

There's No Place Like (a Real) Home  
(even in an over-regulated environment)

## A TWO-DAY WORKSHOP ON SUPPORTED LIVING

With

Connie Lyle O'Brien, Responsive Systems Associates, Lithonia, Georgia Trish Farnham, Executive Director - Georgia Options, Athens, GA Mary Kissel, Founder, former director, parent - Georgia Options, Athens, GA Peter Leidy, Options in Community Living, Madison, Wisconsin
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This two-day workshop is an opportunity to learn about two supported living organizations that provide support for people to live in their own homes and participate in community life. Although concepts like "supported living," "self-determination," and "inclusion" are now widespread, most adults with developmental disabilities continue to experience segregation and live under the control of others. These two agencies have over 35 years combined experience in person-centered support, and are internationally known for their innovative work.

**Some of the questions/issues addressed in this workshop are:**

- What does individualized support look like?
- How do we get started – and how do we keep going?
- What does it take for people to have community membership and control of their lives?
- How do we do this in a system of over-regulation?
- How do we honor, support, and retain our staff?
- Building a culture of respect.
- Examples of agency funding and individual budgets.
- Top 10 lessons learned about supported living.

Participants will learn about the journeys of Options in Community Living and Georgia Options to carry out the dream of community living for people with disabilities. Connie Lyle O'Brien, co-author with John O'Brien of *Framework for Accomplishment*, will frame the specific experiences related by Mary, Trish and Peter and identify common themes, issues, and principles other organizations may adapt for themselves.

**The first day** of the workshop focuses on the ways we think about people, their needs and their relationships to the communities where they live. How do we describe current experiences and desirable futures for people with disabilities? Presenters will share stories about particular people the two agencies support. The successes and challenges

people with disabilities, their families, and the staff who support them experience will give those attending the workshop a clear idea of both the hard work and rich rewards in creating a change in the typical pattern of support that is available to people.

**The second day** describes some of the "how-to's" of day-to-day operation, including funding issues, building great staff, building partnerships with families and defining organizational structures. Both agencies will describe the work of supported living as continuous learning and evolving as people's lives change.

Come listen to these stories and begin one of your own. Participants can expect fast-paced presentation of information, lively discussion, time for questions and answers, examples of "successes" and "failures," and even a song or two! All in all, a thought-provoking, stimulating, and fun two days.

**Resources available: (talk with Peter Leidy about these)**

- *Supported Living – What's the Difference?* By John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien
- *Remembering the Soul of Our Work*, stories by the staff of Options in Community Living
- *Celebrating the Ordinary*, the story of Options in Community Living, by John O'Brien, Connie Lyle O'Brien, and Gail Jacob
- *Down Stairs That Are Never Your Own*, by John O'Brien
- *Greetings from Human Serviceland* and *More Songs for People Like You & Me*, recordings by Peter Leidy
- *The Story of Georgia Options: A Grassroots Supported Living Organization for People with Disabilities*, by Mary Kissel.
- *Living in Your Own Home*, by Mary Kissel (*Making a Difference* magazine, Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities).
- *Congregated Living May Reduce Community Interaction*, by Trish Farnham (*Making a Difference* magazine, Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities).

**Who should attend?**

Both of these organizations began with a small group of committed people who dreamed big and were willing to work hard. If you fit that description, are looking for some ideas to get started, or need rejuvenation to continue what you're already doing, this is for you. Whether you are a self-advocate, family member, concerned citizen, bureaucrat, staff member or director of an organization, we believe you'll find this worthwhile.

**For more information or to schedule a workshop, please contact Peter Leidy:**

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