

Transcript for SDC Implementation Manual Podcast

LR: Hello. My name is Dr. Lisa Razzano. I'm here with Dr. Judith Cook, Director of the University of Illinois at Chicago Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery. Today, we'll be talking about the self-determination tool called the *Self-Directed Care Implementation Manual*, which is available from the UIC Solutions Suite.

LR: Thanks for joining me today, Judith. Before we talk about the manual, could you tell our listeners what self-directed care is?

JC: Sure Lisa. Self-directed care is a new way of providing mental health services, in which service recipients directly control the funds spent on their recovery. They create a person-centered recovery plan and develop a budget for the purchase of goods and services to achieve their recovery goals. Program staff, called support brokers, help them find and hire service providers and make purchases that have been pre-approved. This way of providing services is referred to as budget-neutral. This means that the amount of money made available to a person is based on what it would have cost to serve them in the traditional way. This model already has a strong evidence base in the disability, aging, and social service fields. New research suggests it can also work well for people in mental health recovery.

LR: That sounds very different from the usual way of providing services. Why would people want to receive services using this approach?

JC: That's an excellent question and I'm glad you asked it. Self-directed care offers people more choices and greater control over what treatment they receive and from whom. People can select services, supports, and other resources that meet their individual needs, creating opportunities beyond what is available from traditional mental health service systems. Satisfaction is higher because participants who are unhappy with a provider can switch to another, or change services altogether. Participants also can access services or goods not typically available in most state mental health systems. For example, someone with a health goal might purchase a membership at the YMCA, or someone with a work goal might buy a suit for job interviews. This model also allows people to take personal responsibility for their recovery and emphasizes building a life beyond receiving services. Research shows that, compared to those in the traditional system, self-directed care participants are more satisfied with their services while also controlling costs for the funder.

LR: So I gather that the *Self-Directed Care Implementation Manual* is about how to set up and run such programs?

JC: Yes that's right. The manual helps people understand what mental health self-directed care is, and provides practical information and resources for promoting, developing, and operating these kinds of programs. It's also designed to stimulate thinking about the various ways that the self-directed care program model can be implemented to foster self-determination and recovery for people with mental illnesses.

LR: What kinds of people might want to use the manual?

JC: We designed it for a wide audience. This includes anyone interested in mental health self-directed care such as people living with a mental illness, family members, and other supporters. Self-directed care program managers and staff will find it useful because it provides examples of

different ways to organize and run these programs, including sample program forms and policies. The chapters on developing grassroots self-directed care initiatives are useful to stakeholders and advocates who want to start a self-directed care program in their local area. The chapters on organization and financing are especially useful for funding agencies and policymakers who are wondering how to bring these programs to large-scale in an entire region or state.

LR: That really is a wide audience. What's in the manual?

JC: The manual's content provides a step-by-step guide to introducing self-directed care in local community settings. Chapters address different ways to structure a self-directed care program, how to help people develop a self-directed life plan and budget, and different ways to handle purchasing services and goods. The manual also addresses the role of the support broker, methods for determining program eligibility, and procedures for recruitment and enrollment. A final chapter covers program evaluation and fidelity. Each chapter includes practical implementation information, real-life examples of how mental health self-directed care was introduced in several different states, and links for additional resources. Also included is an appendix with sample self-directed care policies and program forms.

LR: That's a lot of valuable information. Thank you, Judith. And thank you all for listening. We are pleased to offer the *Self-Directed Care Implementation Manual* as part of our Solutions Suite to promote wellness and self-direction for people in recovery from mental health conditions.