders. A supports coordinator develops and implements strategies for obtaining strength-based and individualized services and supports through a person-centered planning process.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.carf.org/home/>

**survivor:** A person who has continued to live, prosper or remain functional after a sexual assault; considered an empowering term preferred by the violence against women movement. WEAVE recognizes that survivors can still be injured, not all injuries are visible, and not everyone recovers at the same rate or in the same manner.

**trauma:** According to Laurie Markoff, PhD, from the Institute for Health and Recovery, trauma is “extreme stress that overwhelms a person’s ability to cope. It is the experience of a threat to life, body or sanity as determined by the person, and is a normal response to an abnormal event.” Trauma is a neurological event that occurs inside a person.

**trauma-informed:** a thorough understanding of the neurological, biological, psychological, and social effects of trauma and violence on humans and the prevalence of these experiences in persons who receive mental health services. WEAVE is committed to making sure every part of our organizations, management, and service delivery systems includes a basic understanding of how trauma affects the lives of individuals seeking services. We will base our services on an understanding of the vulnerabilities or triggers of trauma survivors, so we can be more supportive and avoid re-traumatization.

**victim:** A person against whom an exploitative or injurious act, which may be criminal, is committed. This term is often used in legal systems, but is also used in some organizations when discussing individuals who have experienced sexual assault and/or abuse.

**victim/survivor:** A phrase that recognizes two perspectives on the experiences of people who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. While some agencies might refer to someone as a “victim,” others prefer to use a word that feels more empowering to them - "survivor."

**vision statement:** A statement giving a broad, aspirational image of the future that an organization is aiming to achieve.

**vulnerable adult:** An adult who is deemed unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, neglect or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or because of advanced age. (MCL 400.11f: Definition of “vulnerable”)

**work plan:** A detailed, written plan indicating the work that a group or team will accomplish, including an outline of duties and a time frame.

## **Appendix A – Talking Points**

These talking points have been designed to help provide consistent and coherent information about the information found in this Collaboration Charter. WEAVE recognizes that it will be necessary to periodically update this information as our work develops.

### **Background Information Talking Points**

- WEAVE stands for Working to End Assault and Violence for Everyone
- This is a 3-year grant funded by the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). For more information see: <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/ovwgrantprograms.htm>
- The purpose of the grant is to identify and create sustainable, systemic changes within our organizations that will result in exceptional services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have experienced sexual assault/abuse.

### **WEAVE Collaboration Talking Points**

- The five collaboration organizations involved in WEAVE are the YWCA West Central Michigan, MOKA, Spectrum Community Services, Thresholds and Hope Network Developmental and Community Services.
- The collaboration's work started in October 2012 and the grant lasts until September 2015.
- The current collaboration team members are: Tom Cottrell (YWCA), Lee Ann Shedleski-Holmden (MOKA), Roger DeKuiiper (Spectrum Community Services), Fred Ward (Thresholds), Jerry DeRuiter (Hope Network Developmental and Community Services), Christine Drewel (Project Manager/YWCA)
- The current collaboration executive committee members are: Caroline "Carla" Blinkhorn (YWCA), Thomas Zmolek (MOKA), Barb Fowkes (Spectrum Community Services), Tom Ferch (Thresholds) and Jerry DeRuiter (Hope Network Developmental and Community Services)
- The mission of the collaboration is: To examine and enhance systems for serving individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse. Through this collaboration we will transform our organizational cultures to be trauma-informed and compassionate by:

- Identifying, developing, and enhancing policies and procedures within our organizations to improve our responses to individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have experienced sexual assault/abuse to receive timely information, compassionate advocacy, and respectful support.
- Increasing the awareness, skills, training and competency of supports coordinators, staff and volunteers at our organizations who work directly with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who have survived sexual assault/abuse.
- Weaving a Culture of Gentleness in our organizations and through our interactions with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
- Creating sustainable and systemic changes in our organizations through our collaboration.

