



The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
Accessibility and Disability Policy Webinar Series

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Leveraging Personal Networks into Success

presented by

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About GCPD

The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD) has a mission to further opportunities for persons with disabilities to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination.

GCPD recommends changes in disability policies and programs in the areas of accessibility, communication, criminal justice, education, emergency preparedness, employment, health, housing, transportation, and veterans. The committee also supports a network of committees on people with disabilities, issues awards to promote greater awareness, and promotes compliance with disability related laws.

Introduction to Personal Networks



TEXAS NETWORK CONNECTIONS

*Creating Community
for People with Disabilities*

How are we, as parents, going to make sure that our son or daughter with a disability has a good life, both now and after we die?

Who will make sure that the plans we have arranged and the services we have secured are implemented and functioning well after we are gone?

How do we make sure our child is not lonely, isolated or neglected?

How do we give caring friends and family an opportunity to have a fulfilling relationship with our child?

How am I, a person with a disability, going to achieve these goals for myself?

NOT ALONE! BAKON, 2019



What We'll Cover Today

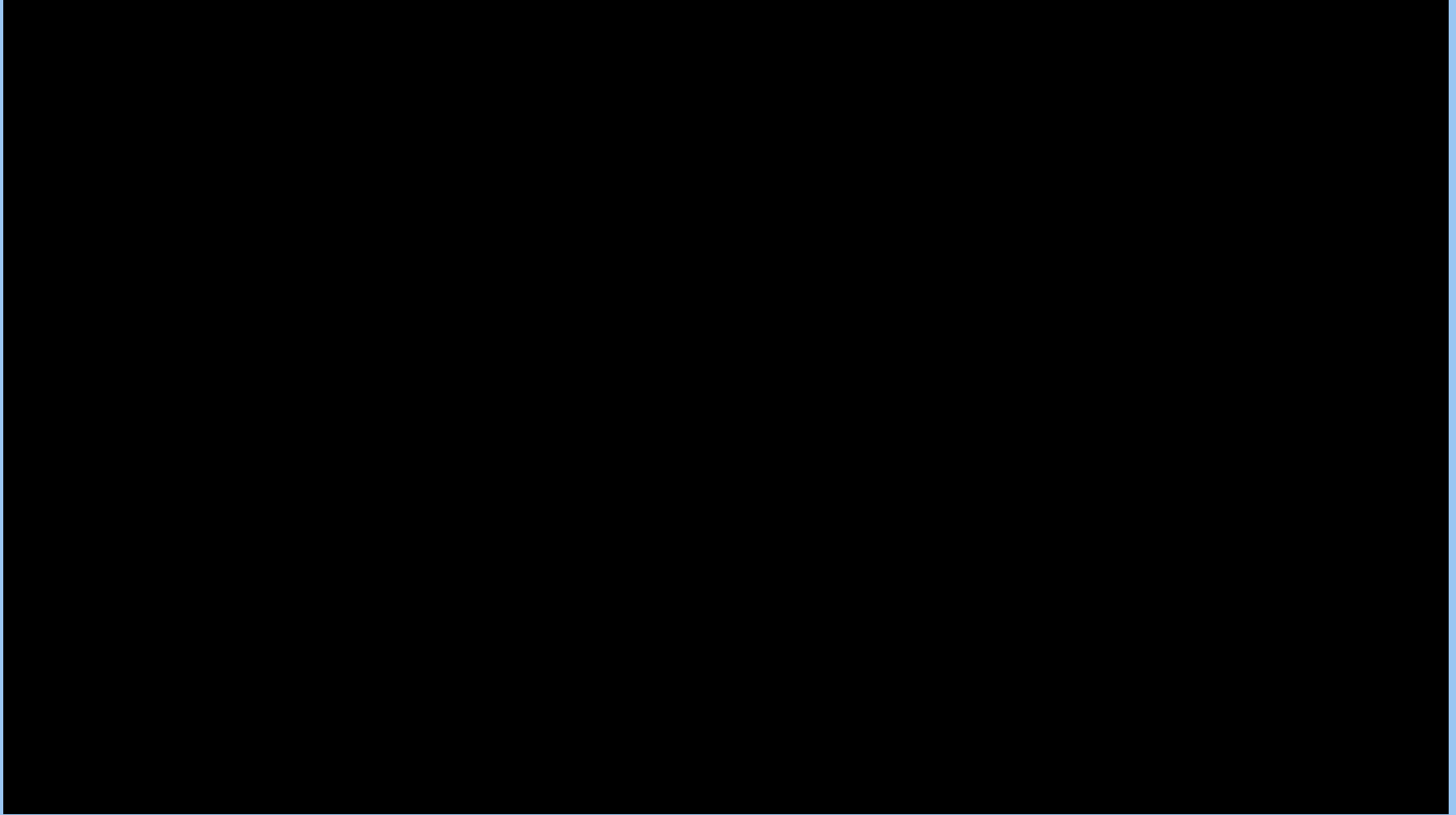
- What Is A Personal Network?
- Key Principles of Personal Networks
- Starting a Network
- Testimonials
- Ways Texas Network Connections is Helping Families Start Personal Networks
- Q&A

What Is A Personal Network?

