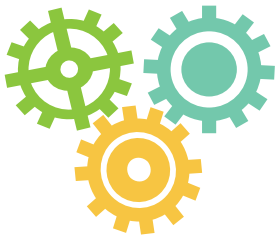


# HOPE AT WORK



## Creating and Sustaining Hopeful, Resilient Organizations

An initiative to provide training and support to organizations so they can create more hopeful, resilient workforces

State of Washington  
Developmental Disabilities  
Administration

Roads to Community Living



Support Provided by:  
Community Activators, Inc.  
Vashon, WA 98070

Report Prepared by: Bruce Anderson, Community Activators  
[www.communityactivators.com](http://www.communityactivators.com)

“One of the key recent transformations in hope-building strategies has been the realization that not all the burden for maintaining hope should rest with individual employees. It is now known how organizational culture can contribute significantly towards the effort to keep employee’s hopeful and resilient.”

## Part One: Introduction

### Overview

From January thru June of 2014, ten organizations participated in an initiative to increase understanding about how to create and sustain hope and resilience in organizations providing direct support to individuals with disabilities. Community Activators provided information, training, and on-going support. This report outlines the scope of the training and support offered, rationale for the approach used, and examples of the activities initiated by the ten organizations. Because of the quantity of ideas and activities that resulted, this report does not list all examples, but rather focuses on providing a wide variety of both short and longer-term activities.

### Scope of Training and Support offered

*Organizations were offered the following opportunities to learn more about and implement hope-building strategies:*

#### **Regional Provider Trainings**

- Hope at Work basic training was offered in two locations, one western Washington and one eastern Washington during February

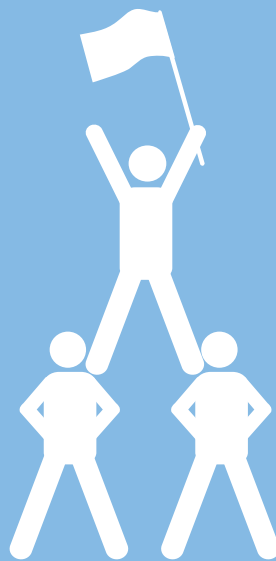


***“The Hope training gave us tools to mine out hope. It also helped to talk about what matters, what is important to each of us and put us together in small work groups to infuse hope back into our organization.”***

— Heidi Hunter, Bethesda Lutheran Communities

### Participating Organizations

Trillium, King/Clark/Pierce/Kitsap  
 Bethesda Lutheran Services, Renton  
 Embassy South, Tacoma  
 ARC Spokane, Spokane  
 LifeWorks, Kelso  
 ResCare, Seattle  
 Embassy North, Shoreline  
 Provail, Shoreline  
 Skills’Kin, Spokane  
 Service Alternatives, Everett



2014. These trainings provided the most up-to-date blend of research from neuroscience and team-building about how hope is built in humans and in groups. Using an assessment tool, participants evaluated the current hope levels in their organization in four key areas, developed specific activities as a result of their assessment, and were provided the tools for on-going hope-building. Participants also received extensive examples of Hope at Work activities being used in other locations in the United States. The training included a mix of presentation of ideas and research, large-group discussion, small-group discussion, use of diagnostic tools, and action planning.

### ***On-site Training at Selected Organizations***

- The Hope at Work training was offered to organizations who had sent representatives to the Regional Provider Trainings and expressed an interest in having the training repeated in-house for their general staff. Ten organizations requested in-house training for staff. Each organization was required to do a minimum of one on-going staff activity as a result of the on-site training. Although not required, most of the participating organizations did multiple activities at both the local team and organization-wide levels.

### ***Ongoing Consultation***

- Monthly “Lunch and Learn” sessions were set up, one in Spokane and one in Burien, for staff interested in sharing ideas, learning more about hope strategies, and asking specific questions related to implementation in their organizations.
- Unlimited telephone and email support was offered to employees, particularly in leadership positions, who were implementing hope-building strategies and had questions, concerns, or ideas they wanted to further investigate.

