FOSTERING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS & PREVENTING ABUSE

Tuesday, April 22, 2025 • 10:00 a.m. EST

In May 2023, the Surgeon General called attention to a new public health crisis of loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection in our country. For people with disabilities, this lack of connection coupled with fewer opportunities for face-to-face social experiences puts them at risk for unhealthy relationships and experiencing abuse at exponentially higher rates than their non disabled peers. This webinar will provide strategies for disability support staff, family members and friends to empower people with disabilities to form healthy relationships and avoid abuse.

AGENDA

- Incidence and Prevalence of Abuse
- Dynamics of Abuse
- Findings from the LEAP Project research
- Strategies to Prevent Abuse
- Responding to Abuse

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Presenters: Molly Dellinger-Wray, Taylor Thomas-Harris, Nicole Rada, and Renée Soniat

Molly Dellinger-Wray is part of the VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities. Together with a team of families and professionals, she developed and researched LEAP: Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention, an evidence-based intervention for adults with IDD. In addition to published academic journals, Molly is a regular contributor to Parenting Special Needs Magazine. Molly is a certified trainer for Person-Centered Thinking and Stewards of Children. Her goal is to help everyone enjoy healthy relationships.

Taylor Thomas-Harris is a proud 2022 social work graduate of Virginia State University. Taylor has experience supporting people with disabilities and providing training in health literacy and healthy relationships. Taylor's Cerebral Palsy and use of a wheelchair enable her to be a thoughtful advocate for herself and other people with disabilities. Taylor has been employed as a Direct Support Professional with SOAR 365, and she is inspired to pursue a future career in social work, due to her desire to make a difference in the lives of those who have disabilities. One of her most proud achievements was having her portrait with her bio placed in the Virginia Museum of History and Culture for the past year through a program called Capable Next Move Program. Additionally, Taylor is a part of the State Special Education Advisory Committee.

Nicole Rada has worked in the disability field for over 20 years and has been with the Partnership for People with Disabilities for 18 years where she has worked alongside Molly on several projects relating to abuse and neglect and healthy relationships of people with disabilities. She is also an endorsed instructor of Stewards of Children. She is happy to continue to foster healthy relationships for everyone.

Renée Soniat has over 25 years of professional experience serving people of all ages with disabilities in various capacities. Renée currently serves as the statewide Co-Director of the Family to Family Network of Virginia, at the Partnership for People with Disabilities, and is a project specialist with the I-CAN Accessibility Project and Project LEAP.

Partnership for People with Disabilities
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