



NEWSLETTER

Seeking Employment, Equality and Community
for People with Developmental Disabilities

SEEC E-Newsletter May 2025

From the Desk of Karen Lee, SEEC's CEO

Mental health is health. It's not an extra—it's essential for the people SEEC supports.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. At SEEC, we believe every person deserves the opportunity to live a full, supported life in the community. However, for many adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), thriving also means having access to mental health care that truly understands their unique needs.

To dig deeper into this issue—and to share some exciting news—I sat down with **Jillian Fisher-Bouchelle, our Program Director of Health and Quality Insurance.** Our organization **recently completed the National Association of Dually Diagnosed (NADD) accreditation process;** this resulted in seven different services being accredited by NADD (Behavior Supports, Nursing Services, Supported Living, Community Engagement, Transitions, Employment Services, and Assisted Technology). **This milestone reflects years of advocacy, training, and a commitment to truly person-centered support.**

"Thriving means doing things simply for the joy of it—laughing, connecting, engaging in community life. It's sitting in the sun because it feels good. It's having meaningful relationships, true friendship, and love. It's being seen as a whole person, not defined by a diagnosis or support need."

We often hear that mental health is health—but what does that mean for the people we support? Why is it so critical to take into account mental health needs for the people we support?

Just like anyone else, the people we support want wellness in their lives. And wellness is more than just the absence of illness. It includes the creation and support of opportunities that promote healthy habits and behaviors—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Achieving true wellness for the people we support requires a holistic approach—one that recognizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of health. This can only be accomplished through a **collaborative, team-based approach** that ensures each **person's needs are seen, understood, and supported in full.**

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities face **significant disparities** across all areas of healthcare—including mental health care. These disparities are often compounded by a lack of understanding about how mental health conditions present in people with IDD, leading to misdiagnosis, underdiagnosis, or inadequate treatment.

That's why **advocacy is so critical. We must not only advocate on behalf of the people we support but also empower them to advocate for themselves.** By helping people with IDD understand their mental health needs and voice their experiences, we begin to bridge the gap in care and ensure they receive the support they deserve. Mental health is health—for everyone. And for people already navigating disparities, **our responsibility to ensure equitable, informed care** is even greater.



Men's group goes rock climbing.

Your team recently supported SEEC in completing the National Association of Dually Diagnosed (NADD) accreditation process; this resulted in seven different services being accredited by NADD (Behavior Supports, Nursing Services, Supported Living, Community Engagement, Transitions, Employment Services, and Assisted Technology). Can you tell us what that means and what it unlocks for the people we support?

Having a **dual diagnosis** means in this case, **having both an Intellectual/Developmental disability and a mental health disorder.** The mission of NADD is to "promote leadership through the expansion of knowledge, training, policy and advocacy for mental health practices that promote a quality of life for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and co-occurring mental health conditions."

Being recognized with an agency accreditation affirms the high quality of care and support SEEC provides every day. It validates our staff's competency in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With this accreditation, we now have access to nationally recognized certification programs for both our Direct Support Professionals and our clinicians. These certification programs will strengthen our workforce and ensure the people we support are receiving services from well-trained, knowledgeable professionals.

Our accreditation is valid for three years, during which we will continue working closely with NADD to set and achieve ongoing goals for excellence. As part of the process, NADD also identified key opportunities for growth—particularly in areas such as **trauma-informed care**. These insights will guide us as we deepen our understanding and continue to improve service delivery. I'm incredibly excited for what lies ahead. **This milestone is not just an achievement—it's a launchpad for continued innovation, learning, and excellence in service.**

[**Read the full interview here...**](#)

Jillian's insights remind us of the **importance of advocacy, training, and excellence** in making meaningful progress. By **championing mental health awareness** and **fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society**, everyone has the chance to lead a fulfilling life.

Cheers,

Karen Lee, CEO

SEEC's DSP Making a Difference: Nue Walter



We are thrilled to announce that Nue Walter who works in Employment Services and Supported Living has been recognized as this month's DSP Making a Difference! Nue's dedication and unique approach have made a significant impact on the lives of the people she supports.

Nue has been working tirelessly with three deaf job seekers and has gone above and beyond by learning American Sign Language to communicate effectively with them. Her commitment to understanding their communication styles and her innovative support methods have led to remarkable positive change.

Nue's supervisors nominated her for this recognition due to her outstanding work and the significant difference she has made in the lives of those she supports. Her professionalism, creativity, and dedication truly embody the spirit of our organization

Please join us in congratulating Nue Walter for her exceptional contributions and well-deserved recognition as DSP of the Month!



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