

**THE MICHAEL DUNN CENTER
STAFF BULLETIN**

NOW YOU KNOW

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edited by Roger Richmond

**FROM THE DIRECTOR'S
DESK...**

Kyle Hauth

**Is That Your Final
Answer ?**

The once popular television show "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" was responsible for coining the question "is that your final answer?" The individual who answered all the questions, which increased in difficulty each time a question was answered correctly, could potentially win a million dollars. We also have a pretty high stakes scenario developing as state and federal surveyors will be visiting in the next few months observing and

asking questions. A great deal rests upon these surveys reflecting that quality services are taking place. Tennessee has been under moratorium longer than any other state in the union and if the federal government is not pleased this go around, then most likely Tennessee will lose all of it's federal funding and services to people with developmental disabilities will be in jeopardy.

Often people tend to think that the individual actions they may or may not take would not have a significant impact on



the big picture. Such a mind set is flawed thinking and is grossly inaccurate when it comes to our services. Every person working at MDC has the potential of making or breaking the fragile system that we operate in. With this in mind, I would like to share some very

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TRAINER'S MOMENT

Roger Richmond

**Why Bother With
ISPs ?**

Individual Support Plans are a vital source of information regarding each individual who receives services. These support plans, or *ISPs*, contain

information that is necessary to assure that we provide adequately for the various needs and wants that a person may have, as well as for any medical needs or concerns that exist. We are obligated to ensure that people are safe and con-

tent, have their personal needs met, and have the support necessary to live meaningful lives.

Issues relating to health, welfare, and safety are urgent matters which must be

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Do you understand...

When writing incident reports, you should identify other staff and all consumers by name, in order to avoid confusion and assure that reports are clearly written.

First name and last initial is acceptable, but referring to other people only as "he", "she", "staff", or "consumer" is not clear and lends to confusion.

IT'S ME AND I HAVE AUTISM....

Submitted by Penny Dodson

Dear friends:

You may see me in the hall, or we may be visiting each other for a party. Some times these visits can be very hard for me, but here is some information that might help our visit to be more successful.

As you probably know, I am challenged by a hidden disability called Autism or what some people refer to a Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD). Autism/PDD is a neurodevelopmental disorder, which makes it hard for me to understand the environment around me. I have barriers in my brain that you can't see but which make it difficult for me to adapt to my surroundings.

Sometimes I may seem rude and abrupt, but it is only because I have to try so hard to understand people and, at the same time, make myself understood. People with autism have different abilities; some may not speak well, some write beautiful poetry, others are whizzes in math, or have difficulties making friends. We are all, different and need various degrees of support.

Sometimes when I am touched unexpectedly, it might feel painful and make me want to run away. I get easily frustrated too. Being with lots of other people is like standing next to a moving freight train and trying to decide how and when to jump aboard. I feel frightened and confused a lot of the time, like you would if you landed on an alien planet and didn't understand how the inhabitants communicated.

This is why I need to have things the same way as much as possible. Once I learn how things happen, I can get by ok. But if

something, anything, changes then I have to relearn the situation all over again! It is very hard.

When you try to talk to me, I often can't understand what you say because there is a lot of distraction around. I have to concentrate very hard to hear and understand one thing at a time.

You might think I am ignoring you-I am not. Rather, I am hearing everything and not knowing what is most important to respond to. Parties and gatherings are exceptionally hard because there are so many different people, places, and things going on that are out of my ordinary realm. This may be fun and adventurous for most people but, for me, it's very hard work and can be extremely stressful.

I often have to get away from all the commotion to calm down. It is great when I have a private place to retreat.

If I cannot sit at the meal table, do not think I am misbehaving or that my staff have no control over me. Sitting in one place for even five minutes is often impossible for me. I feel so antsy and overwhelmed by all the smells and people, I just have to get up and move about. Please don't hold up anything for me, go on with out me and my staff will handle the situation the best way they know, and how they were trained.

Eating in general is hard for me. If you understand that autism is a sensory processing disorder, it's no wonder eating is a problem! Think of all the senses involved with eating: sight, smell, taste, touch AND all the complicated mechanics that are involved with chewing and swallowing that a lot of people with autism have trouble with. I am on a new special food program to help me digest food

better. So I am very picky at what I can have to eat. I literally cannot eat certain foods.

People with autism often have little things that they do to help themselves feel more comfortable. Some people call it "self regulation" or "self stimming." I might rock, hum, jump around, flap my hands around, or any number of things. I am not trying to be disruptive or weird. Again, I am doing what I have to do for my brain to adapt to your world.

Sometimes I cannot stop myself from talking, or partaking in an activity. People call this "persevering" which is kind of like self-regulation or stimming. I do this only because I have found something to occupy myself that makes me feel comfortable, and I don't want to come out of that comfortable place and join your hard-to-figure-out world. Preservative behaviors are good to a certain degree because they help me calm down. Please be respectful to my family and my staff if they let me "stem" for a while as they know me best and what helps to calm me.

