Mental Health America is encouraging individuals to look around and look within. From your neighborhood to your genetics, many factors come into play when it comes to mental health conditions. Take time to consider how the world around you effects your mental health. Housing stability and a safe, healthy home environment can set the foundation for achieving and maintaining good mental health. Spending time in nature is also linked to many positive mental health outcomes, including improved focus, lower stress, better mood, and reduced risk of developing other health conditions.
A DISABILITY LESSON FROM HISTORY

I only recently found out President Abraham Lincoln got a traumatic brain injury when a mule kicked him in the back of his head. This brain injury caused some defects on his vision.

When Lincoln recovered from the traumatic brain injury, he suffered depression for many years. Only then it was referred to as "melancholia". Such a situation was considered to be normal in those days. Depression is another mental disorder that often follows traumatic brain injury, especially if the effects are severe.

I remember reading and learning about his melancholia. But never made any connection to it being a disability. And despite having the depression he managed an impressive law career and became president of the United States. People with disabilities are able to do amazing things - we just do it a bit differently!

QUOTES TO MAKE YOU THINK!

"The wheelchair should not be a symbol of disability. A wheelchair is a vehicle to liberation and freedom; a chariot for independence." ~ Rick Hansen, Author and creator of characters with disabilities.
COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOU!
MAY 2023

May 1st  -  30th DACiversary Celebration!
           DAC NW, Post Falls, ID

May 3rd  -  30th DACiversary Celebration!
           DAC NW, Moscow, ID

May 5th  -  Making Smart Lunch Choices
           1912 Center, Moscow, ID

May 5th  -  30th DACiversary Celebration!
           DAC NW, Lewiston, ID

May 11th -  5th Annual Mental Health Walk
           Friendship Square, Moscow, ID

May 18th -  Spokane Valley Connect Fair
           Pres. Church, Spokane Valley, WA

For registration and details of events visit www.dacnw.org/events/

SAVE THE DATE!!
LINC UP & SPEAK UP
Independent Living Conference
Sept. 13-14, 2023
Best Western Vista Inn
Boise, ID
DAC NW - 5TH ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH WALK

Please join us as we support people battling with their mental health! May is Mental Health Awareness month and DAC NW has partnered again with Latah Alliance on Mental Health and Project Wrap to host our annual Mental Health Walk May 11th. Our goal is to show support in our community and to promote the need for self care.

You can walk, roll or run starting at the Palouse Mall parking lot (by Chase Bank). Pick up your swag bag and t-shirt at check in (pre-register here) at 10:30 am. Then proceed to downtown Moscow.

We will be gathering in Friendship Square for some speakers at noon. You will hear from Suicide Prevention of Inland Northwest, League of Women Voters, Spectrum Institute, WSU Counseling, Moscow City Police, a Pullman Councilmember and more covering topics about how we can better serve people with a mental illness diagnosis and work together to create a welcoming conversation and removing the stigma often associated with mental illness.

Local groups will be on hand with resources for people with mental illness. It takes the community to come together, form connections, and help people dealing with mental illness.

Artist Isobel Grace Baca will create an interactive chalk mural. Our focus this year is self care - which is an important step to staying healthy and happy!

SELF CARE - BE AWARE!
YOUR KEY TO INDEPENDENCE!
LINC PREPARES FOR IDAHO GIVES

By Jen Grushdale

There's nothing like an annual event to make one pause and reflect. What did we do last year? Feels like it was pretty busy with lots of changes. But what did we do? Well, a lot, although most of it gets recorded as numbers. Not interesting. What is interesting? The stories. Usually of events and other shared experiences.

A year ago, we partnered with an all-inclusive dance team from Capital High School to perform Michael Jackson's Thriller at the Center on the Grove. Plus, staff and friends competed in a hot sauce challenge!

Or like our Boo to the Flu and Covid Too event with our local health department getting folks vaccinated last fall. We invited our consumers and our business park neighbors to come find out what we do and get their shots at the same time!

Or our Operation Advocacy where people from around our state came together in February, in conjunction with the Fred Riggers Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol where we overwhelmed the Rotunda with our advocates.

Or our Power Independent Living campaign and website, where we partnered with other entities in the state impacted by low wages for direct care workers. This new platform will enable all of us to organize around this important issue.

These are just a few of the more public examples of things we did here at LINC. And now it's time to participate in Idaho Gives, the Idaho Nonprofit's annual giving drive on behalf of Idaho nonprofits. While we don't have any big plans like last year, we hope to raise some money and some awareness. Join us online at https://www.lincidaho.org.
INDEX
APPLE HEALTH & UNWINDING

You may have heard about Medicaid Unwinding. Beginning April 1, 2023, states are able to terminate Medicaid enrollment for individuals no longer eligible. States will have up to 12 months to return to normal eligibility and enrollment operations.

