

November 1, 2016

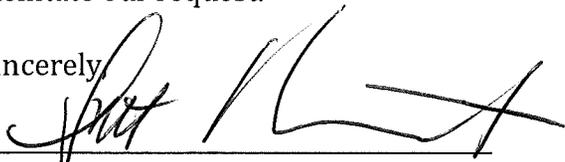
Dr. Gaspar de Alba,

Nevada is faced with increasing number of persons diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) with a 119% increase annually (CDC, 2013). Consequently, more school district personnel, paraprofessionals providing supported living assistance, job coaches, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors, and others are crossing their paths. It should come as no surprise that negative interactions with adults in schools/agencies/providers result in aberrant behaviors, seclusion, and poor Quality of Life (QOL) outcomes. It also results in people that dislike their jobs. Conversely, when school personnel and human services workers treat those diagnosed with respect and compassion, the outcomes are beneficial for all. Knowledgeable and skilled staff become assets to programs, not liabilities. Understanding ASD and sensitivity to those with a diagnosis can be accomplished with training, and with this letter, it is my goal is to propose such an opportunity.

As chair of the Adult Services & Resources subcommittee, we have been tasked with understanding the needs of the ever growing adolescent and young adult population with ASD and determine how to best meet their unique needs. Our progress is measured by goals and objectives described in *Nevada's Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders Strategic Plan (2015-2020)*. Under Goal #2, Objective 2.3, we will *Promote and legislatively advocate for policies and funding which deliver self-directed, person-centered services for adults*. Service agencies include those that evaluate Eligibility, Treatment, Higher Education & Employment Assistance, Housing Options, and Family Supports, all under Objective 2.3.4. Objective 2.4 states that the policies and funding should be for persons with ASD in all geographic parts of the state (i.e., rural and frontier), not just metropolitan areas. Objective #3 specifically addresses the number and quality of professionals providing services, with Objective 3.3 stating: *Establish training options for primary and secondary ASD service providers*.

The most impactful sensitivity training is conducted by persons on the spectrum, with or without the support from others. Impactful sensitivity training also contains materials that have been vetted, and post-training measures that show learning occurred. We request that you, as the Chair of the Nevada Commission on ASD, advocate for funding to help us reach our aforementioned goals. We are proposing a statewide face-to-face training from a self-advocate to professionals and service agencies that provide services to persons with ASD. The training will be recorded and placed into fully accessible training modules for future service-agency employees. For professionals seeking continuing education credits, CEUs will be available by attending this training. Please contact me if there is anything that I can do to facilitate our request.

Sincerely,



Scott W. Harrington, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Licensed Behavior Analyst
Adult Services & Resources Subcommittee Chair