



**DD Community Forum Recording**

We thank Advocates in Action for hosting the March 22<sup>nd</sup> DD Community Forum!

You can [watch the March 22 Community Forum](#) on the Advocates in Action Facebook page. You don't need to have a facebook account to watch the video.

A version of the recording will also soon be posted on the Advocates in Action website that offers closed captioning.

If you have a question that isn't answered in the forum, please contact DDD at: [BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

**Rhode Island's Hard-Hit Community Vaccination Strategy**

Certain areas have had higher rates of COVID infections, hospitalizations, and deaths throughout the pandemic. For example, in the seven hardest-hit ZIP codes, people as young as 25 are experiencing higher hospitalization rates than people over 60 years old in the rest of the state. The goal of Rhode Island's Hard-Hit Community Vaccination Strategy is to distribute vaccines more quickly in the hardest-hit ZIP codes. Given the current limitations on vaccine supply, focused strategies are necessary to ensure vaccine access for the most vulnerable members of the hardest-hit areas in the state.

The Hard-Hit Community Vaccination Strategy currently applies to the following ZIP codes in Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence: 02863, 02860, 02861, 02904, 02905, 02907, 02908, and 02909. Residents of the zip codes who are age 18 or older are eligible for the vaccine at city- and community-run clinics and other targeted venues. Some types of vaccine may be offered to those age 16 or 17 as well.

**See the contact information below to register for a vaccine appointment for each zip code.**

**Central Falls (02863)**

Phone: the BEAT COVID hotline at 855-843-7620  
Website: <https://www.centralfallsri.us/coronavirus>

**Pawtucket (02860 or 02861)**

Phone: the BEAT COVID hotline at 855-843-7620  
Website: <http://www.pawtucketri.com/Covid19>

**Providence (02904, 02905, 02907, 02908, and 02909)**

Phone: Call 3-1-1 for an appointment  
Website: <https://www.providenceri.gov/vaccinate/>

## **Improving Social Connection Among People with Disabilities Webinar** **Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 3:00 PM**

Even prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation and loneliness were identified as significant public health concerns, placing people at higher risk for serious medical conditions. Research conducted during the pandemic indicates that people with disabilities may be at an increased risk of social isolation and loneliness. This webinar will highlight current research on social isolation and loneliness for people with disabilities. Presenters will also share strategies for social engagement and connection from the Center for Independent Living network.

This webinar will be held on **March 30, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.** and is sponsored by the Administration for Community Living.

[Click here to register.](#)

## **Mental Health First Aid Virtual Class** **Saturday, April 10, 2021** **8:30 AM - 2:00 PM**

With the support of the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services Healthcare Workforce Transformation Project, CCRI is offering a **free virtual Mental Health First Aid class** on Saturday, April 10, from 8:30 am–2 pm.

Virtual Mental Health First Aid is a class that teaches attendees to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. The training provides participants with the skills needed to reach out and provide initial assistance to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.

All participants are required to complete the 2-hour self-guided coursework and take the quiz **before** they may participate in the virtual real-time class.

Every Mental Health First Aid participant taking the virtual real-time class needs the following technology:

- A laptop or computer with a camera (a cell phone will not work)
- A microphone for your computer so you can participate in group discussions
- Headphones or earbuds are strongly encouraged

Seats are currently available for the April 10 class, but space is limited.

Please contact Mackenzie Johnson, Program Director of Continuing Education in Nursing and Allied Health at [mmjohnson2@ccri.edu](mailto:mmjohnson2@ccri.edu) to register.

[Register today!](#)

*This program is supported by funding from the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services Healthcare Workforce Transformation Program.*

## Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on People with Disabilities Self-Directing Home and Community-Based Services

The Laurie Institute for Disability Policy at Brandeis University is conducting a study to learn about the experiences of people receiving home and community-based services and self-directing those services. Researchers are interested in learning how people with disabilities are staying safe, how they are keeping their personal care attendants safe, and how they are accessing critical services and supports. Information from this study will be used to advise government agencies and providers.

- Are you a person with a disability who receives Medicaid home and community-based services?
- Are you above the age of 18?
- Do you self-direct your services and supports? In other words, do you control who you hire to provide services or control a budget for services?
- Do you live in the United States?

If you answered yes to each of the questions above, you may be eligible to participate. Participation includes one interview over the telephone or videoconference. The interview will be about one hour. Participants will receive a small gift card for their time.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Miriam Heyman, Senior Research Associate at the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, at [miriamheyman@brandeis.edu](mailto:miriamheyman@brandeis.edu) or (781) 736-8415.