Apple Health is Washington State's Medicaid. Medicaid provides health insurance to low-income people and people with disabilities. For the last few years (during the pandemic) Medicaid automatically renewed health insurance. The automatic renewal was part of the federal state of emergency. The unwinding at the end of the emergency stops this.

So you might ask the question, Am I losing coverage? You can check your eligibility here. You can be eligible based on your income. The amount of money you can make varies by your household size. You can also be eligible if you are working and have a disability.

So when will this happen? If you become ineligible because of the unwinding but your income didn't change, you should be covered through the renewal date. If you do report a change to your income, you are covered through the end of the next calendar month. You need to report those changes within 30 days.

You will need to need to complete your annual renewal during this unwinding period. If you need help navigating this, INDEX can provide enrollment assistance to help ensure that those who remain eligible for Medicaid are able to retain coverage and those who are no longer eligible can transition to other sources of coverage.

For more information go to these links:

**Better Health Together**
**Washington Health Plan Finder**
**Free or Low Cost Health Care**

*Working for Independence, Equity, and Justice!*
LIFE, INC - WELCOME SPRING!

"Spring is Nature’s way of saying ‘Let’s Party!’" ~ Robin Williams

It's May! We have had a great winter/spring with fun events and kicking off some really exciting new classes. From January through April, LIFE was full of laughter and learning. Participants gathered at LIFE to take part in a variety of LIFE Skills classes. The participants felt that they learned a lot. “We learned about different things to help us live better with our family, friends, and homes. They were good classes,” one consumer said.

These classes also taught them how to advocate for themselves in their relationships, and their daily lives, and that it was important for them to think about what they want and how to effectively stand up for it. Over the months we really saw some individuals come out of their shells and start trying out some of the skills we have been teaching. LIFE's Independent Living Skills (or LIFE Skills) program aims to teach consumers the skills they need to live independently and manage life with a disability. It was a great learning experience for the staff and the those we work with. It is only through your participation and support that we are able to make a positive impact on our community! We're excited to be able to do more outside events as the weather warms up. We had a busy winter, and we're looking forward to all the exciting classes and events ahead!

To stay up to date on what's happening at the center follow us on social media and check our website each week. If you or someone you know has a disability, please connect with us if you haven't already. There are many resources available, and we'd be happy to help.

A CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
A lack of transportation can limit access to employment, healthcare, social engagement and community participation. Nearly 30% of disabled Americans have given up driving. And in rural areas, public transportation is sadly lacking.

Studies have shown, people with disabilities who live in rural areas rely solely on rides from others or public transit to meet their transportation needs. Taxi’s, Uber and Lyft are most often in accessible and expensive.

Transportation in rural towns may be limited to local paratransit services. Residents often rely on family and friends for out of town healthcare appointments and errands. Physical access and attitudes of the drivers impact the accessibility. For those on a limited income, to copay stipend can be as high as $50 is you have to go twice a month out of town to a specialist appointment. And you limited to transit schedules and routes.

People have been patient and drawing on social relationships to get rides but this leads to feelings of dependence. Social pressure for reciprocity can lead some to not ask for rides.

Priorities need to be made for accessible public transportation, even in the rural areas. This can help contribute to the economic development, health, and quality of life of rural communities. In more remote locations, transportation may be essential to ensure civic engagement and other types of engagement in community life. Voting for local, statewide, and national elections can be a challenge for those living in rural areas because of limited voting places and transportation options.
An epic fail means "a notable, obvious, and usually public failure." Though perhaps well intentioned, these fails can embarrass, isolate, and even endanger people with disabilities. We work to remove barriers so people with disabilities can live more independently in their own communities.
SELF-DIRECTED PA SERVICES

Rural Communities Matter

For rural disabled people who receive caregiving services, rural context matters. It's important service providers learn how rural living and access to in-home caregivers intersect.

Our goal is to keep people with disabilities in their own home. It's easier if they live in a resource-rich community. That means having access to more than just a post office and fire station. You need a local economy that provides both shopping and services and places to work. Education opportunities also add to life enrichment by providing activities to participate in.

Receiving in-home care in rural areas is characterized by a mixture of barriers and opportunities. Barriers included transportation time and distance, local worker shortages, and difficulty in finding accessible housing. It's important to plan on what to do if your usual in-home caregiver becomes ill, you need a temporary pool of workers in that situation.

Opportunities include having a tight-knit community and often there is more affordable housing. Neighbors and friends are used to checking in on each other.

The worker characteristics desired by rural consumers include personalization of care, respect both for the consumers’ dignity and privacy, comfort with the slower pace of life, trustworthiness, and awareness that urgent medical care takes longer than in urban areas.

