

AGING WELL WITH INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

A PROGRAM REVIEW

PREPARED BY SYDNEY MARSHMAN, OTD, OTR/L, BCG, CHES



HAPPY AT HOME

INTRODUCTION

Happy at Home Consulting is delighted to announce the successful completion of the ONTRAC mini grant awarded by Iowa's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the University of Iowa. This grant, funded by the Administration for Community Living's Community-Based Transition Grants, has significantly advanced our mission to support individuals aging with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

One of the primary achievements of this grant was the provision of seven educational sessions across the state, targeting both urban and rural areas. These sessions were designed to address the multifaceted challenges faced by individuals aging with IDD, focusing on their physical, mental, and social well-being. By offering one-hour educational sessions, we facilitated in-depth discussions on crucial topics such as:

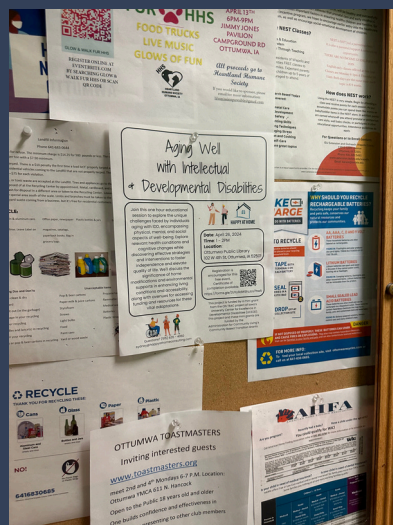
- **Accelerated Aging:** Individuals aging with IDD often face compounded health issues, requiring tailored strategies for management and prevention.
- **Mental Health Challenges:** The psychological impact of aging with IDD can be profound, necessitating specific interventions to support mental well-being.
- **Social Isolation:** The risk of social isolation is significant, and promoting engagement in community activities is vital for maintaining a high quality of life.



Equipment display for presentation in Creston at the public library.



Sydney displaying red grab bar donated by Ponte Giulio for the education sessions.



Flyer display at Ottumwa Public Library.

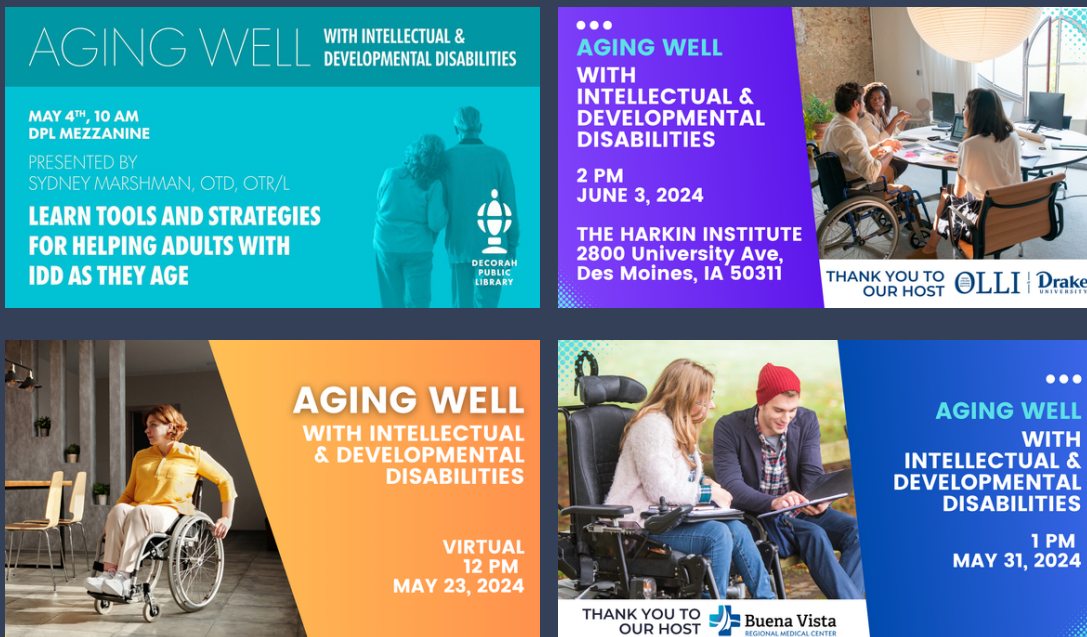
STRATEGIC IN-PERSON SESSIONS

The in-person sessions were strategically scheduled from April to June 2024 in each of the six area agency on aging regions across the state, including Marion, Storm Lake, Ottumwa, Des Moines, Creston, and Decorah. Four of the six education events took place in public libraries, which are designed to be accessible, inclusive spaces, and were phenomenal partners in helping share the education events within the community.