***“This process was really fantastic in getting my managers to work with their teams and demonstrate that we do want to have a focus on our employee’s. This was something that our direct care staff really enjoyed and appreciated, in that they were able to develop an important, meaningful, and fulfilling practice for themselves and their team that they were able to create together and have ownership of.”*** —Les Parker, ResCare Washington

## Part Two: Overall Rationale for the Hope-Building Initiative

Developmental Disability service organizations, like many other kinds of community organizations, are difficult places for employees to sustain hope, at least partially because there is very little focus on activities which maintain the health of the team—most time is spent serving the people coming through the doors. Adding to the stress is an increase in caseload size, documentation requirements, and increased merging of State, Federal, and County requirements. Although employees are committed to service, the overall culture of many organizations is suffering from the impact of the increased workload and requirements.

The Hope at Work model applies recent research—originating in the Positive Psychology movement and backed up by community sustainability and organizational development research—showing that a focus in four key areas is necessary to build and maintain a healthy, hopeful group. Regular “ritualized” activities in each one of these four areas form a foundation of hope that keeps any group inspired, productive, and communicating in ways that build a positive helping environment. One of the key recent transformations in hope-building strategies has been the realization that not all the burden for maintaining hope should rest with individual employees. It is now known how organizational culture can contribute significantly towards the effort to keep employees’ hopeful and resilient.

Across all sectors of employment including health care, civic, manufacturing, and retail, it has been demonstrated repeatedly that employees treat their customers according to how the employee feels his/her employer treats them. The field of Developmental Disability residential and employment support depends on compassionate and responsible treatment of people being served as a cornerstone of quality care. Developing resilient, hopeful employee teams offers employees the opportunity to offer that same kind of resilient and hopeful care to people being served. It has also been documented that employees who are resilient are better problem-solvers, resolve conflict quicker, and ask and offer help to co-workers more frequently. These behaviors support a higher quality of care.

*“...only twelve-percent of employees reported leaving (jobs) for money, while eighty-eight percent of employees state they leave for reasons other than money. In fact, the reasons most often cited by departing employees were more psychological in nature—including not feeling trusted or valued.”*

— The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace, Gary Chapman, Paul White

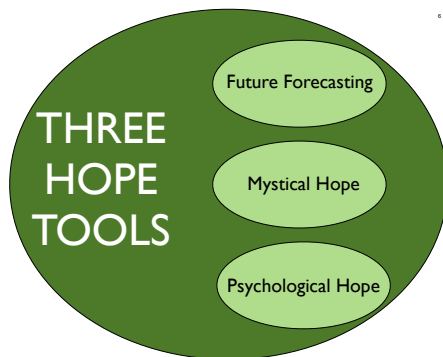


*“We are off to a great start with the Hope Assessment and enthusiasm for a different kind of engagement and conversation. Looking forward to the coming months of team growth and development.”*

— Gina Solberg, Provail

## Part Three: Hope Basics

The following eleven graphics represent the core foundation of the Hope at Work training. They are offered in this report as a representative overview of the information provided during the training and follow-up so the reader of this report has some context for the purpose and resulting activities of this initiative.



### Foundations of Resilience

#### ***What Is Resilience?***

The maintenance of high levels of positive feelings and well-being in the face of significant adversity.

#### ***Why Is It Important?***

Resilience is fuel. It is tapped at the beginning of a vision to get going and along the way to keep going. Without resilience, a person or group will stop working towards their vision.

#### ***How Is It Created and Maintained?***

Resilience is created when meaning is made out of life events before, during, and after they happen. This meaning creates a positive feeling state which causes the person or group to decide it's worth it to keep going. Meaning-making can also create a pool of residual strength that can be used for this or other visions. In individuals or groups, maintenance of a resiliency pool can be accomplished through "ritualized" activities.

### TEN evidence-based reasons to create and sustain a hopeful group:

Our cognitive problem solving abilities are stronger...we can actually THINK clearer and better.

Individuals who are hopeful both request help and offer help more readily than those who are not hopeful.

The more hopeful a person is, the more willing they are to forgive and let go of resentments.

We know that productivity—work output—increases when people are hopeful.

Hopeful individuals are more creative and have a greater quantity of ideas.

There is reduced incidence of unresolved long-term conflict in groups when individuals are hopeful.

Our immune systems and overall health are strengthened. For businesses in particular, this means less sick leave and reduced health-care costs.

Individuals stay with groups longer when they are hopeful. For businesses, this means less turnover, and reduced orientation and training costs. For community groups this means less recruitment of new members and a group who carries a longer mutual story together—a more solid group committed to the cause.

Groups who are hopeful are more willing to pursue collaborative strategies with other groups.

Finally, we know that hope in a work or community group spills over into a person's home life. There is a contagion factor to hope.

