

Mirage

mirage@dhs.county.allegheny.pa.us

Mirage is a team of stakeholders dedicated to providing resources to anyone committed to meeting the needs and interests of individuals in the intellectual disability (ID) service system as they age. Mirage is also invested in providing recommendations for supporting aging caregivers of individuals in the ID service system. These commitments are fulfilled through learning sessions and the Mirage Messenger emails. Learning sessions are offered several times a year. Mirage Messengers emails share resources, opportunities for education and caregiver support. Also, consultations are available to offer resource suggestions. The team is coordinated by representatives from Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Intellectual Disability (OID) and comprised of human services professionals from the aging and intellectual disability service systems. To be added to the Mirage distribution list, request a consultation or to reach us with questions email Mirage or call 412-253-1251.

History and background

Mirage grew from the Senior Enhancement Advisory Council (SEAC). SEAC began more than 25 years ago when a group of day and residential providers of intellectual disability (formerly mental retardation) services joined representatives from the county MH/MR and Aging offices to gain knowledge of aging services. By the late nineties the group changed their name to Mirage and through cross system trainings sought to improve the quality of life for older adults with a diagnosis of intellectual disability (ID).

Mirage became the Allegheny County team under the PA Joint Committee on Aging and ID. The Joint Committee's focus is supporting county teams across the commonwealth and the development of the annual Building Bridges Cross-systems Conference. From 1997 through 2014 an annual funding process through the PA Departments of Human Services and of Aging supported annual conferences and learning events.

Today, Mirage continues to promote and provide opportunity for cross-system collaboration and training through hosting learning sessions, sending the Mirage Messenger e-blast and providing consultations for resource recommendations.

Team members:



Hank Carik, AAA Dom Care
Carol Erzen, NHS-AVS
Lisa Evans, FamilyLinks
Steve Evrard, OID
Mary (Figlar) Evrard, OID
Paula Fischer, Milestone
Jill McKee, Lifespan of Pittsburgh
Jill Powell, Rankin Christian Center, Mon Valley Supports Coordination
Cheryl Pursley, KEPRO HCQU, the Southwestern PA Health Care Quality Unit (HCQU)
April Scherer, Family Services of Western PA
Brenda Slagle, AAA
Robyn Troetschel, FamilyLinks

Mirage would welcome new members. The team meets throughout the year at the Forest Hills OID office. Members may also participate by phone. Send request to mirage@dhs.county.allegheny.pa.us



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Learning Sessions:

Learning sessions are planned throughout the year with a focus on information of particular interest to AAA Care Managers and Service Coordinators and ID Supports Coordinators as well as providers of Aging and ID Services. While these professionals are the target audience, all stakeholders are welcome to attend. Sessions are scheduled at locations across the county and presented by professionals from many fields of expertise. Some learning sessions topics have been



- ~Person Directed Framework
- ~Trauma Support
- ~Deafness/Hard of Hearing/Deaf-Blindness and ID
- ~APPRISE: Coordination of Medicare with Medical Assistance Programs
- ~Aging, Dementia and ID
- ~Future Planning

The Mirage team shares information and materials regarding ID services, Aging services and the local HCQU and provides certificates of attendance at all sessions. Join the Mirage Messenger distribution list to stay up to date on scheduled Mirage sessions and as well as those through Links and other organizations. Also shared are opportunities for learning and support for nonprofessional caregivers.



Mirage Messenger:

Through the Mirage Messenger e-blast valuable resources and educational opportunities are shared and Mirage learning sessions are announced. All stakeholders are welcome to be added to the distribution list. Recent Mirage Messengers have included details regarding AAA and ID services, APPRISE / LINK lunch and learns and the PA Joint Committee annual cross-systems conference. Links to nutrition assistance, transportation sources and caregiver support programs have also been sent. Resources specific to individuals who are aging with ID have been provided from the [Southwestern Pa Health Care Quality Unit](#) *. These include details about various aging topics and a handbook on caring for someone with IDD and dementia. *<https://hcqu.kepro.com/Home.aspx>



Consultation and resource recommendations:

Through these 'case reviews' Mirage utilizes the service system and medical and community resource expertise of team members to offer recommendations that may benefit the service participant and/or their family/caregiver. Anyone can make a request, including:

- Service participants, their families and their caregivers
- ID Supports Coordinators and Aging Care Managers and Service Coordinators
- Provider staff

Do so by contacting Mirage via email. A Mirage team member will contact you to obtain any necessary information. Follow-up includes a written response and specific contact information for resources to the requester.