- **Storm Lake:** Hosted at the local hospital, providing the opportunity to educate healthcare professionals who may be working with care partners and individuals with IDD.
- **Des Moines:** Hosted in partnership with the Drake OLLI Center and Harkin Institute.

The events were attended by a multitude of stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, care partners, community health workers, and healthcare professionals. We marketed these events through various channels to ensure broad awareness and participation, including:

- **Professional Groups:** Leveraging networks and associations related to healthcare, disability support, and aging.
- **Community Organizations:** Collaborating with local nonprofits, support groups, and community centers to spread the word.
- **Paid Social Media Ads:** Utilizing targeted advertising on platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn to reach relevant audiences.



Social media graphics were utilized throughout programming to market upcoming events to target audiences.

Occupational Therapist to Speak on Aging with Disabilities



DecorahNews.com Staff Apr 21, 2024

DECORAH – Decorah Public Library is the hosting of a special program titled "Aging Well with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities" on May 4, 2024, at 10 a.m. This one-hour educational session is designed to address the unique challenges faced by individuals aging with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

The program, led by Dr. Sydney Marshman, licensed occupational therapist and founder of Happy at Home Consulting based in Des Moines, will explore the intricate physical, mental and social aspects of well-being in aging individuals with IDD. Attendees will gain insights into relevant health conditions, cognitive changes and effective strategies to foster independence and improve the quality of life for these individuals.

The session will cover the importance of home modifications and environmental supports, which play a crucial role in enhancing living conditions and accessibility. Participants will also learn about various avenues for accessing funding and resources essential for these vital adaptations.

Dr. Marshman formed Happy at Home Consulting in 2020. The organization focuses on providing in-home outpatient therapy services across Iowa, including physical, occupational and speech therapy as well as consultative services. Happy at Home Consulting collaborates with organizations on fall prevention initiatives and other evidence-based programs.

The program is funded by a mini grant from the ON TRAC project of University of Iowa's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD.) This project and these mini grants are funded by the Administration for Community Living's Community Based Transition Grants.

This program is a must-attend for caregivers, professionals and anyone interested in learning about the nuances of aging with IDD. It's an opportunity to understand more about creating supportive and adaptive environments that cater to the specific needs of this population.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Decorah Public Library at 563 382.3717 or visit decorahlibrary.org.

Decorah Public Library assisted in marketing the event through a series of social media posts (shown on prior page) and a press release to the local newspaper.

HOME MODIFICATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS

A significant portion of our educational outreach emphasized the importance of home modifications and environmental supports. We explored various adaptations that can improve living conditions and accessibility for individuals with IDD. These modifications not only enhance safety and comfort but also empower individuals to live more independently. Key topics included:

- **Types of Home Modifications:** Ranging from simple adjustments like grab bars and ramps to more extensive renovations tailored to individual needs.
- **Funding and Resources:** Information on how to access funding and resources for home modifications, including local, state, and federal programs.



At our educational events, we showcased a range of low-cost adaptive equipment and home modifications, with a special focus on options that are renter-friendly. These products provide practical solutions to enhance safety and accessibility for individuals aging with IDD. Our goal is to empower attendees with affordable and feasible ways to improve their living environments, ensuring comfort and independence without the need for extensive renovations.



Individuals with disabilities often rent due to financial constraints, flexibility needs, and the availability of accessible housing options. While these apartments may be accessible on paper, they often require continued problem solving to ensure the independent and safe use of the space as the individual's needs evolve. For example, this individual struggled to safely move boiling water from the stove to the sink to strain pasta.

CONSULTATION AND ADVOCACY

Our ONTRAC mini grant program has been instrumental in offering personalized consultation and advocacy services for individuals aging with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their care partners. Through these services, we have provided direct access to professional advice and support tailored to each individual's unique needs.

Our consultations focused on:

- **System Navigation:** Assisting individuals and their families in understanding and utilizing available healthcare services. We guided them through the complexities of Medicare, Medicaid, and other healthcare systems to ensure they received the necessary care and support.
- **Home Modifications:** Offering expert advice on making home environments safer and more accessible. This included recommendations for adaptive equipment, safety modifications, and funding resources.
- **Health and Wellness Strategies:** Providing personalized health management plans to address specific medical, physical, and mental health needs, ensuring a holistic approach to well-being.

