



Avita is an organization that provides support to individuals with developmental disabilities as well as mental health and addictive diseases issues.

Nationally Recognized Best Practice Approach for Serving Individuals with Developmental Disabilities



We as providers have matured and learned from those we support, we have come to recognize that an institution is more a mindset than a building. People with developmental disabilities have been kept separate too long. This separation has been at a tremendous cost to our communities as well as the individuals and families whom we support. Part of this maturation for Avita has included the evolution of our services over time. This evolution has followed a path taken nationally by others as well as services have advanced over time.

Avita's role in the lives of individuals with disabilities has evolved through the years. As other similar organizations, we once saw our role as caretakers who would provide assistance with the basics of daily living. Individuals who lived with their families were often served in day centers while others resided in state institutions.

ORGANIZATIONS CORE BELIEFS

Avita's services are firmly based on several core beliefs.

1. We acknowledge that everyone regardless of their abilities has gifts to share.
2. Healthy communities are comprised of a diverse set of members who are interdependent.
3. For those whose gifts are less obvious or whose life experiences have been limited. Avita staff view themselves as providing...
 - A bridge to a brighter future;
 - To provide opportunities for people to seek meaningful employment;
 - Volunteer and make contributions to our communities;
 - Develop relationships and friendships; and
 - Find and follow their unique path.

Avita staff recognized that people wanted to contribute and had so many gifts to share. For many years, however, we have employed a one-size fits all approach. If the current national or international trend was sheltered employment, we embraced that approach. Group homes were better than institutions, so we embraced that model. Avita was not alone in these endeavors and progress has most assuredly been made. As people went to work, made friends, owned homes, and found their unique paths, however, we began to realize that one size might be great for stocking caps but not so great for people. Avita staff became more creative in supporting people with disabilities find their place in their communities.

Good 2 Great Incentives

As evidence of our progress, Avita was asked to participate in a 3 year project to move toward being a "Person Centered Organization". Through this project, designed by international consultants Michael Smull, Mary Lou Bourne and Helen Sanderson predominately for providers of Developmental Disability Services, Avita has reviewed our methods of service delivery to individuals as well as Avita's internal systems that support our staff. The leadership of the organization have come together to design a system that better supports the staff who are working so diligently to reduce barriers to people finding their dreams.

As a result of the last three years, Avita's mission and vision have become more closely aligned. There is more meaningful communication among staff at all levels. Avita staff is also listening more closely with their hearts as people pursue their dreams. We are coming to a fuller recognition that each of us—staff and those we support—have the right to dream; to fail and to be successful beyond what we could imagine; the right to make mistakes; and the right and responsibility to enrich our communities.

Avita's mission involves reducing barriers for these individuals as they become more integrated into their communities.

Avita's vision is seeing people achieve their dreams.

Avita has not "arrived". The work is challenging. There are difficult days ahead. However, we are an organization that will continue to learn and grow together as we continue to reduce those barriers to important dreams.