### **Katie Lowe, Owner of Cheetah Greetings, Supporting National Down Syndrome Day** March 21 was National Down Syndrome Day

Katie Lowe has Down's Syndrome. Katie started her own business, and is helping on behalf of this cause.

The developmental disability community in Rhode Island has been hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many of their resources, such as in-person learning, or home service aides, having been cut off. Within this community, new small business owners are struggling, but are doing an excellent job of helping each other...and other charities as well.



In honor of **National Down Syndrome Awareness Day** (March 21) and **National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month** (March,) **Katie Lowe**, founder of [Cheetah Greetings](http://cheetahgreetings.com) will be donating 30% of all proceeds from her special Friendship Line to The National Down Syndrome Congress, The National Down Syndrome Society, and The Global Down Syndrome Foundation. Katie's company says, "On March 21 every year, we celebrate World Down Syndrome Day (WDSY). WDSY is

celebrated on this day to represent the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome, which causes Down syndrome. This is a day of awareness and education. Cheetah Greetings is celebrating this year with our friendship cards. These cards are blue and yellow, the color of Down syndrome awareness. They are all handcrafted and individual. We have chosen 3 places to donate the profits to: The National Down syndrome Congress, The National Down syndrome Society, and the Global Down syndrome Foundation.

### **A true passion for caring – the person behind the cards**

Katie Lowe lives in Warwick, RI with her family. She loves pizza, the color pink, summertime, musicals, and of course cheetah! She created Cheetah Greetings because she enjoys making cards and making people happy. She likes to make personalized cards for family and wanted to do it for her business! Her cards are made by using patterned cardstock and stamping. Have a special request? Want a personalized card with a picture of your loved one? She can do that! Send her a message below or call Cheetah Greetings at 401-206-0599... we can't wait to talk to you!

In addition, there are a number of Rhode Island small business owners in the developmental disability community that are committed to doing good during these difficult times, including:

- **Karen and Jack Carfagna**, of [Mr. C's Old Thyme Scents](#) together with **Debbie and Jason Wood**, of [WeBeJammin](#) are helping the current or past RIDDC Self-Employment Business Class participants become vendors at local/outdoor flea markets and farmer's markets
- **Karen Carfagna** is providing technical assistance to individuals currently enrolled in the RIDDC Self-Employment Business Classes
- **Michael Coyne**, who has autism, owns and operates [Red, White, and Brew](#) and [The Budding Violet](#) with his mother, Sheila Coyne. The Budding Violet serves as a retail shop providing space for local entrepreneurs and other business owners who have disabilities to sell their custom made products to the coffee shop visitors.
- Artist [Rachel Rasnick](#) donates a portion of every sale of her notecards to Special Olympics
- James Bray, photographer and graphic artist, owns [TopShotDesigns](#), lending his skills to create logos and business cards for participants currently enrolled in the RIDDC Business Class Series.

All of the small business owners listed above have successfully completed the RI Developmental Disabilities Council's (RIDDC) Self Employment Business Series, which is funded by the RI Dept. of Labor & Training and the Governor's Workforce Board.

Learn more, here: <http://riddc.org/self-employment-participants/>

Watch the video on [Starting a New Business](#) about the Self Employment Business Series



## If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, BH Link is here for you

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at [www.bhlink.org](http://www.bhlink.org) or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)

If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

## Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

### Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email [RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov)

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

### Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

*Includes a link to ASL videos*

### BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website [bhddh.ri.gov/COVID](http://bhddh.ri.gov/COVID)

### RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email [callcenter@ripin.org](mailto:callcenter@ripin.org)

### Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

Website <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

*Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you*

## Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at [bhddh.ri.gov](http://bhddh.ri.gov), select **What's New**, then go to bottom and click on **DD Community Newsletter**. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture at right.



DD Community Newsletter  
[SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER](#)

## Contacting DD Staff

DDD has put extended hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers on the next page. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

**401-462-3421**

**8:30 AM → → → → → 4:00 PM**

**WEEKDAYS DURING BUSINESS HOURS FOR:**

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS
- QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES

During business hours  
(Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00),  
for questions or support  
**(401) 462-3421**  
Para español, llame  
**(401) 462-3014**

**401-265-7461**

**4:00 PM → → → → → 10:00 PM**

**AFTER HOURS ON WEEKDAYS FOR:**

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

For emerging or imminent care  
related questions,  
Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and  
weekends 8:30am-10pm  
**(401) 265-7461**

**401-265-7461**

**8:30 AM → → → → → 10:00 PM**

**ON WEEKENDS FOR:**

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Send general questions to the  
AskDD email address. Please  
do not email critical issues.  
[BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