# The Flashlight Rule



When you are helping another person, the focus is on them and your resilience is **DRAINING** whether the interaction is positive or negative. When you make meaning out of that event for yourself, the focus is on you and your resilience **INCREASES**. "Meaning-making" consists of any thinking about the event or interaction that results in you believing you have an increased understanding of the event.

Examples of increased understanding might include:

- "I think I know why I reacted so strongly to Mark's statement."
- "I see why my client got so upset."
- "If I intervene in a certain way with Steve, I'm likely to get better results."
- "I now understand why it's important to save for retirement."
- "I know why I have such a hard time trusting people."

## Pivot Points in Understanding Hope

### ***Busting the myths and facing the facts:***

Hope and despair both have a contagion factor.

Increasing quality of services and creating hopeful work cultures are separate but parallel tasks.

Over time, employees will treat customers in the same way they feel treated by their organization.

Stress and pace are not deterrents to hope. The real enemy is the lack of disciplined, intermittent recovery periods.

Making hope conditional on someone else doing something, or the receipt of adequate resources are the two most common blockages to hope in an organization.

Hopeful organizations are built by focusing on increasing the third ingredient, which is called resiliency.



## Brain Change Rules

**Neuroplasticity gives us the opportunity to build circuits of hope**

### **Grassy Field Rule:**

The neural path doesn't just facilitate your thinking, it dictates your thinking.

### **Explicit and Implicit Rule:**

We are driven not by the facts of the events but by our felt memory of the event.

### **Velcro and Teflon Rule:**

The amygdala is hardwired to label experiences as negative. Negative thoughts are more easily accessible than positive thoughts.

### **Words Matter Rule:**

Decide about what frame of thinking you want. Use that language. It WILL alter your emotion.

adapted from:  
Rick Hanson, Ph.D. and Rick Mendius, MD  
Positive Emotions and Taking in the Good  
www.wisebrain.org

## ABOUT RITUALS <sup>16</sup>

### WHAT IS A RITUAL?

A process used by an individual or group which allows each participant to increase health through further understanding, celebrating, grieving, or taking action. Although the structure is planned, the outcome for each person can be different.

### Ritual Criteria

1. Designed by participants
2. Stated purpose is health of group
3. Frequency determined by group
4. Everyone is involved
5. Not focused on customer issues/service

### Rituals build resiliency by:

- encouraging individual health to build group resiliency
- structure for working through difficult events
- bringing people "home" to their group
- planned time for gaining strength
- supporting various viewpoints on a topic or event
- release of emotion, tension, and reducing toxicity
- each person accurately seen by others

## Examples of organizational rituals:

story-sharing • conflict resolution between employees  
 clarification of group's vision • clarifying employee job descriptions  
 discovering and using employee talents and gifts  
 celebrating birthdays • welcoming new employees  
 learning new things • mentoring new employees and tasks  
 grieving employee/client deaths or serious illness  
 creating continuous learning cultures • holiday celebrations  
 learning visits to other organizations • vision dialogue  
 new staff orientations • outcome celebrations  
 grieving loss of contract or grant • team strength assessing  
 historical values changes • operating principles

### Basic Steps to Ritual Design

1. Choose one of the five Rituals for Resiliency focus areas you would like to develop ritual(s) in.
2. Using that Focus Area, brainstorm 3-4 responses to the following question: "What beliefs or values in this Focus area lift us up and energize us?"
3. Using that same Focus Area, brainstorm 3-4 responses to the following question: "What beliefs or values are we currently engaged in that drag us down in this focus area?"
4. Choose one of the items from Question Two or Three that your group agrees would be useful to focus on right now.
5. Create a CLEAR one-sentence purpose statement for the ritual. (Examples: "To help each other understand why we chose this work", "to provide a safe space for us to resolve conflicts", "To clarify and agree on our vision", "To grieve the loss of a co-worker". Make sure the purpose statement is very clear and only has one purpose to it.
6. Using the purpose statement, choose 3-6 materials from Ritual Materials sheet that can be symbolically connect to your ritual purpose.
7. Before you design your ritual, be sure to clarify:
  - What elements will we use?
  - Who will be invited?
  - Where will it be held?
  - When will we do this, and how often?
  - Who will facilitate/lead the ritual?
8. Using the basic steps on the next page, design your ritual. You may or may not use all the steps, depending on the complexity of the activity and the amount of time you have.