We empowered individuals and their care partners with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively advocate for their rights and access to services:

- **Resource Connection:** Connecting families with local and state resources, including support groups, financial assistance programs, and legal aid services.
- **Community Engagement:** Encouraging active participation in community programs and initiatives to foster a sense of inclusion and support.

Our consultation and advocacy efforts have resulted in significant positive changes in the lives of many individuals with IDD and their families. By providing the tools and knowledge to navigate complex systems and advocate for themselves, we have helped them achieve greater independence, improved health outcomes, and enhanced quality of life.



My daughter Jessica has been struggling with a physical and mental disability that has culminated in her being wheelchair bound. Her hands have also atrophied making life very difficult for her to do many things. Within the last two years, she has been in the hospital several times with infections in her legs, which throws her back physically each time. She is at a fall risk. Even with physical therapy and occupational therapy, she continues to get worse.

In March of this year, she had a fall and laid on the floor for about four hours before she was found. The emotional and physical repercussions of that fall have been immense. She was not able to independently get off the toilet nor independently shower like she had prior. I have been researching and trying to find out options for the toilet. I called Plumbers and was told that the highest toilet they had was a 19 inch which would not have helped. I didn't know there was any other sizes . I have also made contact with other individuals to see what their thoughts were to improve things for my daughter. I finally got connected with Sydney at Happy Home Consulting who researched more to find ideas. We settled on installing a 21 inch toilet, which has made an immense amount a difference in my daughter's life and in my life. She is now able to get on and off the toilet without any assistance and is feeling much better about herself and her situation.

Because my daughter has so many things not working for her during her life I have spent a lot of money on devices and have taken on extra jobs to obtain items to help her be independent. I was so grateful for the grant that helped buy the toilet and the support and expertise Sydney offered us. I will be honest when I was on the phone talking with Sydney I was very emotional because it is so stressful dealing with things on my own.

Thank you, thank you thank you!

*-Aging Well with IDD
Program Participant*



COMMUNITY IMPACT

The grassroots nature of our educational events fostered a sense of community and support among participants. These events provided a platform for individuals with IDD and their care partners to share experiences, challenges, and solutions. The positive feedback and high engagement levels at these events underscore the value of such community-based initiatives.

The ONTRAC mini grant has been instrumental in advancing our mission to support individuals aging with IDD. Through statewide educational sessions, focused consultations, and advocacy efforts, we have made significant strides in improving the quality of life for this underserved population. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Iowa's UCEDD and the Administration for Community Living for their support and look forward to continuing our work in this vital area.

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I am incredibly grateful to Happy at Home Consulting for their support and generosity. As a disabled adult, I faced many challenges in my daily life, especially in the kitchen. Thanks to Happy at Home Consulting, I received essential kitchen tools free of charge. These tools have improved my ability to cook and maintain my independence at home. Little things like that can have a real impact on my life and I couldn't be more appreciative. I wholeheartedly recommend Happy at Home Consulting to anyone in need of support to live safely and comfortably in their own home. Their expertise and kindness have made a true difference for me.

*-Aging Well with IDD
Program Participant*

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ABOUT US

Happy at Home Consulting formed in March 2020 to better serve older adults wishing to age at home in Central Iowa. Our organization has grown to provide statewide support to individuals across the lifespan. Often our services are provided in the home to ensure an individualized program to achieve maximum potential. Our team identifies areas of opportunity for the individual to improve their ability to age well at home which may include fall prevention strategies, exercise programming, and home modifications. We work with several community partners to provide appropriate referrals for clients regardless of age, income, or home ownership status.

SYDNEY MARSHMAN

Sydney Marshman, OTD, OTR/L, BCG, CHES is the founder and occupational therapist with Happy at Home Consulting based in Des Moines, Iowa.

Happy at Home Consulting provides therapy at home with her team of physical, occupational and speech therapists. In addition to traditional rehabilitative services, Sydney continues to increase access to home modification assessments throughout the state. She works alongside builders and interior designers to craft beautiful, functional spaces. Sydney is the current President of the Iowa Occupational Therapy Association and advocates for accessible housing through her involvement with multiple state coalitions. She received her Doctorate of Occupational Therapy from Drake University and received her AOTA Board Certification in Gerontology.

