

Incorporating **Inclusion**

as a Model for

Self-Advocacy

Nancy Alar Judy Endow Jane Pribek



/Authsm Society of Wisconsin



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AUsome Social Group

The Idea

Madison, Wisconsin ASA chapter Panel discussion with 4 teens on the spectrum in 1997 How to maintain their connection?

Provide social opportunity for others

Respect those on the spectrum



AUsome Social Group

The Event

Monthly social activity starts March 1997

Do something fun and/or educational

- sensitivity to sensory issues
- friendship opportunities
- accepting atmosphere be yourself
- panel member parents volunteer
- How much work could it be?



AUsome Social Group

Our Growth

1997 = 4 members; 2001 = 60 members; 2008 = 158 members

Computer is key to success: data base, mailing labels, e-mail, web-site

AUsome Social Group name Parents connect on the side Newsletter 2 months at a time \$5,000 Grant in 2000

Volunteers and neuro-typical peer models



AUsome Social Group

Our Growth

Recurring activities: juggling show, video game night, swimming

"What Happened Last" activity summary Opportunities for panel participation Survey members and validate mailing

13 scrap books of pictures Falling in love with this population Creativity and lots of FUN!!

list annually



AUsome Social Group

Next Steps

Activities showcase job/career possibilities Publicize important/relevant opportunities Tips for running Social Group (handout) Expand web site

Add spectrum adults & aspie support group

Plan for continuity and funding

ASW (Wisconsin) Conference Autism Strand

ASW Conference Autism Strand

The Idea

Autism Society of Wisconsin Annual Conference

Inspiration from AUsome Social Group and MAAP Conference

Vision of participation, respect, acceptance, accommodation, sharing, learning, companionship, fun and statewide opportunity

Autism Strand proposal in April 2002



ASW Conference Autism Strand

The Event

Two days of fun and educational activities at ASW 2002 Conference

Planning team of 2 & volunteers

Special schedule for Autism Strand

Panel of Experts & Talent Show

Hospitality room with video games, art, fun things and food

How much work could it be?



Our Growth

Steady increase in participation 12 people in 2002 to 107 people in 2007

(9% of conference attendees)
Computerized data base utilized

Grant to offset cost for attendees

2 breakouts per time slot, adding speakers on the spectrum Autism Strand schedule included with conference



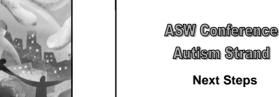
ASW Conference Autism Strand

Our Growth

Expanded over time to include:

- pizza supper social event
- art show
- favorite things display
- yearly art mural
- quiet room

Neuro-typicals invited to respectfully observe and learn



Dedicate one of the two
Autism Strand breakouts
sessions per time slot
to adult issues

Encourage and support participation of self-advocates





ASW Across the Lifespan

The Idea

Desire to make our state conference more welcoming to all adults on the spectrum, including those adults who type to talk and those adults who live independently

> (two under-served groups of adults as identified by ASW Self-Advocacy Committee)



ASW Across the Lifespan

The 2008 Event

First Town Hall meeting for adults on the spectrum facilitated

Self-Advocacy Strand replaced with Across the Lifespan Strand and Youth Strand

Across the Lifespan Strand based on principles of inclusion



Three Principles of Inclusion

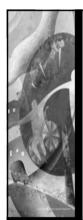
- · The power of language
- Inclusion = Support not simply a shared experience
- Support that is "only as special as necessary"



The power of language

Where do the people with Autism go?

Is it really necessary to make that distinction?



The power of language

2006 Breakout Session Strands:

Educator's Strand Family Strand Professional Strand Eclectic Strand Autism Strand



The power of language

2007 Breakout Session Strands:

Self-Advocacy Strand
Education Strand
Home/Community Strand
Intervention Strand
Eclectic Strand



The power of language

2008 Breakout Session Strands:

Education Strand
Home/Community Strand
Intervention Strand
Across the Life Span Strand
Youth Strand
Eclectic Strand





Inclusion = Support

Foreshadow what is new at the 2008 conference

- article in Fall 2007 newsletter
- welcome letter sent 3 weeks prior to conference

Personal welcome at the conference

- same welcome letter w/Hospitality Rm highlighted
- tour offered

SHOW rather than TELL answers to questions

Support that is "only as special as necessary"



"only as special as necessary"

One registration form for all

Across the Lifespan breakouts in same physical location as other breakouts rather than in Youth area

Removable paper clip on name tags

Identifying registration area as place to ask questions/seek assistance

Have familiar person at registration area to SHOW answers to questions





ASW Across the Lifespan

Our Growth

Follow up article in newsletter reporting on Town Hall meeting

Participants to receive email on regular basis throughout the year, inviting further input and discussion



ASW Across the Lifespan

Next Steps

Supporting involvement of others on the spectrum in planning

Creating opportunities for people on the spectrum to serve in a wider range of roles in ASW

Possible Fall event

Autism Society of Wisconsin



http:/www.asw4autism.org

