When the Dam Breaks: Preventing and Planning for Mental Health Crises with People with IDD

Program Description
Crisis looks different for everyone. What may feel like a dam breaking to one person is a minor drip to another. Approximately 30-50% of people with IDD have a co-occurring mental health condition. People with IDD are more vulnerable to trauma than their typically developing peers. A person with IDD and a co-occurring mental health condition may need more personalized support at times to plan for and prevent personal crises. It is important to understand how to support a person in always feeling safe so as to assist them in times of crisis.

This workshop explores what it means to have a crisis and how we can positively support individuals with IDD in our everyday interactions to help minimize the possibility of a crisis. We will focus on understanding the underlying circumstances that can lead to crisis and how utilizing trauma informed approaches in your everyday support of a person with IDD can help prevent a situation go from a water drip to a break in the dam.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this workshop, participants should be able to:
1. Identify the vulnerabilities that can lead a person with IDD and co-occurring mental health challenges into crisis.
2. Describe aspects of crisis prevention planning that can be implemented in everyday supports.
3. Design a sample crisis prevention plan for a person with IDD.

Target Audience
Service providers, family members, caregivers, school personnel, self-advocates who identify with IDD

Contact Hours
4.0 credit hours

Program Agenda
9 AM to 10:30 AM	Introductions
	• What it means to have IDD and Mental Health Conditions
	• How to identify vulnerabilities
	• What causes crisis
10:30 AM to 10:45 PM	Break
10:45 AM to 12:15 PM	What does it mean to feel safe
	How to create an environment of safety
12:15 PM to 12:30 PM	Break
12:30 PM to 2:00 PM	Using the understanding of above information, we will develop a sample plan for crisis prevention
2:00 PM	Adjourn

<u>Faculty:</u>

Laurel Powell, MS is the Program Manager for the Family Support Program and the Family Support Network of NC University Office at the UNC School of Social Work. Laurel has worked with the IDD population and their support systems for over 20 years in many capacities. Laurel has expertise in building systems that support individuals with IDD and those who are neurodivergent. Laurel has extensive experience with crisis prevention and intervention planning for people with IDD and trauma histories as well as people with IDD who have co-occurring mental health challenges. Laurel's passions lie in supporting people with IDD and neurodivergence in advocating for their needs and utilizing positive psychology practices to build more accepting and affirming communities. Laurel has a degree in Special Education from UNC Wilmington and a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling and Psychology from the School of Medicine at UNC Chapel Hill.

Barbara Leach is a Family Support Specialist and Special Projects Coordinator. She joined the Family Support Program at UNC, School of Social Work in 2005. She has over 30 years of experience as a child and family advocate for families with children who have mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and other special needs. In addition to providing information and referral for families and providers, Ms. Leach serves as a family advisor on multiple state and national committees that work collaboratively to transform systems so that they better meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families. She presents extensively on topics relating to supporting families, family advocacy, family engagement, family/provider partnership, cultural competence, and systems change. Ms. Leach is passionate about lifting the voices of diverse families and to promoting families as partners to co-create and develop services and systems that improve outcomes so that individuals with disabilities can live their best lives – healthy, independent, and self-determined.