## Rituals for Resiliency Action Model

### Focus Area One: Celebrating and Grieving

Activities which acknowledge both accomplishment and loss for individual members of the workgroup, entire workgroup, or individuals being served.

### Focus Area Two: Community Engagement

Activities which reinforce purpose of group and clarify specific group and individual responsibilities, roles, and working agreements.

### Focus Area Three: Personal Identity

Activities which result in individual employees becoming more well-known to their coworkers.

### Focus Area Four: Learning

Activities which increase knowledge and skill in carrying out the purpose of the group.

### Focus Area Five: Physical

Activities which increase physical health of individual members so they can further carry out the purpose of the group.

## Keeping It Going

### Key things that will increase ritual success in your organization:

- **A ritual has started at the moment you begin to design it.** Immerse yourself in the pleasure and meaning of the entire ritual experience, including the design.
- **Don't create a lot more meeting time for rituals!** Most rituals can be done before or after already scheduled meetings and don't require a lot of extra time.
- **The first couple times you do a new ritual, be sure to allow time at the end for a short feedback discussion.** Remember, rituals will sometimes seem silly, sometimes not work, and sometimes produce unexpected results. Keep at it until you find what works. Was it meaningful? Was it interesting? How could you change it to make it more meaningful or interesting? Rituals often need to be altered slightly, or sometimes abandoned in favor of new ideas. Be open to change.
- **Don't postpone a ritual.** We're all busy, and the tendency is to say, "We'll do this next week when we're not so busy." The pattern of postponing rituals leads to the end of rituals in an organization.
- **Have a designated leader for each ritual.** Rituals won't sustain themselves without somebody being in charge and making sure it happens.
- **Everyone participates.** Everybody who can be there should be there. Be sure to have group agreements that outline the conditions under which a person may be absent. If you don't, eventually everybody will just be too busy and no-one will show up to participate. Remember, rituals are the glue that holds your group together, so the whole group needs to participate.
- **Don't continue rituals that have lost their meaningfulness.** There is nothing worse than a boring ritual. Redesign it, abandon it for something else, but don't keep doing it. Rituals can lose their effectiveness over time. *NOTE: Many groups get to a "hump" phase a few months after their initial kick-off of rituals, and have to recommit to the idea of rituals and their usefulness in the group.*
- **Periodically, review your rituals.** Groups often review their rituals each year, offering the opportunity for old rituals to be altered or abandoned, and new rituals to be added.
- **How many rituals is enough?** It's helpful to have a ritual or two in each of the five areas, but you don't have to start them all at one time. Each group will come up with the "right" amount depending on their unique culture.

## Part Four: What Happened?

### Activities resulting from participation in the Hope at Work initiative

The Hope at Work model, based on research originating in the Positive Psychology movement and backed up by organizational development and community sustainability theory, says that a focus in five key areas is necessary to build and maintain a healthy, hopeful group. Regular, “ritualized” activities in each one of these five areas form a foundation of hope that keeps any group inspired, productive, and communicating in ways that build a positive helping environment. These five areas are described in the graphic on page six labeled Rituals for Resiliency Action Model. Participating organizations agreed to have employees design and implement rituals that they believe will increase their hope and resilience, based on the rules and steps outlined during the Hope at Work trainings. The following are examples from the ten participating organizations of activities implemented in each of the five hope-building categories.

#### Focus Area One: Celebrating/Grieving

**Description:** *Activities which acknowledge both accomplishments and losses for individual employees and/or entire workgroups. Because of the Flashlight Rule described in the Hope Information Basics outlined above, these activities must be focused on employee accomplishments rather than accomplishments of the customers being supported.*

- Each Supervisor will start with a short brag at the start of the client/staff check-in.
- We will have our staff meetings off site at a selected location one time per month. We will all be seated and greet each other with a hello or good day. Then we will pass a stone, which stands for solidarity, around our circle and each person will tell something positive that happened to him or her this month.



