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ASERT Spotlight: Ziggie, Certified Peer Specialist (CPS)

The role of a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) is to share the tools, skills, and information they have learned with individuals going through similar struggles. To be certified, the person must have received specific training in the role, functions, and skills of the Certified Peer Specialist position.

How long have you been a CPS?

I acquired my CPS in 2017 from the Institute for Recovery & Community Integration, and I obtained an additional state CPS certification in 2019.

What made you want to become a CPS?

I wanted to model wellness for those navigating through the mental healthcare system. When I dealt with my own mental health concerns, I understood how isolating it can be. A CPS is someone who empathizes with others because we've gone through similar experiences.

What process did you go through to become a CPS?

First, I was interviewed. Your score during that interview determines if you're eligible to take the class afterward to become a CPS. I also have to obtain 18 CEU's every year related to mental health to maintain my certification.

What's one lesson that stood out during your CPS training?

My instructor said: Only do CPS work when you're well enough to do it. Don't compromise your own mental health, your own wellness has to take priority before CPS work.



Statewide Quality Assessment and Improvement (QA&I) Process Meeting for Adult Autism Waiver (AAW) Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs) and Providers

Beginning July 1, 2019, the Bureau of Autism Services (BAS) will begin the QA&I process for all AAW SCOs and Providers. To help prepare for this change, BAS is hosting a face to-face meeting from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on June 19, 2019 at the Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg-Hershey (4751 Lindle Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17111). The face-to-face meeting will include a comprehensive overview of the entire QA&I process with a focus on ODP, SCO and Provider roles, responsibilities and collaboration.



ODP Relaunches Positive Approaches Journal

It is with great enthusiasm that the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) announce the relaunching of the Positive Approaches Journal, written by and for professionals who provide supports and services to individuals with mental and behavioral health challenges, intellectual disabilities, autism, and other developmental disabilities. You can read the [Positive Approaches Journal on MyODP.](#)

ISAC Member Receives SARTAC Fellowship Award

Michelle Middlemiss, self-advocate and member of the ODP Information and Sharing Advisory Committee (ISAC), is among the 2019-2020 Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) Fellowship Award recipients. Learn more about this year's [SARTAC Fellows and Michelle's project](#).

Stay Connected!

Want to receive the latest ODP updates, training opportunities, and newsletters? Subscribe by emailing RA-PWODP_OUTREACH@pa.gov.



Events and Trainings

Featured Events

- 6.4.19 - [Introduction to Autism for Parents and Caregivers of Children](#)
- 6.5.19 - [Sturgis Playground Community Health Fair](#)
- 6.6.19 - [Dual Diagnosis Professional Conference Series, Peer Supports - Mutual Learning](#)
- 6.6.19 - [Intellectual Disability and Autism Waiver Presentation](#)
- 6.11.19 - [Children's Museum of Pittsburgh: Sensory Friendly Tuesday Afternoon](#)
- 6.12.19 - [The Fatal 4](#)
- 6.17.19 - [The June Summit: Speaking Up for Yourself and Others](#)
- 6.26.19 - [Supporting Healthy Sexuality](#)
- 6.27.19 - [Building Awareness & Capacity in Response to the Sexual Abuse of People with DD](#)
- 6.28.19 - [Effective Practice for Students with an ID, including Down Syndrome and Autism](#)
- 6.29.19 - [Little Lake Theater Sensory-Friendly](#)

[Click here for a full list of events.](#)



Resource Spotlight

Tips for a Successful Vacation

Going on vacation is usually a fun and exciting time for families, but for children with autism, it can be stressful. These information sheets from ASERT provide tips for planning a hotel stay, as well as visiting an amusement park.

Additionally, PA has some new Certified Autism Centers, including [The Elmwood Park Zoo](#), [Kennywood](#), and [Sesame Place](#)!



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