

## Design of a Technical Assistance Process for Mentorship of Vermont Results in Value Added and Increased Skills for our Neighbor, a Capacity-Building State Disability & Health Program

The New Hampshire Disability & Public Health project (NH DPH) provides organizational support to the Vermont Department of Health as they build capacity as a Disability & Health State Program. During our first year as mentors, we developed a process to provide technical assistance (TA) to Vermont staff and established five core principles that characterize our partnership:

- **Collaborative.** Work together to identify needs and long-term goals of the partnership.
- **Targeted.** Focus on activities or areas that have the greatest need and where TA will have the greatest impact.
- **Adaptive.** As the TA provider, remain flexible based on the needs of the Vermont Disability & Health Program.
- **Customized.** Design and deliver TA that meets the unique (and changing) needs of the Vermont Disability & Health Program.
- **Asset-based.** Identify, engage, and leverage existing assets; build on strengths, resources and relationships.

NH DPH evaluation of the technical assistance process revealed that staff of the Vermont Disability & Health Program are “very comfortable” requesting TA from NH DPH. Their program manager explained, “The resources that NH DPH has provided have been incredibly helpful to use as preliminary templates for the work that VT is either currently working on or is interested in pursuing. These resources have provided a roadmap for us to use as a starting point in drafting data briefs and potential policies.”

In particular, their staff benefitted from TA regarding developing accessible documents.

“[This] is a new process for Vermont, and having a mentor with extensive practice and expertise has been very encouraging and helpful – such as recommending use of Word’s Flesch-Kincaid readability tool. . . . NH DPH’s support to Vermont in developing data briefs that are appropriate and meet the needs of our various audiences has allowed us to progress in our work in a more strategic and productive way.”

As the Vermont Disability & Health program manager eloquently stated, our partnerships has been “accessible, collaborative, and productive, and is one that we look forward to further developing!

*NH DPH is supported by cooperative agreement #NU59DD000954-04-00 from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Its contents are the responsibility of NH DPH and do not necessarily represent the views of CDC. Alternative formats available on request.*

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