Notes from Community Meeting #2 (Feb 29)

Housing

What Works

1. 1133 Programs and training for people with disabilities and homeless
2. St E’s patients have more options when returning to the community
3. DACL has been successful in reducing paperwork required to connect people to services
4. DC Health has linkudmv.org to provide resources for food, housing and jobs to people in the DC Metro area

Areas of improvement

1. DC needs to figure out how to spread the word about existing programs and services through community outreach
2. Use the Certified Peer Specialists (from DBH) or other peers to help residents in transition navigate  system
3. Addressing literacy needs of the population seeking services, which includes making sure information is available in other languages and working to ensure cultural and linguistic competency
4. Offer accessible housing and make sure the people who need accessible housing are the ones to whom it is offered
5. Make sure that the community and the housing providers understand the rights to reasonable accommodation under the FHA and ADA
6. Communicate with DCHA rt on all of the above and how we can work together to make the programs and services they offer more accessible to residents in transition
7. Communicate and collaborate with DC Gov agencies that have vans to transport people from the shelters to their new homes or from their homes to medical appointments, etc.

Healthcare and Wellness

 (DACL and ODR suggested making this priority area broader to include the supports that help people in transition remain well)

Areas of Improvement

1. The fact that the Direct Support Provider payscale is not catching up with minimum wage is causing higher turnover in those positions
2. More training is needed for home health aides to ensure that they are aware of how to treat people with disabilities
3. Background checks should be conducted--not just letting everyone have the job. Staff are not always competent
4. Agencies should attend community meetings to make members of organizations aware of their rights and get their feedback
   1. The public must be educated about what is available to them and that fed and DC benefits can co-exist
5. Recidivism is a challenge--many people from St E’s are incarcerated for minor charges
   1. This suggests that people are not ready for discharge when they leave--how do we prepare them?
6. Use of supported decision making in healthcare
7. Eligibility for services with DDS needs to be expanded to those with developmental disabilities who do not also have intellectual disabilities
8. Education and support should be provided for caregivers of people with disabilities

Employment

What is Working

1. DDS can highlight the new Workforce Investment Opportunity Act strategic Plan.
2. DOES and DACL are helping older adults get back to work through Back to Work 50+
3. Aspiring Professionals Program provides employment opportunities to young adults with disabilities
4. DSP Academy exists to help educate people with disabilities who want to work as direct support professionals
5. Recovery Coach training through DBH to connect people to a myriad of services, including employment, housing, and transportation
6. Focus on data around sustainable employment outcomes
7. Metro (WMATA) has good employment opportunities

Areas of Improvement

1. Balancing housing, healthcare, and employment simultaneously
2. The Deaf, blind, and Deafblind communities face additional barriers to employment
3. DC needs to make people more aware of transportation options they can use to get to work, including not just options in DC but those available in neighboring jurisdictions if they work in MD or VA. This includes travel training
4. Discrimination exists in employment and can lead to people with disabilities feeling isolated at work--how do we address this?
5. Bring youth with disabilities into the summer youth employment program through reasonable accommodations
   1. Both 4 and 5 suggest the need for ADA training for transition age youth
6. Focus on school-based mental health programs to help teens
7. Increase the age range for SYEP to give more people opportunities to participate
8. Engage employers--more fully integrated employment opportunities are needed for employment in the public and private sectors
9. Re-establishing the importance of learning trades--college is not the only option
10. Bring Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services into this conversation