### **Collaboration Partner Organization Talking Points**

#### **YWCA West Central Michigan**

- The YWCA West Central Michigan (YWCA) was established in 1900 and is grounded in the founders' vision of a place dedicated to "the betterment of women and girls."
- The organization offers the most comprehensive range of services and has leveraged its experience, expertise, resources, and partnerships to confront the human tragedy and public health crisis created by domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and stalking.
- The YWCA West Central Michigan serves over 5000 individuals annually through its various services (Emergency and transitional housing for survivors of domestic violence, forensic medical exams through the Nurse Examiner Program, crisis counseling, support groups, therapy for survivors and families, supervised parenting time, 24-hr. crisis telephone response and Girls Incorporated.®)
- To help reduce girls' vulnerability to violence and increase their ability to thrive, the YWCA is formally affiliated with Girls Incorporated®, which provides prevention/ intervention services for girls nine to eighteen years old.
- The YWCA sexual assault services are provided primarily in Kent, Montcalm and Ionia counties. The YWCA's mission is, "Eliminating racism, empowering women and girls and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all."

## **MOKA**

- Established in 1978, MOKA is a non-profit organization whose vision is “to create an inclusive culture where everyone is held in the highest respect, feels safe, is valued and as a result affirms others and works collaboratively toward personal goals and achieving our mission.”
- MOKA serves over 800 individuals with disabilities annually throughout western Michigan.
- They offer treatment in specialized community based homes, training and support for independent living, skill building with the goal of employment, skill development and job placement, and family support of children with autism and other disabilities.
- In Kent County, they serve 62 individuals in specialized licensed residential homes and provide supports coordination services to over 125 individuals living in the community in their family home, their own residence or in general adult foster care homes.
- MOKA believes in gentle teaching and created a gentle culture to treat the individuals they serve with the greatest respect so they feel safe and affirmed.
- MOKA’s mission is to “create opportunities for independence and acceptance in our communities by supporting people in: making choices, building relationships, sharing places, developing skills, enhancing reputations, and contributing back to their community.”

## **Spectrum Community Services**

- Spectrum Community Services, a local non-profit organization and affiliate of Spectrum Human Services, was established in 1976.
- They specialize in community integration by operating residential group homes that provide services specifically for individuals who have developmental, mental and physical disabilities.
- Spectrum Community Services operates 17 residential treatment homes in Kent County for persons with a developmental disability, serving approximately 100 individuals.
- They provide supports coordination, community living supports and enhanced mental health services to 170 individuals who reside either with their families, in general adult foster care homes or in supported independent living arrangements.

- The mission of Spectrum Community Services is “to empower, strengthen and enhance individuals, families and communities.”

### **Thresholds**

- Thresholds, Inc., established in 1972, is a non-profit social service agency that provides services to Kent County residents who have developmental disabilities and to their families.
- Thresholds serves approximately 900 individuals annually; 115 individuals reside in Thresholds’ treatment homes in Kent County and approximately another 700 additional individuals receive support services in adult foster homes and private residences.
- Thresholds’ array of services includes supports coordination, specialized residential support and service, and respite care supports.
- The core values that guided their formation and that have sustained them during more than 40 years are continuing today with an ongoing emphasis on Person-Centered Planning which builds on an individual’s strengths – honoring their choices and abilities.
- The mission of Thresholds is “to enable adults with developmental disabilities to live as productively and independently as possible in the community.”

### **Hope Network Developmental and Community Services**

- Hope Network is a non-profit Christian organization founded in 1963 serving individuals with disabilities of all, or no, religious affiliations, with a focus of empowering people to achieve their highest level of independence.
- Hope Network Developmental and Community Services (DCS) provides a continuum of specialized care for those with brain and spinal cord injuries, mental illness, and developmental disabilities.
- Hope Network DCS support services include transportation, subsidized housing, and workforce development that utilizes Hope Network owned manufacturing facilities for on-the-job training.
- Hope Network DCS Specialized Residential Services, with 20 homes in Kent County, will be the division partnering with this project.
- The mission of Hope Network is, “In Christian service, Hope Network empowers people to overcome challenges to achieve their highest level of independence.”

## Contact Information

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