



ISAC

Recommendation

6

April 2026

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Medical Director
Department of Human Services
Office of Developmental Programs



Support People with Complex Needs

- People with disabilities who have both physical and behavioral health needs receive the medical treatment and supports needed throughout their lifespans. People are more able to live an everyday life when individuals, families, and providers plan and prepare to provide and modify supports as needs and challenges change. Opportunities for a full community life are dependent on adequate supports and the commitment to build capacity within the larger human service delivery system.



- Adopt established models
- Adapt existing approaches/models
- Create new opportunities and content
- Mindful of needs across the lifespan
- Involve agencies at every level
 - From DSPs to CEOs
- Reach across organizational “silos”
 - HCBS, Behavioral Health, Physical Health, Funders
- Licensed professionals
- Self-advocates and families/caregivers



- CBI
 - Cycle 9 began October 2025
 - Cycle 10 will begin September
- CBI Intensive
 - Completed Summer 2025
- Pediatric CBI
 - **Capacity building initiative for children and adolescents with multi-system involvement**
 - **Broad role representation**
 - County ID, MH, CYF; State DHS; Providers; BHMCO; Educators, Families, Training Organizations, Academic institutions, Early Learning Centers
 - 34 of 67 counties represented in the first 3 cohorts



Enhancing Trauma Recovery Services and Increasing Capacity for Vulnerable Populations

- Trauma Recovery for Autistic, Intellectually Disabled, and Neurodivergent Individuals
- Intended for licensed clinicians who offer psychotherapy services and want to build capacity to see neurodivergent individuals
- Training is meant to equip them to use current evidence-based practices for meeting trauma recovery needs of neurodivergent individuals



- Program occurs in 2 stages:
 - 12-week didactic portion comprised of 3 modules each with four sessions.



- Followed by 12-week clinical portion comprised of group synchronous clinical consultation calls where program participants present their current cases where they are working with neurodivergent individuals addressing the impact of trauma/victimization experiences.
 - One presentation of individual in assessment phase of treatment
 - One presentation of individual in safety/stabilization or trauma processing phase of treatment

Curriculum Content



1

Module

- Defining Trauma
- Expressions of Trauma
- The Social Brain and Neurodiversity
- Principles of Trauma Focused Treatment and Examining Ableism

2

Module

- After Disclosure and Psychoeducation
- Assessing Traumatic Stress Part 1
- Part 2
- Case Formulation

3

Module

- Building resources
- Trauma Processing, Meaning Making, Future Planning
- Resiliency and Self-preservation
- Application of Building Resources



- Including the current 9th cohort, **106** licensed clinicians have participated from across the state.
- Counties of participants include
 - Allegheny, Philadelphia, Cambria, Fayette, Lehigh, Chester, Erie, Dauphin, Somerset, Lancaster, Franklin, Berks, Schuylkill, Snyder, and Connellsville, Armstrong, Montgomery, Cumberland, Mercer, Bucks, Luzerne, Lycoming, Wayne, York, Clinton, Westmoreland, Bradford, Centre, Washington, Juniata, Carbon, Northumberland, Union, Monroe, Pike, and Lebanon.
- **Cohort 10** begins April 14, 2026, and is currently recruiting.



- Reinforce learning and further expand capacity
- 60 to 90 minute workshop format for those who have completed TRAIN
 - 12/16/25 Advancing Your Train Knowledge
 - 1/27/26 Deepening your TRAIN Practices
 - 4/28/26 Topic TBD

