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**Disabilities Awareness Training Workgroup – Curriculum Suggestions**

1. Positive existing practice (i.e., social worker actions that inspire confidence).
  - a. Utilize a Social Strengths-Based Model: positive efforts in communicating with recipients living with disabilities through conversation and exchange.
  - b. Allow adequate time for the recipient to prepare for announced visit. Provide guidance to recipient to make a list of needs to help maintain focus during the visit.
  - c. Start where the recipient is in all aspects of functioning (i.e., where is the recipient in the disability?).
2. Solutions to what is *not* working (i.e., social worker action resulting in recipient's discomfort).
  - a. Gather supplemental information from the provider for a more accurate assessment.
  - b. Make efforts to prevent erroneous termination in services (e.g., social worker's due diligence in locating recipient prior to case discontinuance for whereabouts unknown, utilizing available resources to find recipient's home, etc.).
  - c. Complete individualized assessments and take time to explain regulations and program changes at each visit.
3. Materials or methods that should be included in promoting meaningful engagement and respect.
  - a. Speak to the recipient naturally.
  - b. Explain changes and how time is assessed (i.e., time per task).
  - c. When possible, work with Alternative Resources to better understand the services the recipient needs to remain safely in his/her own home.
  - d. Assessments should be person-centered and individualized.
  - e. Recognize non-traditional communication cues from persons with disabilities and the social worker's ability to redirect.
4. Best Practices or Resources
  - a. Explain social worker's role within the "bigger picture" of long-term care services/supports.
  - b. Practice self-awareness.
  - c. Train all county social services staff, not just social workers.
  - d. Be resourceful and prepared. Obtain appropriate and accessible documents for recipients with disabilities prior to the visit.
5. The following additional topics were identified for future consideration and/or follow-up:
  - a. Inclusiveness (include family and provider insight in assessment process).
  - b. Alternative Resources (work in collaboration with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of the IHSS recipient and that his/her needs are met).
  - c. Training on Specific Types of Disabilities (invisible, behavioral, differing expressions of similar diagnosis).
  - d. Recipient Self-Advocacy/Empowerment.