

# **CFAC Meeting Minutes**

## **August 10, 2006**

**Present:** Ken, Chris, Marcus, Leslie, Bradley, Steve, Heather, Pam, Cheryl, Allen, Edward, Megan, Rhonda, Michael B., Virginia, Dan, and Michael N.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the July meeting were reviewed, and a motion was made to approve them as written. The motion was seconded and carried.

### **REPORTS**

**Update from CFAC Chair:** Dan reported on the Child and Family Committee meeting of the OPC Board. He noted that they were tracking the number of kids in out-of-home placement. There seem to be more kids living at home than in placements these days, but they do not have data regarding how well the kids are doing.

**Update from OPC CFAC Liaison:** Michael N. introduced himself and, given that he is newly appointed as staff liaison to CFAC, asked members to be sure to let him know if there are things they are accustomed to getting from Billie so that he can provide them what they need.

Michael announced three upcoming conferences:

- The 2006 Convention of the ARCs of NC and SC, which will be held in Charlotte September 8-9;
- The annual Rights and Empowerment Conference, which will be held in Raleigh September 15-16; and
- The 2006 Annual Conference of the Mental Health Association in NC, which will be held in Wrightsville Beach September 27-28

Megan added that the conference for NC TASH was scheduled for November 29 – December 1, in Winston-Salem.

Michael also highlighted a few items in the Pass Around folder, including registration materials for the above conferences, as well as guidelines for the Participant Involvement Fund of the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities. This fund can reimburse some of the costs of attending events such as conferences and public forums.

**Update from State CFAC Liaison:** Michael B. briefly discussed House Bill 2077, which includes CFACs in the statutes for the first time. This is a positive change that can strengthen CFACs around the state, but it will involve some changes. Michael will discuss HB 2077 at length during our September meeting. He circulated a resource book he had put together that includes information on a variety of topics, including conferences and trainings. Michael also pointed out the Red Cross Disaster Preparedness Handbook, which members had received via email (and which was included in the Pass Around folder). He noted that it had excellent information and was quite thought provoking.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Review of last month's Brainstorming Session:** Ken reported in on his and Ellen's efforts to organize the ideas we generated last month into categories. He pointed out that we would need to clarify whether our efforts to reduce stigma would include all disabilities, or focus specifically on mental disabilities. Ken noted that this was a very ambitious undertaking, and asked whether CFAC was committed to taking it on. Pam reminded everyone that this was one of the 3 priorities CFAC members wanted to focus on for this year. After a brief discussion members agreed that this was a high priority for CFAC. While we may not be able to erase stigma altogether, we can make a real impact and that is an important contribution to our community.

Ken continued to summarize the organization of ideas that he and Ellen had developed, and members made additional comments and suggestions.

### 1. Educate the Community

The main idea that fit into this category was to make personal friends with people in power and ask them to take a journey with a disabled person to experience the challenges that can involve.

### 2. Empowering People

The ideas that fit into this category were:

- Invite someone from NAMI to speak about advocacy and how to be powerful. Virginia said she knows someone who is a lobbyist and would be willing to come to one of our meetings. Edward pointed out that this could be useful, because effective communication is a skill that would be useful in our efforts to share our stories with the goal of reducing stigma. CFAC agreed to have Virginia invite this speaker to our October meeting.
- Display our talents and knowledge; speak up about our own knowledge.
- Inspire people with other disabilities to organize/replicate the success of the DD advocacy efforts.
- Make noise – “the squeaky wheel gets the grease!” Don’t assume someone else is doing it for you.
- Empower people with disabilities by teaching them where to go and how to take care of themselves.
- Honor famous people (who are alive) with disabilities. Ken noted that it might be preferable to use famous people from the world of politics, rather than celebrities in the entertainment field. Michael B. pointed out that it would be important that anyone we include be self-disclosing about his or her disability. Virginia noted that Patty Duke was scheduled to make some appearances locally.

### 3. Use Schools

The ideas that fit into this category were:

- Create awareness through education, especially with kids, using methods like “show and tell.”
- Start efforts to reduce stigma with young people (start early); do advocacy and education in and with the schools. Ken suggested that the earlier this could start with children, the better. Michael B. noted that SAMHSA has archived a lot of materials on reducing stigma, and that some information was included in his resource book and the Pass Around folder. He offered to bring some of SAMHSA’s materials to our next meeting. Dan noted that these educational efforts could focus on both educating the community at large, as well as educating children who have family members with a disability. He asked whether books exist for younger children, and suggested coming up with a resource list. Virginia knows the mental health liaison for the local school system and offered to invite her to a future meeting.
- Groups for siblings of people with disabilities, who sometimes feel left out or overlooked.
- School groups for children of parents with addiction disorders or disabilities.
- Start up creative conflict resolution groups.
- Educate people about different disabilities. Bring people together to show how we’re all different, yet we’re all the same.
- Make sure that people are informed and educated that each disability type has great variety and experiences; one can’t categorize or stereotype.

