



DHS News

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Five questions with Myra McNeill

Myra is senior applied learning and development specialist for the Collaborative for Applied Learning, Trauma and Technical Support (CATTS) team in the Office of Administration (OA). She can be reached at Myra.McNeill@AlleghenyCounty.US.

1. What was your path to Allegheny County/DHS?

I came to DHS as the lead learning and development specialist in the Center for Learning and Development at the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). I had previously worked as the senior service learning leader at ModCloth, Inc. Before that, I ran programs in New York for children involved in mental health services, and in Pittsburgh I ran the children's programs at two homeless shelters.

2. Tell us a bit about the work you do.

On the CATTS team we provide training on the assessments as well as trauma-informed care. We also consult with teams and offices throughout DHS on the creation of learning products including trainings, educational videos, staff wellness, etc. In my personal work, I focus on curriculum development and evaluation planning and make sure that learning products have clear, measurable goals. I'm also involved in trainings for other offices within DHS including the Office of Equity and Engagement (OEE) and AAA, where I still lead their new employee orientation.

3. How does your work help to support DHS's mission and goals?

I strongly believe the better care you provide your staff, the better care they provide clients, and professional development is an important part of taking care of your staff. I'm here to help teams and leaders create learning products or opportunities that provide their staff with the knowledge or skills they need to support the people they serve. Making good use of our staff's valuable time is important to me, so creating learning that is engaging, relevant and meaningful is how I like to focus my work. My work supports the work of our agency by supporting our agency's workers – helping the helpers.

4. What most excites you about your work?

I really enjoy the creativity that curriculum development allows. Creating engaging content through activities, role plays, discussions, etc. is really fun. I'm always looking for new ways to engage people, whether through gamification, storytelling or visual media.

I find the challenge really exciting. I also enjoy the interactions I get to have with people around DHS and our provider network. Working with subject matter experts and translating their knowledge into a meaningful and engaging learning opportunity is one of my favorite things about my position.

5. What is the most important thing DHS staff should know about your role?

The CATTs team is here to help with any and all of your staff learning needs, and that isn't always a training. Sometimes it could be a game, infographic, video, facilitated discussion, survey, etc. and we can help you decide what would be best and then support you in the creation process. We are also really good at creating interactive training and are constantly staying on top of industry trends and translating them to the work we do here at DHS. From team building to agencywide training, we're here to make your learning and development goals a reality.