*“I think this is a good way to show we think of each other as more than just coworkers and that we really appreciate each other. I think it reaffirms that the work we do is not just for our clients but that we gain fulfillment on a personal level from the connections we make as well.”*

—Tracie Thompson, ARC  
Spokane



- We want to acknowledge deaths, using a combination of a clear glass and a letting go activity, generic prayers and poems, and planting seedlings.
- We are doing potlucks or going out to eat lunch—at the staff meeting we will talk about what food we want and where it will be held. Our first one will be in July at Bradley Park with a Mexican theme. In the summer we want them monthly and then in the winter they will be quarterly.
- For staff birthdays, we will have chairs in a line with the birthday person in the front. With their name on a piece of paper, each co-worker will write an uplifting word or phrase about that person, passing paper up until it reaches the birthday person.
- We have a “Spotlighters” group to show appreciation to our peers who have significant events happening in a given month. We’ll gather Tuesday’s and 2pm once a quarter. All members of our management team will meet at the office the day of the event/activity. We will then travel to our destination, where a group picture will be taken as a memory to be shared in the office. The Spotlighters will then have a moment in the spotlight to share something important to them.
- We’re going to put “Welcome” signs by the front door for each new employee on the first day of work.
- We’re going to have a Piñata filled with memories and inspirational quotes to say goodbye to someone on their last day of work.
- Have a going away party for the employee on his/her last day of work. The team purchases a tree and puts a memory message on it for the exiting team member.
- For all new staff: everyone contributes one item to a “goody bag” and a welcome card is signed.
- The last Monday of each month our team gets together at our Program Manager’s house. During this time we celebrate and with

***“We are hiring someone soon and I am looking forward to giving our on-boarding ritual a first try.”***  
— Andrew Pickard, Trillium, Pierce

Martinelli's to our successes and accomplishments throughout the month (both work related and personally related). This is a time to acknowledge each other for our hard work and to greet new team members. We also set aside time to burn our losses. Each of us have pieces of paper in which we write down job losses, lead losses, team member loss, or anything else personally or professionally that we feel we need to 'let go' of in order to start the next month off fresh. These losses are written on separate pieces of paper and then burned individually. The team member has the choice to share about the experience or keep it private and personal. We have been doing this for several months now.

- As team members move on to another position, team, or organization, we would like to acknowledge them by going around the room and saying something about them. Each team member has the choice to participate. This will be incorporated into our weekly meetings on an as needed basis.
- Whenever we lose an employee (on good terms with notice) we do a going away potluck lunch with staff and participant being able to say good-bye and wish them well. We try to find some kind of memory that is special to them such as a picture of outings that they enjoyed or their special person they supported.
- There is a small group that has collected poems, scriptures, cards etc. to give to grieving co-workers. The management team signs the card and adds a small/short note.
- Staff built a celebratory tradition around birthdays, since 5 or 6 have passed without celebration. A sheet will circulate the week before the birthday, and all staff will answer two questions: "What I like/admire about you?", and "What I wish for you in the upcoming year." We will give this to the person, and have snacks, on the staff meeting prior to the person's birthday.
- We are creating a ritual where a co-worker can find another co-worker

***"Initially it was hard for us to not relate this to our customers—to keep it focused on employees. But now, when I go out of the room, I hear animated discussion and laughter. I love it and can't wait to come back and see what they have cooked up! Trillium has a wonderful and creative team culture and this process of building traditions that focus on resiliency has been a great fit for us. It has taken little effort for a positive and wonderful effect. We can maintain balance, humor and friendship even under the most stressful situations. Here's to continued bucket filling!"***

— Wendy Taliaferro, Trillium Clark Team

and “dump” their frustrations so they can move on with their day or week.

- We, as a team are dedicated to celebrating each other’s birthdays. We have a file drawer full of decorations, streamers, banners and signs we use to decorate the birthday person’s office. Prior to the birthday one or more of us will look in the drawer to make sure we are not low on supplies. If we are one of us will go to the store to replenish the drawer. We take turns paying for the decorations, most of which we will get from a local dollar store so it really is not very expensive. We as a team decide when we will decorate, most of the time it is the night before or the morning of the birthday while the person is not here. We generally pitch in for a gift and the supervisor makes cupcakes to share with everyone.

## Focus Area Two: Vision, Job Clarity, and Mission

**Description:** *Activities that reinforce the purpose of the group, including the vision and the mission. Also included are activities which clarify specific individual and group responsibilities, provide emotional support to employees, as well as highlighting when good work is being done that matches the vision and intention of the organization.*

- Our ritual will be for staff to create visual reminders about why we do this work.
- We completed and began discussion of the Organizational Hope Quick Assessment: So far we’ve identified a need for more recognition from the larger organization as the highest need.
- Over the course of the month, when someone notices a supervisor going above and beyond the call of duty, or accomplishing something noteworthy, they will write that person’s name and a brief description of what they did on an index card and place it on the bulletin board. We will begin our monthly supervisor meeting by selected staff reading the observations someone else had shared about their accomplishments and talk about what they achieved. All of the cards will then be placed into a box to make room for new additions on the board the following



