



Advancing the human and civil rights of people with disabilities

SELF-ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE ★ LEGAL SERVICES ★ DISABILITY RIGHTS EDUCATION ★ PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY ★ ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

May 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Equip for Equality is the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy organization for Illinois providing a variety of services to people with disabilities. Since the early 1990's we have utilized Lana Norwood's company LRA to provide training to our staff and have worked very closely with Ms. Norwood in connection with several major studies of various systems in Illinois addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Ms. Norwood's unique skills and insights on abuse and neglect, incident management and public policy research have been invaluable to this organization.

Equip for Equality has utilized LRA's training program, Conducting Serious Incident Investigations, for purposes of training Equip for Equality staff. One of the trainings was opened to staff from several state investigatory agencies. The trainings are always well received, extremely thorough and examine critical elements necessary for effective incident investigation in a variety of settings.

The quality of the incident investigation trainings stems from Ms. Norwood's vast expertise in analyzing systems, identifying areas for improvement and developing effective recommendations. As a result of that expertise, we sought to collaborate with LRA in the development of a research tool and procedure to effectively review the quality of a state investigatory agency's work. LRA analyzed the data collected and was instrumental in developing recommendations to enhance the quality of the state agency's investigations. A subsequent study of the agency's work utilizing the same research tool revealed substantial improvement in the quality of the investigations.

LRA and Equip for Equality also developed a process by which to collect information regarding the use of restraints in the State Mental Health Hospital system and the research tool necessary to analyze that information. LRA analyzed the data collected during that study and consulted in the development of recommendations leading to a reduction in the use of restraints in that system.

LRA and Equip for Equality have collaborated in the development of a tool to analyze compliance with state and federal regulations and standards on the use of restraints in the private hospital system. LRA examined the policies of 25 hospitals through the use of that tool and prepared a substantial report on the findings revealed by that examination.

Most recently, LRA and Equip for Equality engaged in a collaborative public policy research project, a national study on restraint related deaths. Along with several national experts, Ms. Norwood was instrumental in developing a comprehensive method to examine restraint related deaths. Utilizing that method, sixty-two deaths of children and adults in various settings across

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the country were examined and a detailed report of those deaths with findings and critical recommendations was released.

As a result of our experiences with Ms. Norwood and LRA, we can highly recommend its training and consulting services. I am sure that you will find as we always have that Ms. Norwood is an invaluable and enthusiastic partner whose expertise and insights will ensure the success of any training program or project that is undertaken. Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah M. Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "D" and "K".

Deborah M. Kennedy
Vice President, Abuse Investigation Unit