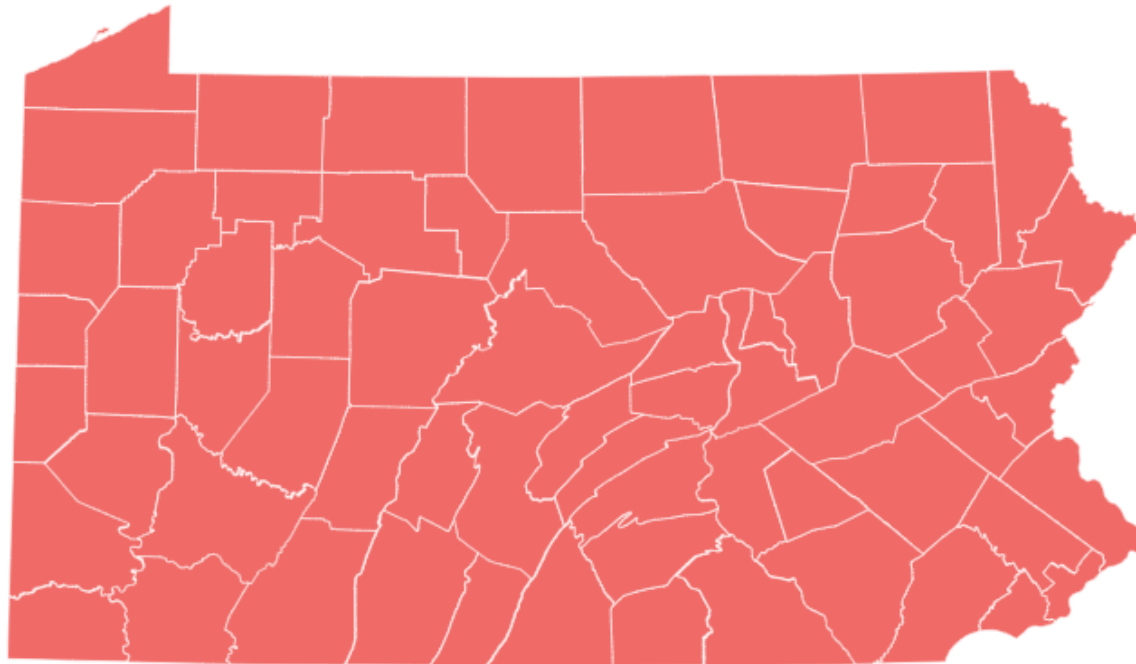


TRAIN Directory

Below is a map showing where past participants of the TRAIN program currently work and practice. Contact information is provided for those who choose to share that information, along with any details related to their practice.

Please note that while participants are listed by county, many currently provide telehealth services which can be accessed from across the state. This will be updated regularly as more participants complete the TRAIN program.

Click a county to find more info



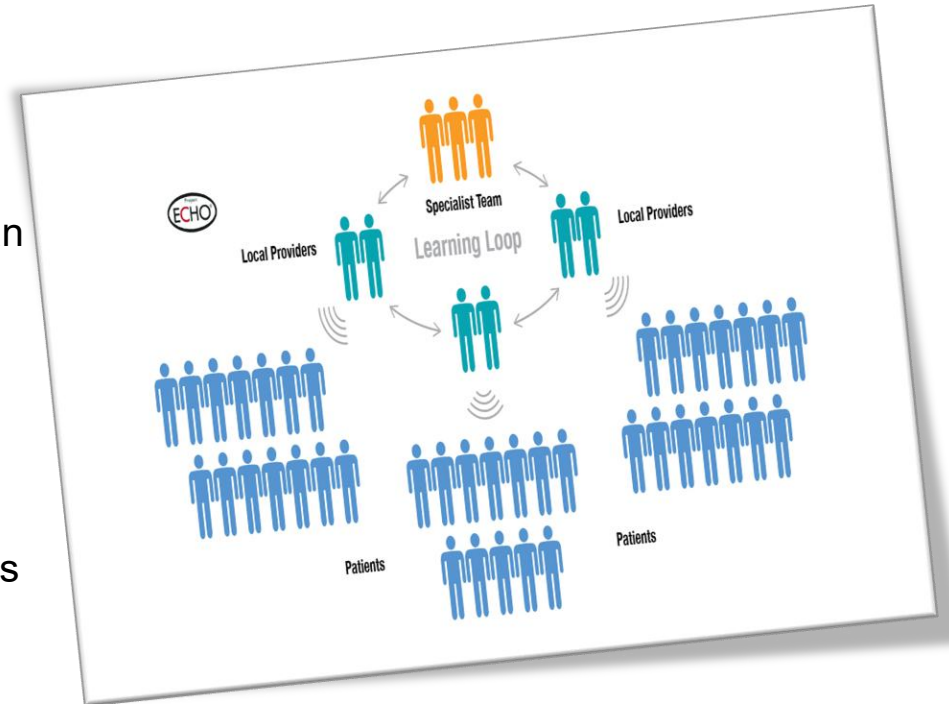


- ECHO-Expanding Community Health Options.
- An “all teach, all learn” spoke and hub model where the ‘spokes’ are community members, and the ‘hub’ is comprised of a team of content experts.
- Heavy emphasis of case-based learning supported by ‘flash talks’ (10–15 minute talk of key clinical points).