***“We all know that it is easy when you are in a helping role to neglect yourself. We also work in a field that does not pay much by means of monetary compensation and as a result, sometimes you get overworked, burned out staff who are trying to make ends meet. We also work in a field where there is always more to do which can be tiring. By using the tools that we learned in the Hope training and what we have learned as a group about how to appreciate one another, I am certain that overall, if everyone is employing those things, it will make a difference.”***

—Heidi Hunter, Bethesda Lutheran Communities

month. At the end of the year/when the box is full, there will be an as yet determined completion to the ceremony. The current leading idea is the ceremonial torching of the box, signifying the letting go of the past (both the positive and the negative) and refocusing on the future.

- We developed an “Encouragement Board” to uplift and help each other. Every Tuesday, we put quotes, thoughts, and inspirational notes on the board and decorate it with drawings, stickers, and symbols. At our monthly meeting, the quotes on the board will be read, and staff will share their favorite quote and discuss why.
- Thirty days after a new employee’s start day, he/she will meet with their manager for a check-in about their new job.
- The Coordinators (they thought of this), at the end of our time with them in meetings, they want me to say “Good Day, Sir...” and then, “...I said GOOD DAY!!” (Remember the old version of the movie, Willie Wonka? Like that...like how Gene Wilder said it.) Maybe this doesn’t fit the prescribed structure of a ritual but we all get a big kick out of it and it signifies the end of the meeting.
- At least once each day, if two directors pass each other in a hall or another public space, each of us will give each of our fellow directors a high five, reminding us that our joint purpose as a team is to lead or organization as a whole.
- We reorganized how I meet with my staff, tailoring it to staff’s needs and requests. Some of my staff would like to have a 1:1 meeting every two weeks and others would like to have a meeting just once a month. It really is dependent on the staff’s position and responsibilities.
- When a new Employment Consultant starts their job, they will be assigned a mentor. The mentor will introduce the new EC at the monthly full team meeting with the purpose of the team getting to know the new EC (something personal and a gift or talent the person brings to the team) as well as for the new EC to feel welcomed and

valued. We will also give the new EC a welcome basket personalized to the individual (we have a welcome basket ritual now but it's given the first Tuesday on the job and we haven't been able to make it more personal to the person's personality or interests). We will follow up with the new EC with a ritual at 90 days of employment to recognize completion of initial training period. We need to further work out the details of that portion of the ritual but it will involve the ringing of a gong.

### Focus Area Three: Personal Identity

**Description:** *Activities that result in individual employees becoming better known. Rituals in this focus area commonly involve storytelling, understanding and naming employee's gifts and talents, and offering compassionate understanding for the difficulty of doing the work.*

- This time had a tendency to spiral into negativity and complaining. When we began sharing--in addition to our mood--a quick summary of something we were looking forward to that week, we noticed a definitive shift in both general demeanor (more positive) and in group dynamics (higher likelihood that team members would check in later in the week to follow up regarding what was shared). It's exciting to see our team connecting in new ways and with more intentionality.
- Our team will meet weekly at the office 15 minutes prior to weekly staff meeting. Staff will bring in a personalized quote representing renewal and share how it reflects on their personal feelings, inspiration etc. Once each person has shared we will give 2 minutes for each person to comment on the quotes.
- We have a "Spotlight On You" time during our staff meetings. Co-workers can share a personal struggle. They can also respond to the question, "Three things to know about me if you want to get along with me." The last 15 minutes or so of the staff meeting are personal—one staff will talk about how he/she got started in the business and why.
- Our team decided to do something in addition to what they already



***“At the beginning of each team meeting, we used to do a “mood check.” This time had a tendency to spiral into negativity and complaining. When we began sharing—in addition to our mood—a quick summary of something we were looking forward to that week, we noticed a definitive shift in both general demeanor (more positive) and in group dynamics (higher likelihood that team members would check in later in the week to follow up regarding what was shared). It’s exciting to see our team connecting in new ways and with more intentionality.”***

— Direct Support Team Leader

have incorporated into their weekly routine, which they take the time to eat lunch together prior to staff meeting.

