



Special Education Committee Minutes

April 5, 2018

Board Chair—Dana Schwartz

Administrative Liaison—Alyssa Marton

Attendance—Please see the accompanying committee attendance sheet.

Dana Schwartz called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

The minutes of the March 1, 2018 meeting were approved.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Kristine Quinby, President & CEO and Pamela Morgan-Ford, Adult Program Coordinator of Potential and Springtime School will discuss how parents can help their child "Be Safe" with police interactions. Be Safe The Movie by Emily Iland, MA will be discussed as a resource.

I'm the founder CEO of Potential that helps individual with autism throughout the lifespan, Pam couldn't make it tonight I met with her this morning to finalize something to talk about. If you need more examples she is our adult coordinator, there's a lot she has seen and heard about hearing our clients be safe with police interactions. Lenape Valley does police training called CIT, to manage mental health crises.

It helps them to better act with individuals with differences. Many of those differences are invisible, specifically autism, no physical symptoms that would indicate to a police officer to treat the individual differently.

Short clip to play for you: [police video]

He has a toy truck that is silver that someone mistook as a firearm. The officer was charged b/c there was no justification for the shooting. The individual on the ground is the man's helper, but you can see here even though someone was with him, it didn't matter. As much training as we can give to police, but also need to focus on training our children about what to do in different circumstances.

Be Safe The Movie – very inexpensive resource, but it's not individualized enough, the handout titled Public Safety questions, our staff compiled that from a number of different resources. Circles curriculum and the book called Taking Care of Myself. Be Safe is a vignette of how you're supposed to react around police officers. A form of video monitoring. Beneficial for kids who have a good understanding of language and vocabulary. Take pieces of the movie and pull out what is appropriate for our clients. In our adult program we serve a whole range of autistic adults. Some just need a little extra help around jobs, executive functioning, all the way to clients who have significant impairments and can't be alone, similar to the gentleman in the video.

The main thing about Be Safe movie talks about what kinds of commands will you need to follow if a police officer is interacting with you. For example, we had a client who was on the bus to his part time job, thankfully a happy go lucky guy, was arrested b/c he matched the description of someone who committed a robbery. Whatever question you asked him he would smile and say yes. Thankfully they figured it out and released him. Had he been more tactile defensive or anxiety or fearfulness that could have led to aggression against police and worse outcome.

A couple examples [on the handout] – we teach Lay Down.

Q – do police ask if they should lay on their stomach?

A – Maybe. We review these first in a rote practice, their staff person will practice with them, making sure they can follow that direction. Making sure they can do it outside. Next step to bring in a uniformed police officer to make sure they can follow it.

In Newtown we have a good relationship with the police dept. as NHS does as well.

One of our adult clients who does tend to be volatile actually sat down and had coffee w a police officer, just getting to know an officer, seeing a uniform, not letting it cause anxiety that could escalate.

They have a movie and curriculum that needs to be adjusted for individual needs.

Dr. Bobby Newman did a presentation on sexuality and ethics, included in that was discussion about making sure our clients and kids don't put themselves in a position for police interaction inadvertently. Talked about this with NOVA, example about the man on the bus sitting next to the pretty woman, we have to teach our kids about preventing them from inadvertent police activity.

The book is called Taking Care of Myself, politeness q's, what do you if someone smiles or says hello, if someone says thank you, where should you look if someone is talking to you, etc. If someone drops something, saying excuse me, interpreting what rude and insulting things are.

The man who I mentioned earlier has a great job at Giant but has no concept of empathy or perspective taking. An example, he was in his uniform, on his way to the break room, a female customer asked him a question, and he blew up. Helping our kids understand what it means to be rude. What does it mean to be polite versus impolite. Understanding that not everyone sees things in your perspective. Not knowing the proper boundaries can get you into trouble.

Circles Program: shows people visually where boundaries are, using color and circles on a chart [slides]. You are the center circle, the next circle is next level of intimacy, then close family and friends, next circle could be a side hug, further and further out these are really strangers.

In addition to physical relationships, it talks about information sharing. Esp with the internet. NOVA talks a lot about different areas of abuse that can occur, a lot of times we think of physical abuse, but there is also financial abuse. Clients have been taught to answer when someone asks you something. Example of someone asking about money and giving it.

The questions on the handout are either from the Circles, Be Safe, or Taking Care of Myself program.