### 4. Awareness

The ideas that fit into this category were:

- Provide a greater awareness and get to know people with disabilities/spend time with people with disabilities. Expose others to the variety that exists among people with disabilities, and show others that people with disabilities have talents.
- Teaching through being very inclusive.
- Develop a theater group comprised of people with disabilities and people without disabilities to show that harmony can and does exist (NC TASH is a good example of such a theatre group).
- There should be no “special” treatment, because *all* are special.

- Keep moving forward with the peer support conference, which is aimed at gathering people together to reduce stigma. This conference is inclusive of peer support for people with disabilities and people without disabilities.
- Develop meaningful work that responds to particular talents.
- Name the disability, don't use euphemisms. It is a "mental" disability. Display our talents and knowledge; speaking up about our own knowledge.
- Find ways to decrease internalized stigma.
- Create more opportunities for people in general. The group gave some examples of what opportunities already exist: Parks and Recreation; Club Nova; Carrboro; churches; Weaver St.; OE; kareoke; mental hospitals; the peer tree frame shop; schools; websites; a mental health softball team; Brushes With Life art gallery; big brothers/big sisters; girl/boy scouts; and compeer.

CFAC members acknowledged the importance of being open about who we are, and reaffirmed that reducing stigma is our highest priority. Edward commented that because we are a small group, we must be realistic about what we can do. But he pointed out that this is a diverse group with a lot of talents, and said he was impressed with the list of ideas for reducing stigma that we generated in our last meeting. Edward also noted that simply having people come in to meet with CFAC can help reduce stigma, because we give them a chance to see a diverse group of people with disabilities who work well together. Virginia added that sharing our stories makes us real, which is a powerful way to de-stigmatize. Chris noted that the use of the term "substance abuse" can sometimes be stigmatizing when the judgement of abuse becomes more important than the person.

CFAC members discussed what our next steps should be. Ken asked whether it made sense to have people step forward to take on different tasks? Some discussion followed about finding creative ways to get our stories out into the public awareness, and Pam noted that it's important that we not underestimate ourselves. Perhaps a first step could be to bring these questions to the speaker Virginia will invite to the October meeting of CFAC.

Since he was not able to attend last month, Dan checked in with members about their reactions to the process the facilitator used for the July meeting. Ken commented that the facilitator was great and was able to keep people focused. Edward observed that the facilitator brought a different energy and skill set to the group, and that he saw value in repeating the process periodically. Allen thought the topic was one that everyone could relate to and that it emphasized the fact that we are not alone. He found it rejuvenating. Cheryl noted that preparation for the PSI Conference is taking a lot of time and energy, but she pointed out that there was a good overlap between the conference and the goal of reducing stigma.

**PSI Conference Update:** The conference is scheduled for Friday, September 22 at Camp New Hope. Allen circulated brochures. This year's conference is focusing on peer support across the board, and is grouping up with persons without disabilities. Different peer groups will be at the conference as both presenters and attendees. Skill building will also be a focus. All CFAC members are welcome and encouraged to invite others. Virginia wondered whether we might want to invite influential people such as Verla Insko and Ellie Kinnaird. Edward noted that the space could accommodate about 70 people, and that the planning committee was hoping for at least 50 attendees.

**Peer Tree:** Dan congratulated Peer Tree on the excellent article that appeared in a recent addition of the Chapel Hill newspaper. Edward shared how the article impacted his daughter who is not disabled, which reminded Megan of some of the experiences of her siblings. She agreed with Dan that there can be a kind of "reverse discrimination" experienced by the siblings of people with disabilities.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Allocation of IPRS Funds:** Michael N. drew the group's attention to the Request for Recommendations attached to the agenda. OPC's Management Team is requesting CFAC input into the development of a process for allocating State money for services to consumers who are not eligible for Medicaid. Dan asked Michael to redistribute a list of service gaps that Billie had shared a few months ago, so that members could have that information when making recommendations. Michael will send that out via email. Meanwhile, members discussed the gaps that came to mind this evening.

- Rhonda noted that persons with Medicare who are not eligible for Medicaid often have difficulty because they cannot afford their co-pays. This is especially important during the early stages of recovery, when the need for frequent appointments is often higher.
- There are also many service gaps for people who are dually diagnosed with mental illness and substance abuse.

**The State Plan:** Michael B. explained that the State Plan, which is a blue print for reform, used to be revised annually. It will now be revised every three years, and is due to come out in October. There will be a 45-day period for public comment, and CFAC should prepare a written response.

**Disaster Plan:** Dan asked whether OPC has a Disaster Plan. Michael N. informed CFAC members that OPC had very recently begun to develop one, and promised to keep everyone updated.

**MH/SA Subcommittee of the Board:** Rhonda announced that Sarah Lugar had left OPC and that Tom Velivil (who had been coming to these meetings) would be the staff liaison for the time being. They had not been informed whether someone else would be hired into Sarah Lugar's position.

#### **NEXT MONTH'S AGENDA**

- Michael B. will review HB 2077 in detail.
- Further discussion of service gaps and allocation of state service dollars.

#### **WRAP-UP**

Dan checked in with each CFAC member about this evening's meeting. Bradley thought that trimming the agenda was really helpful. Pam said she is glad to be back. She is looking forward to reviewing our by-laws, and wondered whether we should also look at our mission statement at the same time.