

Regional Quality Council Quarterly Update December 2020

The last few months have been exciting for the Regional Quality Councils (RQCs)! This quarterly newsletter will include a staff update, overview of RQC collaborative work, and region-specific updates on quality improvement work.

General Updates

The Regional Quality Councils want to welcome Susannah Gressman to the team! Susannah will be the Arrowhead Quality Council Program Coordinator based out of The Arc Northland. She earned her Bachelors degree in Education from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, served fifteen years fulltime with the MN Air National Guard and earned a Masters degree in Aging Services Management from the Department of Gerontology at the University of Southern California. We are happy to have you, Susannah!

Regional Quality Council Collaborations

Culture of Safety

The three Regional Quality Councils have voted to collaborate with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to support their Culture of Safety pilot project. DHS began this work in 2019 to better understand the systemic influences of critical incidents. The goal of this project is to utilize Safety Science to shift the safety culture away from blame to one of accountability and prevention. By understanding the systemic and environmental factors that contribute to critical incidents, the RQCs will make recommendations to DHS on how to better support staff, providers, and people with disabilities to create systems that prevent harm rather than respond to it.

The RQC managers have participated in the Collaborative Safety Advanced Practical Training to learn more about Safety Science and develop the tools and skills to engage in this work.

Presentations

In September, the RQCs gave a presentation as part of the Support Planning Professionals Learning Community (SPPLC) webinar. The SPPLC meets monthly to discuss the most recent person-centered updates and initiatives. This group is made of care coordinators, case managers, person-centered planners, support planners and more. In this webinar, we discussed the RQC history and background as well as the Person-Centered Quality Review process and results. There were 388 participants in this webinar!

In October, the RQCs participated in a Marketplace Presentation as part of Minnesota's Gathering for Person-Centered Practices. In this conference, people and professionals come together to learn about and advance person-centered thinking and practices. In this presentation, we covered RQC background and history as well as the Quality Review process and results. We also talked about specific quality improvement work being planned and

implemented in each region to improve person-centered practices and overall quality of life for people with disabilities.

The goals of these presentations were to raise awareness of the RQCs and to provide participants with actionable information on best practices and challenges/barriers to take back to and influence their own work.

Region 10 Quality Council (R10QC)

Direct Support Workgroup

Region 10 Quality Council is working to increase awareness of and support of direct care staff in our region. To do this we have been:

- Planning, scheduling and presenting the short film “Invaluable – The Unrecognized Profession of Direct Support” to various groups to raise awareness around who Direct Support Professionals are, and the important role they play in the lives of people with disabilities. Data will be collected before and after the film presentation, via a short survey, gauge knowledge and awareness around this profession.
- Working to submit human interest stories to local newspapers to highlight the impact that DSPs have on the lives of people with disabilities.
- Working to create “Story Cards” to present to legislators and community members, which will tell the story of What is a DSP: What do DSPs do.

Building Relationships and Natural Supports:

Region 10 Quality Council continues to advance our work around building relationships and natural supports.

- Community Conversations have been planned and scheduled with various community groups to talk about the importance of community connectedness and to build a stronger sense of awareness, welcome, and inclusion in communities where people with disabilities reside.
- Data from the Community Conversation will be captured and analyzed to create a slate of best practices and barriers to supporting people in becoming and staying connected in their communities
- A public awareness campaign will be developed to share best practices and barriers, and to highlight the need and importance of community support.

Connecting People Through Technology

The Region 10 Quality Council is working to support people in connecting, and staying connected, to their community through technology.

- A new Region 10 Quality Improvement Work page on the Regional Quality Council website is being developed.

- A comprehensive list of Software App Resources, Hardware Resources, Helpful Websites, and Online Training/Education is being developed that will be housed on the Region 10 Quality Council Quality Improvement Work page as a “Get Connected” Resource Toolbox.
- Focus groups will be consulted, and data will be collected and reviewed, to determine what about the Toolbox is helpful, what are we missing, and what needs to be changed.
- Toolbox is planned to go live Spring 2021 and a public communication plan is being developed.

Arrowhead Regional Quality Council (ARQC)

Resource Binder

The Arrowhead RQC began developing a comprehensive resource tool of community services in the Arrowhead region. This guide will be accessible to people with disabilities, family members/guardians, support staff, service providers, and all stakeholder groups.

- Developed an outline for resource binder and reviewed its contents with the quality improvement workgroup members for feedback and input
- Drafted table of contents with images for accessibility
- Reviewed structure and layout with Program Coordinator; Program Coordinator is currently reviewing Arrowhead’s resources to ensure the binder is comprehensive of all resources for people with disabilities, their families, and other support persons
- Shared new and innovative resources with laptop recipients; the Program Coordinator made follow-up phone calls with individuals who have received a laptop through ARQC funds to share technology resource information, assistance, and training support.

Promoting Person-Centered Strategies and Informed Decision Making

Person-centered strategies and philosophy are at the core of the Arrowhead RQC work. Throughout this project, people with disabilities and self-advocates will be able to tell their own personal success stories and explain why person-centered planning was an important part of the process for them to reach their goals and live their best life.

