

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2025

THE JOURNEY

Towards Person-Centered Excellence

Natural Support Networks in Disability Services- *How Are We Doing as a State?*

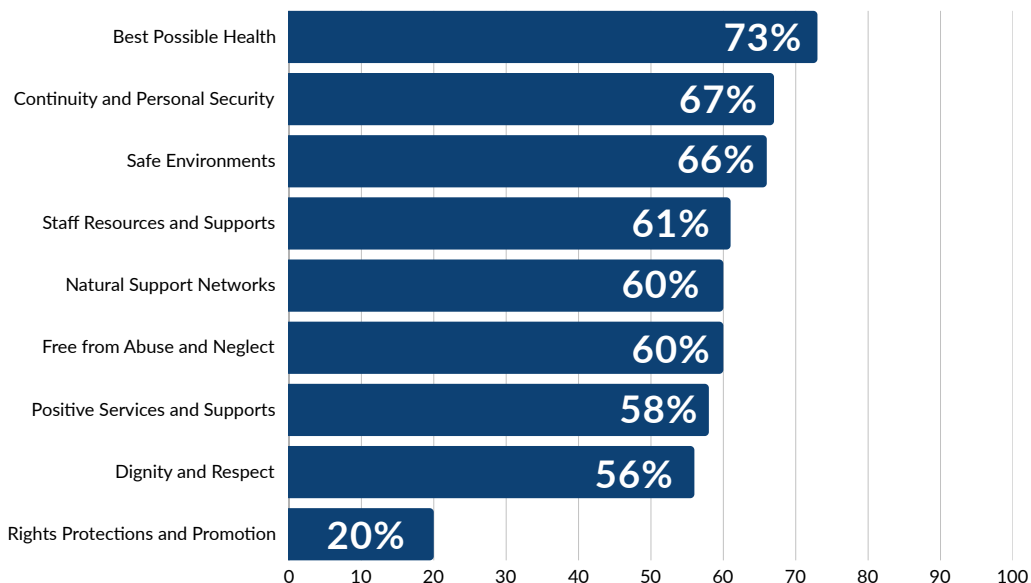
Natural supports are those relationships that enhance an individual's quality of life and serve as a "safety net" for them as they engage with their communities by giving them a trusted individual to provide safety and security in situations that may feel uncertain. Natural supports can be comprised of family members, close friends, significant others, or others who know them well and who they can trust. Technology through social media, email, text messaging, etc. can be especially helpful in developing these relationships and building a support network,

The Council on Quality and Leadership's Basic Assurances® consist of 10 factors, with the third factor focusing on Natural Support Networks. In evaluating the use of Natural Supports in Maryland, 60% of providers demonstrated behaviors that lead the people they support to connect with Natural Supports.

As professionals, we can consider the following questions to identify opportunities to develop participants' natural support networks:

1. Are existing and potential natural supports identified for each person?
2. Are people assisted to overcome barriers that prevent them from remaining connected to their natural supports?
3. Does the organization build the capacity for natural supports based on people's choices and preferences?
4. Does the organization use volunteers to build capacity for potential natural supports?
5. Does the organization use community resources, including local organizations, clubs, places of worship and schools, to build capacity for potential natural supports?
6. Does the organization support the inclusion of family members or close personal friends for people who need assistance with decision making?

Practices Present in Organization



The 89 Basic Assurances® Reviews completed to date have yielded the data pictured to the left.

Building Natural Support Networks is an area of opportunity, with a 60% prevalence in the organizations who participated in Basic Assurances® Reviews.

Continue reading on page two of this newsletter to see how a Maryland provider addresses this challenge and facilitates the development of natural supports amongst the people they support.

QUALITY CORNER

VOLUNTEER IMPACT

Participants of disability services often spend time volunteering at local churches, food pantries, and other spots in their community. Now, we are thinking about how volunteers can enhance the lives of disability service participants through involvement with provider agencies.

The League for People With Disabilities, Inc. (located in Baltimore, Maryland), has a innovative and unique process in recruiting and engaging volunteers in the Baltimore community. This video (provided below) serves as an initial touchpoint to volunteers at the organization.

Developing a welcome video provides a consistent and standard first message to community members, interns, and/or companies who are new to working with a particular agency, or even with the population as a whole!

Click the play button below to see a great example from The League on how to orient new volunteers to your organization.



By engaging volunteers in participation with our programs and services, we open up a door of endless opportunities for participants to build their own natural support network with people from their own community.

Data, collected from talking directly with participants through Personal Outcome Measure® Interviews, shows us that 26% of those receiving DDA services have a natural support system in place, while 23% have friends, and only 14% performed social roles. One barrier often communicated is connection. By incorporating volunteers, we introduce those we support to members of their own communities and give them the opportunity to connect and develop relationships that eventually evolve into friendships and natural supports, as well as provide an introduction to new social roles, too!



See What the Data Says: 2022–2023 NCI Survey Now Available!

Families with
Loved One Living
In-Home



Families with
Loved One Living
Outside the Home



Direct Participant
Responses



MARK IT ON THE CALENDAR


Next Quarterly Review Period-
August 1st - October 31st

*note: this is a change from previous years when start date was July 1st

**Self-Directed Review Updated
Standard Operating Procedure-**
Effective July 1, 2025

*note: this will be posted on the DDA website soon

Reminder to Providers:

Please add our domain: 
@libertyhealth.com, to
your “allow” list, to ensure
any communications from
Liberty are received in
your inbox.