- Spokes are community providers in managerial and/or supervisory roles and hub team is comprised of Penn State Health providers and community partners:
 - Psychiatrist (also a parent of young man on the spectrum with ID)
 - BCBA
 - LCSW
 - Psychologist
 - Self-advocate from Acres Project
 - Nurse Practitioner (Penn State Health is facilitator)





- Seven-week intervention covering following flash talk topics:
 - Trauma and trauma expressions
 - Anxiety and intolerance of uncertainty
 - Introduction to Community Resilience Model
 - Resilience Skills
 - Crisis risk reduction and safety considerations
 - Adapting skills for those with brain differences
 - Fostering community re-engagement
- 9 cohorts have completed through February 2026.



- Focus in 2025 was “Empowered Living Through ECHO: Enhancing Healthcare for the Adult Neurodiverse Community in PA” for DSPs, SCs, licensed professionals and others. .
- 8-week intervention for DSPs helps support those facing trauma, mental and physical health challenges, and offers strategies for using coping skills to build resilience.
- Topics covered include recognizing signs of trauma and common mental health issues, recognizing physical health concerns, improving resilience, encouraging community engagement, and using the Community Resilience Model.
- Focus in 2026 is mental health and primary care providers.
- Planned focus for 2027 will be state operated facility staff.
- Additional Project ECHO “Building Competence in Supporting Autistic Adults” began January 2026.

ECHO – 2025 Cohorts



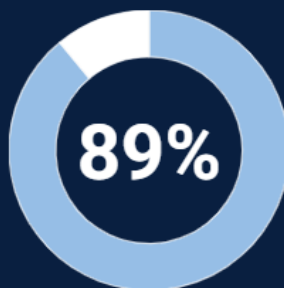
Pennsylvania
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ECHO Program Outcomes

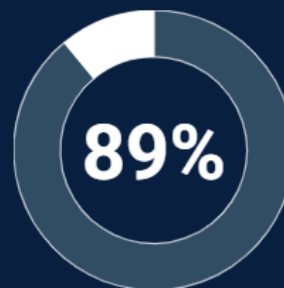
Final Evaluation Results n=26



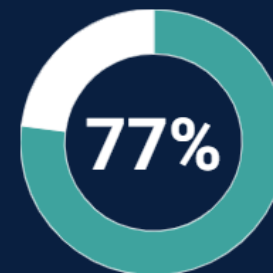
Overall satisfaction with Penn State Project ECHO.



I would recommend Project ECHO to a colleague.



Project ECHO is a valuable educational tool.

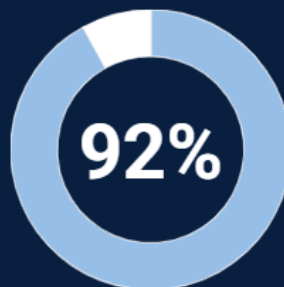


I teach other staff what I have learned in ECHO sessions.

Combined Session Evaluation Results n=272



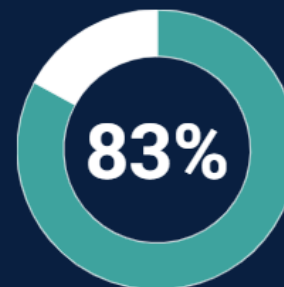
My knowledge has increased.



My ability to work with neurodiverse individuals has improved.



I will make changes in my practice.



I feel a decreased sense of professional isolation.



- Trauma education and resilience building resources aimed at neurodiverse communities
- Stemming from the universal trauma exposure of the COVID-19 pandemic
- 5 Stakeholder Groups
 - Self-advocates
 - Family members/natural supports
 - Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)
 - Licensed/Managerial Service Professionals (LMSPs)
 - LMSPs participating in the ECHO outreach program

project
reassure

resilience and stress management for neurodiverse communities

Project Reassure



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Department of Human Services

