

**Department of Developmental Services (DDS)**  
**Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC)**

Meeting Minutes  
**November 16-17, 2021**

<b><u>Members Attended</u></b>	<b><u>Others Attended</u></b>
Deaka McClain	Nicole Patterson
Shawn Costello	Sara Desumala
Tracey Mensch	Michael Shepard
Kim Rucker	Catherine Blakemore
Sam Yi	Vickki Williams
Sylvia Delgado	Patricia Reed
Amy Lampe	Katie Hornberger
Charles Nutt	
Trina Castro	
Caycee Ricketts	
<b><u>Members Absent</u></b>	
Tim Farrar	
Craig Moorman	
James Wilson	
Ryan Nelson	

**NOVEMBER 16, 2022**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairperson, Deaka McClain called the meeting to order at 10:07 am

- A. Everyone introduced themselves
- B. Video Conference Zoom Ground Rules were read.
- C. The agenda was reviewed, and no changes were made. **It was moved** (Kim Rucker), **seconded** (Tracey Mensch), **and carried to approve the agenda.**
- D. The minutes for June 09, 2021 CAC meeting were reviewed. **It was moved** (Tracey Mensch) **seconded**, (Charles Nutt), and **carried to approve the minutes.**

**2. ABUSE/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV)- STORIES**

Deaka McClain gave overview about the CAC's Health and Safety project. The first subject the CAC decided on was the topic of abuse. Deaka introduced Vickki Williams to share about their nonprofit Divine Ministries and share her story about being a victim of domestic violence.

- Deaka and Vickki met while to school. Deaka was is going to school for media and Vicki was going to school for drugs and alcohol counseling. The way they start working together was through a school project that Vicki needed to do, and they decided to do it on domestic violence and having Vicki share her story through a documentary.
- Divine Ministries purpose is to go into the communities and empower, bring awareness and education about social issues. It seemed that they just kept coming back to domestic violence and that became their main focus,

because it is one topic that touched every community, it didn't discriminate.

- The calendar project is to raise money to help individuals transition from a domestic violence situation. An example could be the person that's in the abusive situation may not have the money to leave. They may not have anywhere to go; they might need a place to stay. We provide financial support for them to stay in a room or hotel until they get into a shelter.
  - They do presentations in the community, places like, women and children shelter, drug and alcohol program, etc.
  - Young Adult Mentor Program
  - They do podcast every Sunday at 7pm on Facebook
- Vicki start her story by giving some back on her life as a teenager, she was raised in a two home family to two children, two parent home family, but for some reason she was interested in hanging out with crowds that may not have been good for her at the time, experimenting with different things and people.
  - She was at work one day when she met this guy while working the cash register. They begin dating and later she found out he a lot older than she thought, but he was fun and before she knew it, she fell in love.
  - Vicki recalls one day then they were visiting a friend. She did something wrong in his way of thinking, this was the first he showed her his temper. The first time the abuse got physical was when she was six months pregnant with their first child together and he slapped her. She would have never thought in her wildest dreams that she would be dealing with physical abuse pregnant. He became more and more aggressive, dominating, and abusive as time went on.

- She tried to leave him so many times, he would always fight her. When she told him the truth about why she was leaving him, he was able to accept it. Because the truth was important to him in his relationships. By doing that, she received her freedom from that situation. She knows that that doesn't work for every relationship.

When dealing with these types of situations you must educate yourself about what is available to you. It is important for you to know the person you are in a relationship. Get help from someone you trust to help you get out of the situation in the safest way possible.

### 3. **FAIR HEARING PROCESS**

Katie Hornberger, Catherine Blakemore, and Stephanie Johnson came from DDS to talk to the CAC about updates they are making to the fair hearing process. They are looking for ways to improve process to make it easier for people.

- Stephanie gave an overview of the current Fair Hearing process.
  - the hearing process happens when a consumer or their family member or legal representative and the regional center disagree. Disagreements can happen when a regional center denies or changes services. The consumer or family member does not agree.
    - ✓ the very first thing that could happen is some regional centers may send a notice of action. This notify you of any changes that are being made, and why, and you can do about if you don't agree.
    - ✓ then the consumer and/or family can decide if you want to request a fair hearing. The Fair Hearing gives you an opportunity to

discuss the disagreement further with the regional center.