**E-MAIL THE DIVISION**

**BHDDH.AskDD@BHDDH.RI.GOV**

**HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!**

**WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:**

- NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS about Your Services and Supports
- GENERAL QUESTIONS about Your Services or the RI DD System

**FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES  
CALL 911  
RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!**

For medical or  
healthcare related  
emergencies, call  
your Primary Care  
Physician or 911

**CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR**

**CALL FOR:**

- ROUTINE Healthcare Questions
- NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care

**FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE  
DON'T go to their office  
unless they tell you to!**

## FREE SELF-EMPLOYMENT Classes for People with Disabilities, Families and Community Agencies



### NEXT CLASS STARTING April 6, 2021

Do you know a person with a disability who has a hobby, an idea for a possible business or who needs more support for an existing business? If so, our **FREE ONLINE ZOOM Business Classes** can help the person to learn all about self-employment and available resources to build their business idea and their financial future!

These are unprecedented times due to COVID-19 but there are opportunities for people with disabilities to safely pursue employment by owning their own business! Entrepreneurship is the choice to do things that have *real meaning* for the person to sell a product or a service they really love to make a living. Here's what Michael Coyne, owner of "Red, White and Brew Café" in North Smithfield, RI says:

### WHY CHOOSE SELF-EMPLOYMENT?

1. I love being my own "BOSS", meeting new people and spending my time working on something I really enjoy every day!
2. I decide my own flexible work schedule and hours.
3. The Classes helped me to learn skills for problem solving, creativity, communication, and self-advocacy. I met other great people with disabilities who also own their own businesses. And I received a mini-grant to buy some equipment I needed for my business!
4. I have a personal support network and my Business Team who help me with my business.
5. I am no longer "volunteering" my time at a job, but instead I have MY OWN business making money and I have increased my income!



The RI Developmental Disabilities Council, in partnership with CWE and others developed a **FREE Business Development Series** of 8 Classes, now ONLINE through ZOOM Meetings. The first Class starts **Tuesday, April 6, 2021 from 1:00 pm-2:30 pm** and others scheduled every week or two.

The Classes provide practical business advice, information on resources (*including mini-grants to buy equipment, supplies or other support for your business*) and ongoing individualized support to participants, families and staff through experienced Business Advisors. Business experts know how to develop good business plans, marketing ideas and set goals the person can achieve in the industry he/she launches.

The Series includes the following Classes: 1. Is Entrepreneurship (Self-Employment) Right for You? 2. Steps to Start a Small Business, 3. Identifying Your Target Market, 4. Developing an Effective "Elevator Speech" about Your Service/Product(s), 5. How to Write a Good Business Plan, 6. Finances, Bookkeeping, and Community Resources, 7. Marketing Your Business Idea, and 8. Using Social Media to Promote your Business.

**To Register for this Class or For More Information Call Claudia Lowe at 738-3960 or Sue Babin at 523-2300. (Participation Is Limited!)**



*This project is funded by the Governor's Workforce Board's and DLT's "Real Pathways RI" initiative.*



# Take Your Legislator to Work Event

## A Self-Employed Success!

This year's kick off to RI ASPE's 2020 signature event series, **Take Your Legislator to Work**, highlighted the value of employment equality and acknowledged the advocacy and work of a local business, "Red, White and Brew" and their shoppe annex "Budding Violets".

Joining Senator Jessica de la Cruz (Glocester, North Smithfield, Burriville) were owners and operators of Red White and Brew Sheila and Michael Coyne, and four young entrepreneurs with disabilities who are carving their own financial paths forward through Self-Employment. This opportunity could not have been possible without the vision of Sheila and her son Michael, who after attempting to become completely employed sought resource ownership and opened up their own coffee shop instead of working at an already-established business. Their vision was supported by a Department of Labor and Training grant-funded program spearheaded by Sue Babin of the RI Developmental Disabilities Council, namely a series of inclusive "Self-Employment" classes. These classes provided real-world resource and information as to how to develop a business plan and take one's passion and help turn it into profit.

Take Your Legislator to Work Day is a national initiative that raises awareness about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and underscores the belief that access to integrated employment is a human right to be shared by all regardless of ability. This event is a powerful opportunity for workers living with disabilities to showcase their skills and talents by bringing local legislators into their workplace where they can demonstrate first-hand the impact and value their efforts bring to the organization they work for, or in the case of Self-Employment, directly to patrons in the community!