Any q's?

Q – you touched on the trust issue, my son had a reading program in which the police didn't really follow the rules, and my son didn't get that entire concept that there could be corruption, how do you get that concept across?

A – that would be in the outer layer, we don't teach that community helpers are our friends, they have a job, and these are things they can help us with, but they're still strangers. For example, a physician even though they can examine you should not be touching you inappropriately. These gray areas are difficult to teach for the concrete way of thinking. If we start with a concept this is a community helper that makes it easier to piece out what is good behavior and what is bad behavior.

Q – any programs who come to the schools?

A – NOVA does, and we have been talking to police officers and they will come to the intensive learning support classes in the upper grades. The teachers are prepping students. It will be a q&a and help build comfort level. We're going to build a relationship with the local police. The concern was if there is an emergency and police on site, if they do have those requests of students, they may not put their hands in the air, we don't want that to be seen as not following the law. The police can get to know our students.

Most police stations have ways for parents to reach out and discuss their children's individual needs.

Responder: You can do a premise alert, you can do it for the elderly, my dad has dementia, he wouldn't be able to get out of the house if there was a fire. Every year the police call us and make sure to update. A person who may not follow the rules or hide in case of a fire.

We did have a situation if you were to call 911, the information doesn't go there, but when it goes to your local police department they know, I have a premise alert, it didn't come out right away. It is something helpful to have.

Alyssa: We have a couple of families who take their kids to the local police dept. for a visit, they get to know the child, the child gets to know the police, helps to familiarize, both have been happy to work with our families to do that.

Kristine: The main point is for you to be empowered using these tools in addition to what school is doing. It's important that they hear from you too. Role play with younger kids so it's not a fearful situation. One thing I know in my experience, is that the law doesn't discriminate against or for individuals with a disability. If you assault an officer and you have autism you will still be charged with assault. Awareness has gotten better, but I used to field a lot of phone calls about people whose autistic children have gotten into trouble with the law b/c they were tricked. They don't understand those social cues and signals about being taken advantage of.

I hope these questions that we provided for you give you a sense of what they may be and work on them in different situations.

Q – in your research is there a widely recognized similar to a medical ID bracelet, when he was young he had an ID bracelet, is there any initiative out there, or a card with info.

A - There are cards you can make or buy or free, but nothing you might see on your arm. It's not something that police look for if they're in a confrontation situation. The answer to that is no.

I've seen stickers on cars, I have a child with autism.

Kristine: they do have different medical alerts

Q – is there something that can be tied into the license plate?

Alyssa: that's a great question and I can call DMV and find out.

Kristine: It could be a traumatic experience if a child encounters a police officer and doesn't follow the commands. False arrest, hands behind his back, it could be a very bad situation that we want to try to avoid.

Q – This is reminding me of talks that I've heard families have who are people of color. It makes sense to have it.

A – Be polite, etc. Be Safe the movie has some sample clips. You can't use the video as a stand alone for everybody. There's always modifications.

Is this something you would ever do for a training for other people? Bring kids and attend.

Kristine: We talked about doing some stand alone classes with kids, still in process of putting that together. Trying to get some grant money for it, low cost or free. We did a presentation at our office, played the movie, had police there, and Lenape Valley came and talked about their CIT program. If people are interested we can do something like that again.

Q - Is there a way to bill MA for that? medical assistance?

Kristine: Maybe for individuals, but not for group classes. I think getting grant money for that, that would be easy.

Q about active shooter situations – Alice program

Chuck is in charge of that –

Dr. Yanni: We have to have secondary plans for kids who have a host of different issues. In an emergency situation, loud noise or crowds, the instinct is to run from that. I'm grateful that Alyssa is working with special education issues for secondary plans, including kids with hearing and sight and gross motor issues, so we can have the ability to move kids to safety at a moment's notice.

Chuck: We've always had plans for students with needs of all kinds and this is another one of our tools for keeping kids safe, granted there are different protocols for age/grade as well, we're well aware, we need to engage and provide those interventions for everyone, staff included.

Public Comment

- Q: Are you still interested in having recent graduates come to speak for a future meeting? I've been in touch with about 6 possible families.
- Alyssa: Yes, absolutely. Let's touch base and I'll follow up.

Dana Schwartz adjourned the meeting at 6:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa Marton
Director of Student Services