*Personal networks are **intentional communities** of friends, family members and acquaintances who assist and collaborate with a person who may be at risk of isolation because of disability.*

Personal networks promote planning and social opportunities, assist with decision-making and goal setting, and work with the person-at-the-center to be a sustainable resource after parents can no longer be available.

What Is A Personal Network?



Key Principles of Personal Networks

Relationships are the key to a good life and the foundation of all networks

Networks are volunteer-driven and directed by individuals and/or families

Networks focus on contribution

Everyone benefits in a network

Relationships are the Foundation of ALL Personal Networks



The Three Phases of Starting a Network: Exploration, Development & Maintenance

Lucas' Lineup, 2018



Lucas' Lineup, 2018



Phase One: Exploration The Wacos, 2001



WILL'S B-DAY @ HIS HOUSE

Explore What?

- Why start a network?
- Who will I invite?
- What do I want the network to accomplish?
- How big should the network be?
- What are my hopes for my daughter's future?
- What scares me about my son's future?
- What are my apprehensions about starting a network?
- What excites me about starting a network?
- What else?

Phase Two: Development Invitation Meeting and Network Meetings

SNAPshots, 2014



The Invitation Meeting MavMen, 2010



What Do We Ask of Network Members?

- **Caring about the person-at-center and his/her family**
- Building relationships with each other in the network
- **Making time to meet for 2 hours 3-4 times per year** and more often when the need arises
- Serving in a network organization role, such as facilitator, meeting organizer or scribe
- **Willing to learn about person-at-center's** interests, disability, services, and supports
- Ensuring that the network keeps meeting
- **Working with group to replace yourself if you have to leave the network**

Invitation: Is It Easy?



**...Or Is It Hard?
Asking Is The #1 Challenge To
Starting A Network**



Network Meetings: The Journey Begins!

Blake's Buddies—2021



Blake's Buddies, 2021



Network Meetings Socializing And Eating!



Network Meetings Taking Care of Business!



Network Meetings Taking Care Of Business

AGENDA

- **Introductions. What's new with members?**
- **Getting started: Develop the Network**
 - **Think about a name**
 - **Assign roles**
 - **Communication tool: Email? Text? Website? Facebook?**
 - **Decide when to meet, how often, where, etc...**
- **Network goals: updated annually**
- **Updates (e.g. medical, employment, schools, benefits, etc.)**
- **Getting to know interests, services, and supports, part 1**
- **Schedule Next Meeting**
- **Adjourn**

What Do Networks Do?

- Meet for two hours, 3-4 times per year
- Provide social opportunities
- Help person at center to identify and articulate his or her needs from the network
- Offer guidance and mentorship
- Assist with goal setting
- Support families during times of crisis
- Monitor public benefits and services
- Learn about disability issues
- Explore employment and housing options
- Have fun!

BUT REMEMBER...

Relationships are the Foundation of ALL Personal Networks!!



Phase Three: Maintenance And Sustainability

MavMen 2010



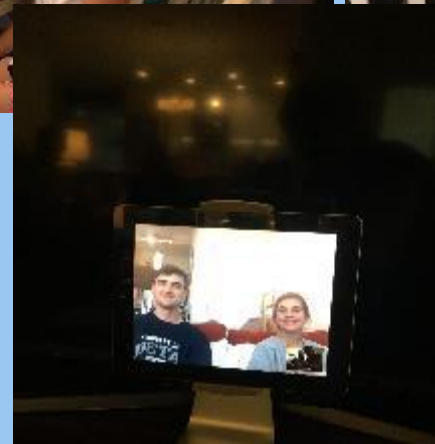
SNAPshots (2014) Celebrates Another Year And Overcomes Network Hurdles!



Just 4 Jaclyn Launches In 2015



Just 4 Jaclyn In 2019



The Wacos Take Charge In 2018!



The Cavern Club Keeps On Rockin!

Cavern Club, 2008



Texas Network Connections Is Helping Families and Self-advocates Start Personal Networks



- Network Facilitation Services
- Transition Action Groups (TAGs)
- Monthly Zoom Visits/Q&As
- Facilitator Recruitment and Trainings

