

DEAF-BLIND IMMERSION EXPERIENCE (DBIE)

An innovative assessment and training program for individuals who are deaf-blind and have intellectual disabilities (FOCUS persons) and the staff and family who support them.

Length of Program: Five (5) Days - Monday through Friday either at HKNC in NY or in the individual's home community.

Each FOCUS person will:

- ◆ Receive a **Lifestyle Assessment** through participation in preferred functional activities related to work, home, and leisure.
- ◆ Develop an **Individualized Communication System** incorporating object cues, object symbols, picture cues, and American Sign Language (ASL) to try out at HKNC and bring home.
- ◆ Receive a **Low Vision and Audiology Functional Assessment**
- ◆ Identify **Environmental Modifications** incorporating tactual cues and markings, contrast, low vision adaptations, audiology cues, and vibrating alerting systems.

Each staff person will:

- ◆ Receive a hands-on, in-the-moment staff training and mentoring with their FOCUS person from 9am-7pm Monday-Thursday and 9am-3:45pm on Friday.
- ◆ Receive training in alternate communication systems, American Sign Language (ASL), Haptics, tactual teaching techniques and adaptive strategies for vocational and daily living activities, conversational approach, person-centered planning, and community participation.
- ◆ Contribute to the creation of communication systems for the FOCUS person for use at home.
- ◆ Develop an Action Plan to incorporate successful strategies and activities with support of the HKNC team.

Vocational Exploration

The lifestyle assessment provides an individualized approach to JOB EXPLORATION COUNSELING. The home team completes the Personal Futures Planning (PFP) maps of the FOCUS person's *background, preferences, a day in the life, relationships, recreation activities, and choices*. This information is used to create meaningful matches of vocational activities for the FOCUS person to experience. The home team and HKNC team together discover new preferences, teaching approaches and vocational activities to explore at home which are recorded in an action plan with the home team. The home team can meet with HKNC's vocational coordinator to learn information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as non-traditional employment. HKNC offers an array of integrated on-site

and community WORK-BASED LEARNING including stock work (snack and soda machines), cafeteria work (simple food preparation, industrial dishwasher, porter maintenance), laundry services, and mail delivery. The opportunity to job shadow with consumers who have their own snack machine business and soda machine job, as well as have a mentoring opportunity with them, is an impactful part of the work-based learning experience. WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING to develop social skills and independent living skills includes functional and meaningful experiences with communication and interpersonal skills. Communication is embedded in helping the individual anticipate, understand and receive feedback about his/her participation through alternate communication systems, sign language, and Haptics. The individual returns home with a personalized communication system that the home team has used to support the vocational experience. The use of functional orientation and mobility skills is identified and practiced at the work settings and while travelling in the community after dinner. Understanding employer expectations for punctuality and performance, as well as other soft skills necessary for employment, are infused in the experience.

Instruction in SELF-ADVOCACY can include peer mentoring by joining a career development group and/or working with consumers who are employed or involved in paid work experiences. Learning how to identify a preferred learning style with optimal accessibility and environmental modifications is a valued outcome.

The home team is invited to a quarterly community of practice call (COP) with other professionals and parents who have been supported by HKNC to review the progress of the FOCUS person and brainstorm new ideas. A team of HKNC's experienced staff will guide, train, and model tactical techniques and personalized strategies to support the FOCUS person to participate more fully in life and re-engage in the home community if he/she has attended an out-of-state program.

Staff who would benefit from this training seminar include job coaches, habilitation specialists, program managers, behavior specialists, caregivers, deaf-blind specialists, and therapists. All participants need to provide a copy of their most recent PPD. The FOCUS individual and his/her staff will reside in the HKNC Residence and join the Destiny Group Home program. Visiting staff will be responsible for the support and administration of medications for the FOCUS individual for the duration of the program. If the HKNC team travels to the home community, there are fees for transportation, lodging and meals.

Cost for FOCUS person: \$500 per day (\$2500 for one week) paid by the home State VR program, PRE-ETS funds or funding through Medicaid.

Cost for staff: Room and Board fee is \$50/day for each staff member who resides at HKNC

For further information, please contact:

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