

PROPOSAL FOR SERVICES

The concept of providing statewide training on “neurodiversity” will remain on brand and retain objectives that align with the council’s mission to promote independence, self-determination, productivity, integration, and inclusion. However, this series will delve into varying domains of a person with disabilities life that affect activities of daily living (ADL’s) and community integration. As a result, these training topics will address capacity building as it pertains to ***identifying neurodivergent individuals with different abilities (physical and/or sensory), identifying possible accommodations, and common neurodivergent disorders.***

OVERVIEW

Like a person’s fingerprints, no two people brains think alike. Because of this, there is no formal definition of what is considered “normal” capabilities of the human brain. However, for most sectors of behavioral health, defining what is considered normal vs. abnormal is critical. In most health-based environments, practioners are accustomed to asking a series of “Yes” or “No” questions or “Is this normal?” Depending on the person’s response, they are either deemed sick or well based on what they can or cannot do.

“Neurodiversity” acknowledges that despite differences, individuals develop differently and have their own unique abilities and strengths. **The goal is to identify differences instead of deficits.**

The Objective

Promote an efficient approach to education, early detection, and ability that supports the fact that various neurological conditions are the effect of normal changes and variations in human beings.

- **Outcome #1: Improve overall awareness that neuro-differences are recognized and appreciated as a social category similar to differences in ethnicity, gender, and ability.**
- **Outcome #2: Increase awareness as it pertains to educational advocacy surrounding IEP creation and implementation to include exploring cognitive differences between how people think, learn, and behave.**

The Opportunity

Create closed loop referral processes that promote early recognition and family/caregiver involvement to prevent instances of ineffective service delivery.

- **Goal #1: Continue to improve early recognition of “neurodiversity” within the mental health and educational systems to address challenging behaviors.**
- **Goal #2: Improve caregiver and family input, along with self-determination and community integration through use of decision supports by better understanding available approaches to treatment to build the capacity of interdisciplinary teams that can provide effective case management.**
- **Goal #3: Increase educational advocacy throughout the IEP and behavior intervention processes while exploring post-secondary options that ultimately promote workplace inclusion and sustainable employment.**

The Solution

Develop measurable outcomes and case management processes that promote diversified service delivery, but improve integrated care in community-based settings through use of appropriate accommodations.

- **Action Step #1: Continue to outline specific considerations and challenges for treating the neurodivergent population and report findings to LADDC.**
- **Action Step #2: Implement therapeutic solutions to treat dually diagnosed persons with disabilities through effective case management services utilizing professionals with varying degrees of specialties (both behavioral health providers and educators).**
- **Action Step 3: Identify supports and resources that foster independence and community integration throughout the person with disabilities’ lifespan with special consideration to educational and workplace settings (i.e. requesting reasonable accommodations and self-advocacy).**

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

During the past fiscal year, Hustle & Grow, LLC has provided informative trainings related to co-occurring disorders topics throughout the state and has provided trainings to nearly 200 self-identified disability advocates, behavioral health organizations, educators, mental health clinicians, and parents of persons with disabilities.

The owner/operator that will continue to serve as the Executive Director for the proposal and is a Supported Employment Specialist and former Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapist for adults and children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with many years of experience working with coordinated systems of care to include Medicaid, waiver services, and Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS). She also earned a certification in Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment from the University of North Texas. In addition, the Executive Director previously served as Clinical Manager of a community-based behavioral health clinic. She is well-trained on co-occurring disorders to include substance use diagnoses having previously facilitated a Medicaid-funded Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for persons with substance use disorders. In addition to providing clinic-based and school based behavioral intervention services in schools throughout northeast Louisiana.

The Program Manager holds a PhD in Urban Higher Education, a Master’s in Criminal Justice, and a Bachelor’s of Social Work. For the past five years, the Program Manager has served as the designated Support Services Coordinator that provides job readiness and placement services to people with disabilities in marginalized communities and housing authorities throughout northeast Louisiana. As a result, she has gained expert knowledge on hosting and facilitating community forums, as well as experience gathering both qualitative and quantitative data for analysis.

The Advocate is an Educator and Mental Health Professional that joined Hustle & Grow, LLC with nearly ten years of experience providing community-based mental health services to both adolescents and adults, many of whom have co-occurring disorders. This experience includes providing pre-employment transitional services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities in both Louisiana and Texas. In addition to on-site job coaching and Supported Employment services in the field of vocational rehabilitation. This experience also includes behavioral health treatment plan implementation, intensive case management, and linkage to resources. In her most recent role, the Advocate serves as a Special Education teacher within the public school system creating IEP’s, implementing classroom and community-based behavioral intervention planning, and most importantly providing disability advocacy.

Project Deliverables

Following is a list of project deliverables that will be facilitated by the Executive Director, Program Manager, and Advocate:

Deliverables	Method of Evaluation
Increased Awareness	Survey Methodology-collect data from participants utilizing standardized questionnaires to assess level of awareness
Process Analysis	Impact Evaluation-Assess the perspective of persons with disabilities (when feasible), caregivers/families, and service providers as it relates to current processes to improve future decision making
Identification of Service Gap(s)	Questionnaire-Summative participant evaluations on subject matter presented to gain insight on service gaps, identify areas of weakness, and quality levels