- We want to get to know each other as whole people. At our yearly leadership retreats, we'll have each person go off alone and spend 5 minutes to draw 3 figures/symbols (art not necessary) that represent something about themselves that year. Then we'll all come back to the group and each person shares about their figures/symbols. We'll leave these pieces of paper up during the whole retreat.
- At the beginning of each team meeting, we used to do a "mood check." This time had a tendency to spiral into negativity and complaining. When we began sharing--in addition to our mood--a quick summary of something we were looking forward to that week, we noticed a definitive shift in both general demeanor (more positive) and in group dynamics (higher likelihood that team members would check in later in the week to follow up regarding what was shared). It's exciting to see our team connecting in new ways and with more intentionality.
- We have started gathering "getting to know you questions." The questions were distributed to everyone at the beginning of our last staff meeting. We answered them all anonymously and passed them in. Our Director selected a few to read out loud and have the rest of the group try and guess whose paper she was reading. The authors of the first 4 questionnaires that she read now have to compile a list of questions for the rest of the group to answer next time. We had such a good time answering the questions that we "broke the rules" and DEMANDED (LOL) that the Director read all of the papers because it was fun to guess and get to know things about each other that we have never really asked.
- Show and Share: On the last Weds of the month, everyone will bring an object to staff meeting and share with the group something about themselves, not work related.
- We have had one successful retreat so far! One of the staff offered her

***"We started a ritual of asking around the table at each staff meeting the question, 'How are you doing?' There was good participation and reaction for about three months and then we were hearing, 'I'm fine' or 'I have nothing.' This ritual was stopped, but then an unusual thing happened—some staff said they wanted to restart it. We discussed the pros and con's and finally decided to continue this ritual but at a less frequent rate than each staff meeting. The ritual has been working well since then."***

— Les Nipp, ARC Spokane

family's time-share style cabin for us all to use. We had a potluck style lunch and then settled in for about 2 hours of teaching/group time.

- Our topic was the 5 Languages of Appreciation for Work. It was a great topic because we got to look at what we have been doing to recognize and encourage others, talk about what works and doesn't and most importantly we got to see what works for each person so we know how to hit their specific appreciation sweet spot. Finding out each person's language seemed to be most valuable for everyone overall.
- At the beginning of each meeting, we're going to "name our favorites." A designated person (we'll rotate) will choose and announce what the favorite is to be. Examples might be favorite animal, food, vacation, job, memory of a friend, etc. The favorite can be work-related or personal. We will go around the room and each person will say what their favorite is, and if there is a short story associated with why or how that became their favorite, they can share that but they don't have to. We started our meeting last Tuesday with this ritual for the first time and the resulting group conversation lasting under 10 minutes was fun!
- One staff is going to anonymously write 2 true things about themselves and 1 false thing about themselves. The staff will post it on the magnet board in the kitchen without anyone seeing them. All the other staff will read them and try to figure out who the person is and which one of the things is true or false about that person.
- One staff is going to hide a card anywhere in the home and staff can look for it and try to find it. After someone finds the card they will sign it and then they get to hide it in a different spot. Staff will use a notebook to write in giving hints to the other staff until the card is found.
- On boarding: Within the first two weeks of a new hire into the Pierce team we will all meet at a restaurant. We will play a game we chose (Jenga questions). We decided this because it introduces the new team member to how we like to have fun. Also we get to discuss and learn new things about each other without putting the new person on the spot.

***"Thank you for your on-site training last week. I am pleased to let you know that on Monday, I saw a team meet for lunch to talk about what 'fed them' and created resiliency and hope for them. I saw another team do a walking meeting, I have heard people talk about building their own resiliency with exercise, and I have seen people do some self-learning or mentor learning to build their 'moments.' I think we are going to do well focusing on building the organizations resiliency and supporting employees to build their own as well. We are on our way."***

— Follow-up response from CEO of a residential support program.

## Focus Area Four: Learning

**Description:** *Activities that increase knowledge and skills in carrying out the purpose of the group. Rituals in this focus area commonly include mentoring of new and long-term employees, establishing ongoing learning groups around specific topics, and cross-training of employees.*

