

Reflections on Therap

Karen Ennis, the Director of Continuous Improvement and Jesica Dominguez, Administrative Assistant for Therap for The Arc of Somerset County (SARC), in New Jersey, recently spoke to TherapServices about how the system has helped to improve both the quality of their individual services as well as agency-wide communication.

The Arc of Somerset County first heard about Therap when Somerset staff brought Therap materials back from a conference they had attended in Boston. After evaluating it, The Arc of Somerset County discovered that Therap offered a wide range of features that the agency felt would enhance their operations. Including T-logs shared between programs, individual employee access to SecureComm's, and electronic follow-up for incident reports.

"There is an on-going need to increase quality of services provided and we were still struggling to expectations. Now, we have a tool to do it. Our monitoring of quality in our programs is now higher and communication is wider and more transparent," replied Karen when asked about life before and after The Arc implemented Therap. "Not only has communication between

our Direct Support Professionals improved, but it also has opened communication between group homes".

Therap offers immediate communication that fosters an efficient use of time and agency resources. Administrators are able to manage more information in less time and are more aware of specifics regarding their clientele without sifting through paper files. T-Logs, Individual Service Plans (ISPs), General Event Reports and Secure Communication are the most frequently used modules at The Arc of Somerset County. ISPs have proven to be the most beneficial because of the broad spectrum of the application that can track anything from outcomes of traditional teaching strategies, to sleep charts, to catheterizations.

Karen added that Therap has made it easier for people who use English as a second language being able to correct spelling using web spell-check and has eliminated time spent deciphering handwriting. Staff are more likely to give input that will improve their clients' quality of life as they know how and where to document.

When asked her opinion regarding the quality of Therap's customer support, Karen responded, "Excellent! Support

couldn't be more accessible, patient, friendly or available as far as Therap goes. You can present your own training or use automated materials as a supplement. New users get to say 'Hi' to Therap support staff on Live Chat reassuring users that Therap people are really there and supportive."

One of the major concerns of many agencies providing support to those with disabilities is the high rate of staff turnover. Karen commented that they received calls from people saying, "You have that Therap thing; we want to work there!" This response also complemented many other initiatives made by The Arc of Somerset County to improve their workplace environment. "Therap is the headline symbol of the fact that we are moving forward with quality and decreasing tedious paperwork for staff who should be concentrating on providing supports. New staff is blown away knowing that Therap is accessible from anywhere," said Karen.

Pleased with their experience thus far, The Arc of Somerset County is planning to implement and train staff on additional modules to try to take full advantage of Therap's functionality. ■