Starting a Network with a Texas Network Connections Facilitator

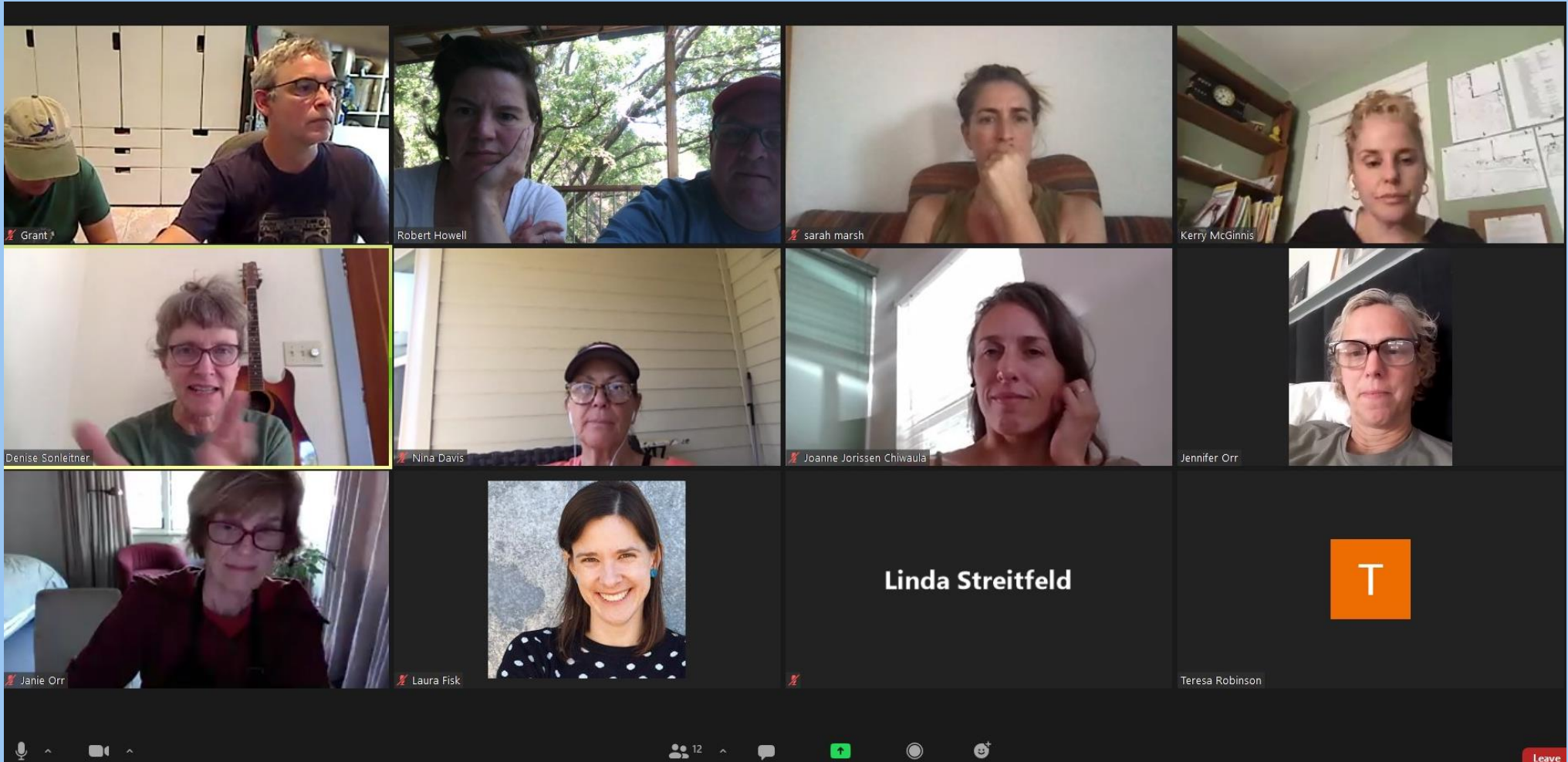


Starting a Network with a Transition Action Group (TAG)



Testimonials

BAKON, 2019



What do Families Say About Having a Network?

- *The Crisis Team was right there with us for back-to-back (to-back) hospitalizations. And the recovery from each! Bob and I have found this support to be a massive game changer! We felt part of a team of peers working together to care for Oliver, care for Apollo and ourselves, put food on the table, stay connected, work, think about what we need, and rest. THIS is a night and day difference from trying to grit it out on our own. Our appreciation for the Crisis Team runs deep!*
- *Taking these first steps of starting a network leaves me feeling hopeful that we can build a strong community of support for my daughter*
- *I know that this network will be such an important and special part of my sister's life, and I look forward to future meetings and all that is to come!*
- *Meeting with the network has put a dent in my skepticism*
- *I am so happy that I finally did this!!!*
- *Over time, I see network members becoming more invested in my son's future*

MCOL—Mekenna's Circle of Love, 2021



Siblings Love Networks!



What do Network Members Say About Being Part of a Network?

- *It's a great way to put our minds together and think about someone we all care about*
- *It's given me a really clear way to be a part of his life and support his family*
- *I wanted to support my best friend with her younger brother*
- *We always know there's going to be a group of people there for her*
- *It felt like an honor to be asked to be included in the network*
- *I like having a defined role in how I can support him*

**Developing A
Healthy,
Sustainable
Network Takes
Years**

**And...that's
Okay.**

**Networks Are
A Work In
Progress!**



Over Time, As Networks Mature, Relationships Deepen And Members Become More Invested In Each Other's Lives

Colter's Intelligence Agency (CIA)--2017



Texas Network Connections Program

<https://www.txp2p.org/services/texas-network-connections>

Personal Networks Video:

<https://www.txp2p.org/services/our-videos/personal-networks>

Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN): <https://plan.ca>

<https://planinstitute.ca>

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