- We've shared and discussed some of the research about hope related to neurological, psychological, anthropological and other misc information.
- Our second new tradition will be to get a 'hope chest' and everyone will submit a piece of paper that has a word or two on it that describes something you'd like to improve about yourself, i.e. 'patience' 'positive attitude' etc. Those papers will go into the hope chest and at the beginning of every staff meeting we will visit how everyone is doing striving to accomplish what's on their piece of paper. Once a staff member feels they have accomplished that word/words they would take out the old piece of paper and put it on a bulletin board to show it off that they reached it and put a new word/words on a new piece of paper and put that one in the chest to start again.
- One of the stress areas identified by our team was the way we interact with others in the office. So our ritual is to have each team member think of a question to give us insight about how each of us feels, works, interacts, etc. with others which we'll discuss it at the beginning of each team meeting. Sample questions might be, "What motivates each of us?", "What frustrates each of us?", "What's something we did we felt good about?", "What's something we wish we would have done better?", etc. We're hoping that the more we come to understand one another, the better we'll be able to interact as a team.
- When a new Employment Consultant starts their job, they will be assigned a mentor. The mentor will introduce the new EC at the monthly full team meeting with the purpose of the team getting to know the new EC (something personal and a gift or talent the person



***“My intent is to keep asking the team if they are all still on board with this decision to do rituals and then begin to explore more of what they see as areas of weakness in the team dynamics to see how the team wants to strengthen itself so those weaknesses become assets in providing better services and staying healthy as a team.”***

—Les Nipp, ARC Spokane



brings to the team) as well as for the new EC to feel welcomed and valued. We will also give the new EC a welcome basket personalized to the individual (we have a welcome basket ritual now but it's given the first Tuesday on the job and we haven't been able to make it more personal to the person's personality or interests). We will follow up with the new EC with a ritual at 90 days of employment to recognize completion of initial training period. We need to further work out the details of that portion of the ritual but it will involve the ringing of a gong according to the team.

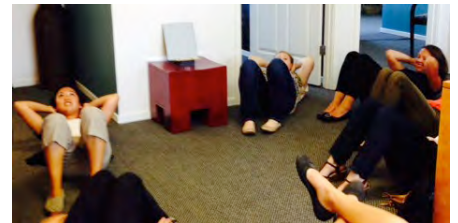
- Volunteer one day with a collaborative organization
- At the last staff meeting the team decided to focus on learning. All the staff take a lot of interest in medical issues, diet and nutrition because it helps them care for our medically fragile clients. They all wanted to research information and then once a quarter at a staff meeting we will have a potluck, and at that time each share some fact or new information they have discovered about health, diet, medications or nutrition. At the end of the learning, we will play the game Apples to Apples so we can get a better understanding of how each other thinks without getting too personal. At the end of the meeting we will choose an area to research over the next quarter. We have chosen to research several medications and how diets affect them. This tradition will start at our staff meeting in September.
- When preparing to make these traditions we went through a few exercises. I did a short presentation on what is a ritual and why it's important. At a different meeting I went over each ritual category with examples and handouts from the power point. Next, at the retreat we did the "Does anyone see me?" exercise, breaking into pairs to discuss findings. We then did the Personal Health and Resiliency checklist. We paired up and discussed our findings.
- We have decided to do roundtable brainstorming and discussion of issues.

## Focus Area Five: Physical

**Description:** *Activities in this area increase the physical health of individual employees so they can further carry out the purpose of the group. This focus area builds on the science of holistic health and the integration of body, mind, and spirit as one indicator of individual health.*

- Our team decided that we would like to incorporate more physical activities into our rituals. We decided that quarterly we would plan a physical activity for the team to do together (i.e. Short hike, bowling, walk, etc). This would be coordinated by rotating through the team members. We would like to carry out this new ritual in our team shirts.
- Our mission is to create a healthy mind and body through raising our endorphins. Our plan is to start team meetings with exercise to music. A rotation through team members for planning will happen.
- Once a month we will meet for friendly physical competition. Each event will be “hosted” by a randomly selected team member. That team member will plan the location and activity. The tradition will happen every third Wednesday of the month. We will all be wearing the same color for the activity.
- At yearly staff retreats, the Leadership Team will come early and when all together, go to a private place and pair up. Spend a short time with each other waltzing while we look each other in the eye. After all have partnered, do it for a few minutes as a team.
- At the end of the day after staff meeting, an employee will bring his Wii in and staff will bowl. There will be an Outlook reminder sent out. Oh, will the fun never stop!!!

***“Some who did not attend a ritual in the physical category later said they would still like to be a part of us gathering but due to their physical challenges would choose not to attend activities like this. It was disappointing to hear after the fact, but allowed the team to understand the dynamics of its make up in a clearer fashion.”***



***“Yes, it’s true. We’re all in work attire doing crunches!”***

— Jenifer Anderson, Trillium Kitsap