- Arrowhead RQC staff facilitated multiple focus groups with people who receive services on the topic person-centered planning
- Shared resources and information on Zoom with focus group participants
- Helped people make meaningful connections with peers
- Arrowhead RQC staff facilitated discussions with three disability service professionals on the topic person-centered planning
- Began developing marketing and outreach plan for future focus groups with people who receive services and information gathering from stakeholder groups

- Program Manager began drafting 'story script' for project; the quality improvement workgroup reviewed and made recommendations
- Data workgroup reviewed focus group script for guardianship alternatives; focus groups on this topic will begin in February 2021

Connections in Rural Communities

A goal of the Arrowhead RQC is to connect and engage with rural communities. We want to share resources and best practices to help improve services and supports for people with disabilities. The objectives of our project include, but are not limited to, presentations and outreach to build relationships, facilitating listening sessions to give people in the community an opportunity to share their voice, and sharing results and recommendations as follow-up to what we have learned. The Arrowhead RQC hopes to utilize grant funds, if available, to meet needs identified by the community.

- Data workgroup developed questions for community listening sessions
- Quality improvement workgroup reviewed flyer for community listening sessions in rural areas and made recommendations for changes
- Both workgroups strategized marketing and outreach efforts for the project; began developing list for outreach
- Collaborated with University of Wisconsin, Psychology students on first draft of a technology needs assessment

Metro Regional Quality Council (MRQC)

General Updates

- The Metro Regional Quality Council (MRQC) submitted our 2020 Annual Report to the Department of Human Services (DHS). This document outlines all of the data collected and quality improvement progress made in 2020 as well as a robust set of recommendations for systems change. Read the full report on our website: <https://qualitycouncilmn.org/metro-regional-quality-annual-report/>
- The MRQC utilizes the Disability Justice principles as a framework to guide our work. To stay actionable and intentional within this framework, we have developed an accountability chart that defines each principle, discusses our goal outcomes, and outlines the work we are doing within each principle. Access the accountability chart here: <https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Framework-for-Disability-Justice-11.2020-2.pdf>

Employment

The Metro Regional Quality Council (MRQC) continues to work towards improving employment experiences and outcomes for people with disabilities.

We Work! Employment Campaign

The Metro Regional Quality Council (MRQC) has continued our We Work! social media campaign on empowered employment. The goal of this campaign is to educate the general public and employers on the benefits of employing people with disabilities. In this campaign, we emphasize capability and power and will discuss current unfair, yet legal, practices.

Our We Work! videos are posted and shared on our Facebook page and website:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MRQCMN>
- Website: <https://qualitycouncilmn.org/metro-quality-improvement-work/>

Employment Systems Change

- In September, the Metro Regional Quality Council published our Employment Report, which outlines the current status of employment for people with disabilities and covers employment data, best practices, and challenges/barriers collected by the Metro Regional Quality Council. There were 10 robust recommendations made to DHS and DEED to improve employment experiences and outcomes. You can access the report on our website: <https://qualitycouncilmn.org/wp-content/uploads/MRQC-Employment-Report-9.25.2020.pdf>
- MRQC staff were involved in a workgroup to revise The Arc Minnesota's Employment Position statement to continue to support competitive, integrated employment and to include language on phasing out subminimum wage and segregated employment. This position statement was approved by The Arc Minnesota's board in November: <https://arcminnesota.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Employment.pdf>
- MRQC staff are involved in an interagency Employment Systems Transformation workgroup. This group is working on strengthening existing legislation and developing new legislation that will promote competitive, integrated employment and equitable wages for people with disabilities. More updates to come!

Support Staff

The Metro Regional Quality Council Support Staff Shortage Workgroup is focused on building viable careers for support staff. This quarter, we have made the following progress in this work:

- Determined and planned the quality improvement project on support staff recruitment, retention, and turnover prevention
- Developed surveys for provider agency leadership, support staff, and service recipients
- Developed and offered focus groups for service recipients who didn't want to participate via survey
- Signed Memorandums of Understanding with Living Well Disability Services and Hammer Residences, Inc. to implement project
- Sent out surveys in partnership with Living Well Disability Services and received
 - 133 responses from support staff
 - 19 responses from members of leadership
 - 12 responses from service recipients

- Analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from Living Well Disability Services surveys
- Sent out surveys and still receiving responses from Hammer Residences, Inc.
- Will continue to analyze data and compile a report for each service provider as well as a list of tailored recommendations with resources to improve recruitment and retention of quality support staff.

Self-Advocacy

The Metro Regional Quality Council staff has provided ongoing supervision and support to The Arc Minnesota's self-advocacy initiatives:

- Weekly Self-Advocate Zoom Happy Hour
- Weekly planning meetings for the Future Leaders of Self-Advocacy Training
- Monthly Self-Advocate Advisory Committee meetings
- Bi-monthly Arc at the Movies
- Bi-monthly Calling all Self-Advocates statewide meeting