Promoting Communication Navigation Essentials Toolkit to Your Team

Leadership Essentials Guidance

Administrators, supervisors, and team leaders are often the connector for their team's engagement in training and access to resources. Below are some suggestions on how to promote interest in and encourage the use of the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit among your team members. Also refer to the general guidance included in Promoting Navigation Essentials Toolkits to Your Team for additional information and ideas when using toolkits for staff training. This general guidance is found in the *Leaders' Essentials* toolkit.

Consider using the ideas below to promote the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit.

- **Include in Email Communications.** Email the link for the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit to the team. Although many people are familiar with the importance of communication, explain that this toolkit offers insights about supporting the communication process for youth with complex needs. Encourage the team to review the toolkit to learn about or refresh their understanding of communication and strategies that can be implemented immediately to enhance effective communication.

- **Social Media.** Use social media to draw attention to the resources in the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit. Post the link for this toolkit and suggest that the information in this toolkit is foundational and everyone, regardless of the role, agency, or organization should use the strategies included in the toolkit.

  Consider using social media during associated awareness months to draw attention to the content in the toolkit. October is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Awareness Month and May is National Speech-Language-Hearing Month. These months are an ideal time to recognize the importance of the information in the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit and highlight the importance of the role of the speech-language pathologist on the MSY team.

- **In the Moment.** Identifying information in the toolkit that is immediately useful can be one of the best ways to promote ongoing use of the toolkit. The *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit can easily provide this type of 'in the moment' information. For example, when working with a youth that appears to struggle with understanding directions, questions, or choices, modeling the use of wait time and a question asking protocol can be done with little preparation. The resulting response of the youth is often unexpected and can draw attention to the power of the strategy. Suggest that the team then review the videos and brief documents in the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit. Interest and use of the toolkit will quickly increase when the information can be applied in the moment to help solve a problem.

- ***Navigation Essentials* Spotlight.** Consider creating a recurring opportunity to call attention to the *Navigation Essentials* toolkits. This can be a virtual event, a monthly email, an informal gathering, or part of another meeting. The *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit can be promoted during a *Navigation Essentials* Spotlight by presenting the titles of the videos in the toolkit and posing questions such as, "How much does your communication style impact the success of the communication process with others? Did you know that choice making may need to be taught? How much do you know about visual supports? Learn more in the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit." If the spotlight is an email, provide the direct link to the selected video.

- **Communication Tips Documents.** Download and share with the team one of the documents in the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit that offers tips on communication strategies. These documents found in the "Do" download section of the toolkit offer ideas for improving choice making, using visual supports, and enhancing communication by modifying the adult's actions. Encourage the team to review the videos and additional documents in the toolkit.

- **Recognize Team Members' Contributions.** Take opportunities to recognize a team member for exploring the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit and for sharing with others. This can be done casually in a conversation with a few people or during a meeting when asking if anyone has explored the toolkit. Even a small recognition can encourage a team member to continue to use the toolkit and can create curiosity in others about the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit.

Promote *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit as a resource for Professional Development.

- **Multi-System Resource.** Understanding the complexity of communication and how to support the communication process is critical for every person that teaches or supports youth with IDD and behavioral health needs. The *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit is a perfect resource for those that are just beginning to explore these topics or for those that have a foundation and are ready to dig deeper. Suggest using this toolkit in professional development and training for a multi-agency/multi-disciplinary group.

- **Speech-Language Pathologist Support.** Share the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit with the speech-language pathologist (SLP) on your team. Ask the SLP to review the toolkit and highlight information or offer suggestions for use in professional development.

- **New Staff.** Include the information about the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit when onboarding new staff that will be working with youth with IDD and behavioral health needs. The toolkit can also be used for new staff at the ICF or school. Newly hired staff are often motivated to engage in resources that connect with their role, making this an optimal time to promote the entire set of *Navigation Essentials* toolkits.

- **School District Teams.** Share the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit with Building Leadership Teams (BLT) and Teacher Based Teams (TBT). The videos and resources included in the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit will help teachers better understand the importance of using a broad range of strategies to support communication in the classroom. Teachers will also appreciate the included tools that will help explain communication strategies that all adults interacting with youth should be using throughout the school day. Include related service personnel and related arts personnel when sharing information about the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit with the team.

- **Resource for Professional Development Plans.** The foundational information, strategies, and tools included in the *Communication Navigation Essentials* toolkit will meet the professional development needs of many teachers. As the toolkit is both convenient and immediately relevant in the daily practice, it is an ideal resource to include in Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP) that focus on positive behavior supports, inclusive practices, specialized instruction, social-emotional development, and student engagement.