ABOVE: Standing from left DD Director Kerri Zanchi, Joe Murphy (ORS and RIAPSE), Rory Carmondy (RIAPSE), Jay MacKay (BHDDH and RIAPSE), Senator Jessica de la Cruz, Kevin Nerney (RIDDC), BHDDH Director Kathryn Power RIGHT: From top left Nic V. of Rock Solid Creations, Jason T. of Jason's Creations, Jason W. of We Be Jammin', and Katie Lowe of Cheetah Greetings



Owners Sheila and Michael Coyne

The effort to educate and support our local legislators and legislators is an opportunity presented to all. Please consider supporting the Employment First cause through membership in RIAPSE.

Whether you are an employer looking to access a talented labor pool, a support professional interested in integrated employment, a family member or a working living with a disability, you have a place in RIAPSE.

If you are interested in membership or showcasing a worker, please contact Kie O'Donnell at: [kodonnell@fogartycenter.org](mailto:kodonnell@fogartycenter.org).

# Working While Disabled—Work Incentives Overview

**Registration Now Open!**  
**Work Incentive sessions for SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries**

## **SSI Sessions:**

March 15, 12-1 pm

April 10, 9:30-10:30 am

## **SSDI Sessions:**

March 27, 9:30-10:30 am

April 26, 12-1 pm

*Sessions will be offered on Zoom with subtitles in English.*



**REGISTER ONLINE at** <https://bit.ly/2KkUCVQ>

The Sherlock Center provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and those that support them (family, guardian, rep payee, professionals). These sessions will be of value to anyone looking for a basic introduction to disability-related work incentives and/or has related questions. Along with providing an overview of basic SSI or SSDI and related information, these sessions provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the following topics:

- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

Upon registration please share your questions.

NOTE: These sessions will not address how to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits.

**TIP:** Unsure if you receive SSI or SSDI? You can confirm which benefit you have at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

**Presented by Certified Work Incentives Counselors.**

**REGISTRATION IS LIMITED!** Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the session. You can access the session by computer, mobile device or listen using a cell or landline phone.

**Accommodation requests or registration questions:** Contact Elaine Sollecito at [esollecito@ric.edu](mailto:esollecito@ric.edu).

**Session questions:** Contact Vicki Ferrara at [vferrara@ric.edu](mailto:vferrara@ric.edu).



# PERSON-CENTERED THINKING FACILITATOR TRAINING

**Online Course  
April 5— June 15, 2021**

This free course is available to those supporting persons with I/DD living in R.I.

**Register by March 30, 2021**

## Course Description:

Rhode Island is in the process of expanding and refining Person-Centered practices throughout the state. One of the most important components of Person-Centered Thinking is the facilitator who advises and assists the person to actively participate in developing a plan for all domains of their life.

This course focuses on the knowledge and skills a facilitator needs to help individuals to:

- Prepare for the plan
- Develop the plan
- Implement the Plan

To get the most from this course, it is recommended that learners identify an individual with whom they might engage in person-centered planning. The course will provide the opportunity to practice the skills and knowledge learned and to reflect on learner experiences.

## Course Requirements:

Completion of the 11 online modules, assignments and participation in four (4) group sessions via Zoom is required to earn a certificate of completion.

## Course Details:

The Sherlock Center is now offering **Person-Centered Thinking Facilitator Training** as an online course. The next course runs from **April 5 to June 15, 2021**.

Learners will use Moodle, an online platform, to independently access course materials and assignments. Learners can access the course starting on April 5, 2021.

Learners will participate in four (4) required group sessions with the instructor. Course readings and assignments will align with the group sessions. These sessions will take place on Zoom from 10:00—11:30 AM on the following dates:

- **April 13, April 27, May 18, and June 15**

Learners are required to complete an orientation to Moodle and initial readings prior to the first group session on April 13. Details will be provided following registration.

## Technology Requirements:

To access Moodle and participate in the group sessions, learners will need a computer, laptop or tablet with internet access and a camera. We recommend using the latest version of **Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge**, or **Safari** for the best Moodle experience.

All course materials will be provided electronically using Moodle and/or email. It is recommended that learners install a free version of Adobe Reader on the device that will be used to participate in the course.

Every effort has been made to create this course and course documents in an accessible format.

**Registration:** <http://bit.ly/2xeV6pT>

Register online by **March 30** using the link above. You will receive a confirmation by email when your registration is processed. Registration and course information is also available on the Sherlock Center website at [www.sherlockcenter.org](http://www.sherlockcenter.org).

If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL/CART) to participate in this course, please indicate your request on the registration form as soon as possible.

The Sherlock Center will use the email provided with your registration to create an account in Moodle and to provide course information and updates.

For registration questions, contact Elaine Sollecito at [esollecito@ric.edu](mailto:esollecito@ric.edu) or Leave a message at 401-456-2764. Due to COVID-19 the Sherlock Center is open limited hours. Please allow extra time for staff to respond to messages.