"One on one good personal care is important. Someone that really cares about you and you can tell that they care!"

SERVICES YOU CONTROL!
At the Birth of the Rehabilitation Act (part one)

- By Miriam Hertz

In Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319 (1976), the U.S. Supreme Court found that Eldridge had not been denied due process when his Social Security disability benefits were terminated prior to an evidentiary hearing.

As part of the Social Security Administration’s appeals process, all Social Security beneficiaries in Eldridge’s position would be entitled to a hearing, but only after benefits were terminated. Even though Eldridge and any Social Security beneficiary in Eldridge’s position would receive retroactive benefits should their termination be reversed with benefits reinstated, Eldridge sued rather than follow Social Security Administration procedures.

Why did Eldridge sue rather than adhere to the administrative appeals process? I ask this because in my line of work, I generally advise people who are in a situation akin to Eldridge to give the established line of procedure a go (at least before they sue).

The year 1976 – the year of Mathews v. Eldridge – was a heady time for disability rights in the United States. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 had been passed three years before, establishing that no federal entity or entity in receipt of federal funds could discriminate against people with disabilities. And in 1977, the year after Mathews v. Eldridge, disability rights activists staged a 25-day sit in at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in San Francisco to force the signing of federal regulations to implement the Rehabilitation Act. Equal treatment of people with disabilities by federal entities and federal-funded entities truly was the law of the land now.

By claiming a lack of due process in the Social Security Administration’s procedures, was Eldridge taking a stand for something bigger – for the rights of people with disabilities?

Before approving disability benefits, the Social Security Administration requires evidence of a medical impairment, i.e., diagnostic codes, and documentation that establishes substantial limitation to an applicant’s work functionality. But the impact of a medical diagnosis on the individual generally extends beyond the medical to the experienced social and cultural consequences of being “labelled disabled.” The brilliance of the Rehabilitation Act was that it was the first piece of federal anti-discrimination legislation to emphasize a sociocultural model of disability over a medical model of disability.

So, maybe Eldridge was taking a stand for disability rights. Are there clues in Mathews v. Eldridge that Eldridge’s perspective on disability was rooted in the newly minted sociocultural model of disability? Find out more next month!
BLUEPATH WEBSITE

- Homer Alaska is working on Accessible Tourism!

Homer is an incredible place to live or visit—and that should be true for everyBODY! In fact, Homer’s stunning setting—perched on the shores of Kachemak Bay—along with its spectacular outdoor recreation; great places to stay; delicious offerings at cafes and restaurants; world-class fishing; diverse and innovative farming; active art community; variety of businesses promoting wellness; and more make it the go-to destination for folks with disabilities who want a wonderful Alaskan experience.

They have been listing accessible businesses to BluePath so people with disabilities can plan their visit with confidence.

Plan to arrive at the Homer Airport Terminal. You can start your visit with a lovely cup of coffee from Captains Coffee. Plan to visit the Bunnell Street Art Center. If you need cash or supplies for your adventure stop by Alaska Federal Credit Union. Kachemak Gear Shed, and Elmer’s Drug and Hardware. Need medical attention while you are there? No problem, Bartlett Street Family Clinic is accessible. Check out local community info at the Homer Public Library, a great resource for information. Need some supplies for you service animal? Check out Wagon Wheel Garden and Pet store. Finish up your day with a beer at Grace Ridge Brewing. You can thank the folks at the Homer Independent Living Center for loading these accessible businesses to BluePath. And be watching for more! You can access Homer from the listing page on BluePath here.

Find YourPath!
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

BAGGIE OPENER
This Baggy Opener keeps your storage bags open while you pour and store food. The hands-free operation makes pouring food easy and with less mess. Accommodates small and large plastic refrigerator or freezer bags with its adjustable arms. Easy to use; just unfold rack arms from its flat position and insert storage bag under the clips. Fill up your storage bag, remove from clips, seal up the bag and store away! Measures 8.75 H x 3.5 in. base. Rack arms measure 10 1/4 in. at full height and 7 in. at the smaller height (not counting base).
$19 from www.maxiaids.com

BOWL WITH BUILT IN STRAINER
The flat solid base stabilizes the bowl for soaking and the perforated side strainer keeps smaller food in, allowing water and debris to drain out. The angled side helps in draining the water easily with just a simple tip onto its side. Convenient for making rice recipes that call for soaking the rice before it is cooked. Whether using brown rice, jasmine rice, basmati, wild, white, short-grain rice, and other types of rice, thorough cleaning in the Rice Washer can significantly reduce toxins and chemical levels incurred during the growing process.
$18 from www.maxiaids.com

STUFF TO MAKE LIFE EASIER

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CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

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