- There are a few steps that can happen while waiting for the Fair hearing date.
- could have an informal meeting so people can go back and meet with your Regional Center and talk about the decision that was made. This is time for both parties try to understand each other point of view. This also can be the time where the issues can be resolve.
- Another one is mediation where somebody who doesn't know you, or your regional center would come and help you and your regional center come to an agreement.
- ✓ All these things can happen before the fair hearing date, but if you still disagree, then you will move forward with the fair hearing where you go in front of a judge.
- ✓ During this time your services will be continued until a decision is made.
- Katie asked the CAC a few questions that she wanted them to think about for tomorrow's discussion.
  - How have you ever learned about your fair hearing rights?
  - How could more self-advocates learn about fair hearing rights?
  - Have you ever received a Notice of Action (NOA)?
  - Did you understand your NOA?
  - Did anyone help explain your NOA?

- How can we help make the NOA more understandable?
- What are some ideas about the best way to resolve disagreements with your regional center?
- Do self-advocates feel respected and listened to during the fair hearing process?

**NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

## **1. ABUSE/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV)- STORIES** **CONTINUE**

Deaka started by shares her story of how her anger led to her becoming the abuser.

- Anger is an emotion that is depicted by resentment, bitterness, and/or hatred toward someone or something that we may feel has harmed us or done us wrong.
- Deaka shares how she was more comfortable with her feelings of anger then her feelings of vulnerability.
- She has a selective group of individuals to be her support system. She had to learn her triggers and coping skills, listening to music, and read and talk to support system where they allow me the opportunity to vent.
  - Educate yourself on physical, emotional, financial abuse
  - Know your triggers and finds ways to manage your anger
  - Investigate and learn your own coping skills that works for you
  - Attend support groups
  - Select your own personal support network of friends or family that you trust

- Studies have shown in the past women were more likely to be the ones abused in relationships, but a study in 2014 showed a 30-40% increase in domestic abuse directed toward men. Women also have a higher rate of abusing men by engaging in continuous psychological abuse such as shame, belittling, and intimidation.
- 2016 study conducted by the University of Michigan, it is estimated that as many as 40 percent of women with disabilities experience sexual assault or physical violence in their lifetimes and that more than 90 percent of all people with developmental disabilities will experience sexual assault.

Deaka also shares how caregivers can be the abuser and how sometimes it takes someone on the outside looking in to show you. This person helped her understand she did not have to continue to feel trapped and her caregivers made her feel at the time they were the only ones who could assist her once she realized this wasn't true she began to slowly find other ways of support and prepared to leave so the healing could begin.

- Caregivers may withhold medical care, inappropriately restrict movement, steal, and use Social Security payments or deprive victims of necessary physical accommodations People with disabilities are especially vulnerable to becoming victims of crime and abuse because they are often dependent on others.
  - ✓ People with disabilities make up nearly one-fifth of the U.S. population, and they are four to 10 times more likely to be abused and at least twice as likely to be victims of violent victimization as people without disabilities.

- ✓ Anger is a secondary emotion and generally covers other more vulnerable feelings such as fear, humiliation, sadness, and hurt. The primary feeling is what is felt immediately before the anger. People quickly resort to anger to cover up acknowledging this vulnerable feeling – which may be why anger problems tend to be more common in males.

Deaka mention the importance of being safe online using your cell phones and computers always keep in mind what they're sharing with others through texts and social because predators are always watching.

## 2. **FAIR HEARING PROCESS CONTENUED**

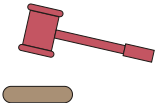
Katie and Stephanie continued the talk from yesterday to the CAC about their thoughts on the Notice of action form and how it can be easier to use.

- The print needs to be larger
- graphics for nonreaders
- Trainings on the fair hearing process and how to use the form.
- People are only notified about the fair hearing process through their annual IPP it needs to have other opportunities to learn about the process.
- Requiring all regional centers to provide mediation. Also requiring the decision makers to be present to discuss their decision and to hear why the person can explain to them directly.
- Giving people someone to call to help them understand the form, would be helpful



- Putting the form into plain language, make it less confusing.
- Maybe informing consumers and families about when they receive something like an email from the regional center it's ok to disagree with what is being stated and saying it to the regional center.

Katie and Stephanie told the CAC if they think of any other ideas or questions they can always email them at Johnson, [Stephanie.Johnson@dds.ca.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Johnson@dds.ca.gov) or [Katie.Hornberger@dds.ca.gov](mailto:Katie.Hornberger@dds.ca.gov)



### 3. **END MEETING**

Ryan Nelson, Chairperson at adjourned the meeting at 12:02pm

**Next CAC meeting will be February 16, 2022- Dates may change**