- Trauma education and resilience building resources aimed at neurodiverse communities
- Based on the Community Resilience Model
- Four core courses:
 - Trauma and Trauma Expressions
 - Resilience and The Resilient Zone
 - The Core Resilience Building Skills
 - Resilience Skills Application
- Community Collaborators:
 - Self-Advocates United as 1 (SAU-1)
 - The Acres Project
 - DSP, LMSP and family inputs
- Courses for self-advocates, DSPs and Families & Caregivers are currently available on [PAAutism.org](https://www.paautism.org), an [ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)

project
reassure

Types of Trauma

For Self-Advocates



Dual Diagnosis Conference



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

- Promote greater understanding of current thought and treatments
- Promote greater access to a wide array of treatments
- Broaden conference content to be more inclusive
- 2025 - Understanding Neuroplasticity And Recent Advancements In Enhancing Supports
 - Over 800 registrants
- 2026 – Brain and Body Connection
 - Understanding the Vagus Nerve
 - Technology and Mental Health

Conference Agenda

Dual Diagnosis Pre-Conference

The Brain and Body Connection: Understanding the Vagus Nerve

Understanding the Vagus Nerve

May 6, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

- **Trauma-Informed Behavior Support Through a Polyvagal Lens**
Presented by Ellen A. Black, LCSW and Lynn Haller, MSW, LCSW
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
- **Vagal Nerve Stimulation Therapies**
Presented by Rebecca Knowles, Unyte
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
- **Healing with the Brain in Mind – An Introduction to the Neurosequential Model**
Presented by Michelle Maikoetter, MA, NCC, LPC-S, NCC
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
- **Trauma Informed Therapies**
Presented by Hela Baer, LCSW, E-RYT
2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Technology and Mental Health

May 7, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

- **Online-based Therapeutic Intervention**
Presented by Dr. Keely Hirsch
9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
- **Internet, Social Media, and Communication**
Presented by Erin Sass, Provider Educator, Acentra
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- **Promoting Independence Through Technology Panel**
Facilitated by Shea Tanis, Ph.D., FAAIDD
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM
- **Mental Health Support for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability**
Self Advocates United As 1
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM



Hela Baer is an Integrative Therapist specializing in trauma-informed mindbody practices

6



- Allegheny County
 - Launch in Summer 2023
 - 28 current enrollees
 - 56 deactivated since 4/2024
- Philadelphia County
 - Launch
 - 144 attendees
 - Community Mental Health Providers
 - Supports Coordination Organizations
 - Inpatient Psychiatric Hospitals (4)
 - ID Residential Providers
 - Behavioral Support Providers
 - CBH, DBHIDS staff
 - ODP
 - OMHSAS
 - Home Health Organizations
 - Development of new resources
 - Crisis line is active

PA START Allegheny



Pennsylvania
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Pre and Post Enrollment Emergency Service Utilization (7/23 – 3/25)

Variable	Children	Transitional Youth	Adults
N (%)	<11	23	23
Psychiatric Hospitalization			
Prior to enrollment, N (%)	<11	11	11
During START to date, N (%)	<11	<11	<11
Emergency Department Visits			
Prior to enrollment, N (%)	<11	11	16
During START to date, N (%)	<11	<11	<11
Law Enforcement Encounters			
Prior to enrollment, N (%)	<11	11	11
During START to date, N (%)	<11	<11	<11

PA START Allegheny



Program Crisis Interventions (7/2023 – 3/2025)	
Crisis Contacts	
Number of Individuals	22
Number of Crisis Contacts	89
Range of Contacts	1-9
Type of Intervention	
In-Person	45 (51%)
Telehealth	44
Average Response Time	59 minutes
Number of calls involving police	26 (29%)

Crisis Disposition	
Maintain Setting	74
Psychiatric Hospital Admission	<11
Medical Admission	<11
ED (released)	<11
ED (held over 24 hours)	0
ED (not specified)	<11
Non-START Crisis Stabilization	<11
Incarcerated	0

Certified Peer Specialist



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Department of Human Services

- Credential for individuals with lived experience in their own mental health disorder and recovery.
- Peer specialists provide a unique perspective while providing peer support services.
- 75-hour mandatory training to become certified.
- A CPS is not a clinical therapist but provides peer to peer support to foster community, promote a sense of connected, and reduce feelings of isolation and stigma.
- Limited opportunities for individuals with IDA to receive peer support.



- An “endorsement” is a process of receiving additional training of focused content for people who have successfully completed CPS training.
- ODP is developing an endorsement to provide additional training for peer specialists to better support individuals with IDA.
- The curriculum for the endorsement is in development and is targeted to be available for use in 2026.
- Hybrid model of asynchronous and synchronous learning.