Oftentimes I have to use all of my senses to explore the environment around me. I might touch things excessively to make sense of my surroundings. Many of us people with autism get the most information about the world through the visual sense. Sometimes I might even have to touch, twirl or spin things in order to "place" where I am and what I am doing. I learn about the world through channels that may seem unusual to others. But imagine if you were to visit the North Pole without being equipped with the necessary clothing or items needed to endure the brutal environment. How would you feel? You

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Individual Support Plans...

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clearly spelled out in the ISP. Does the individual have important health-related issues? Is he or she diabetic, with a diet that must be carefully monitored? Does the person have a serious medical condition that must be watched closely? Support staff must be very knowledgeable of dietary needs and conditions, including specific diet plans and food consistencies. As a staff person, you might be also faced with safety issues or behavioral issues which could be dangerous or disruptive to the person you support.

Staff must be knowledgeable of self care needs for each individual they support. Does the person bathe himself or does he need physical assistance. Can the individual brush her own teeth, is staff supervision required, or is she physically incapable of independent tooth care. Does the person toilet independently, or must staff provide physical

assistance.

It therefore becomes of vital importance that support staff are intimately aware of all the information contained in the ISP. Support staff-

The ISP is *the* plan of care for every individual; you *must* make sure you are following it to the letter, as written.

each and every direct support staff person- must be knowledgeable of every aspect of the support plan *and* must be capable of answering any questions which may be asked regarding each individual's care. You can be assured that, when we are being monitored in coming weeks, surveyors will ask you, in detail, specifics which are found in individual's ISPs.

Are support plans always accurate? Unfortunately, no. However, it behooves us to identify incorrect information and get all misinformation corrected! For all intents and purposes, if something is stated in the ISP, it's a fact- regardless of whether the information is actually accurate or not. If we don't identify errors and get them corrected, for all practical purposes that means we are agreeing with the information as written. If you do not agree with an ISP, see your Department Director and take measures to have the ISP corrected immediately.

The ISP is *the* plan of care for every individual; you absolutely must make sure you are following it to the letter, as written. If you are not intimately aware of the information in the ISP for the person(s) you support, take the time now to become very familiar with the support plan. Your knowledge is essential to adequate care- a great deal is at stake!

MICHAEL DUNN CENTER TRAINING POLICY

In order to ensure that the Michael Dunn Center maintains knowledgeable, qualified staff, and to assure that agency personnel provide the best care, welfare, safety, and security of individuals who receive services from this agency, staff are required to attend specific training courses in accordance with The Tennessee Division of Mental Retardation Services regulations. This required training includes specific Pre-Service training, which must be completed within 30 days of hire, and Core Training that must be completed within 60 days. It is the responsibility of each staff person to see that they attend initial classes, as well as regularly sched-

uled update classes, in a timely manner.

Upon hire, and when updates are due, each MDC department will schedule classes for staff, who are then responsible for attending all classes as scheduled, arriving on time for classes, and conducting themselves in a professional manner during the course of their classes. Disciplinary action will result when staff fail to attend classes as scheduled.

The procedure for attending training, and disciplinary actions for failure to attend, is as follows:

- Upon hire, and as needed for

updates, employee training will be scheduled by Supervisory Personnel. Each employee will be given a training schedule by the Department Director or Supervisor. Staff who fail to obtain training in a timely manner may be demoted, which could result in a reduction in wages, possibly to a minimum wage level.

- If an employee cannot attend a class, it is the employee's responsibility to contact the department director or supervisor in order to request an excused absence. Missed classes must be rescheduled in

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Is That Your Final Answer?

basic issues that will be expounded upon in various forms of communication throughout our agency in the next few weeks.

According to some of the reports we have received from the state, the following problems have been most damaging to community agencies and the people they serve during the time of a survey:

Surveyors request to enter the home and upon entering they find that the staff are more concentrated on being hospitable to the guest surveyors than they are to the people receiving services. Staff forget to offer liquid and food to the people served and at times even forget to dispense medication according to policy. When surveyors request to enter the home, they should be asked to present credentials and once proper identification has been presented, they should be invited into the home. They should be informed that you will be happy to answer any questions, but that otherwise you will be attending to the needs of the people served. The needs of the people we serve should not be placed on hold in order to accommodate observers. The surveyors should witness you offering liquid to the people served on a frequent basis. This is a pet peeve with them and they are looking to

see that people's physical needs are being met. You should be constantly anticipating and meeting the needs of people being served. This includes offering liquids, food and seeing that regular schedules are being kept. They should see the ISP being implemented as written. Therefore, if the ISP states that a person loves to go to church on Wednesdays and it just happens to be Wednesday when they visit, they should witness you taking the person to church. They want to see that mattresses are clean and comfortable (should be at

The needs of the people we serve should not be placed on hold in order to accommodate observers.

least two layers of cloth over all plastic bed covers), the home and individual rooms are comfortable, there is adequate food (at least a week's worth on hand) and that food in the refrigerator is properly stored (with all leftovers being properly covered with a label indicating when it should be thrown away), water temperature from all faucets should not exceed 115 degrees, a person has access to money so they go places and purchase personal items and the person

is generally happy and well cared for.

There will be several questions asked of direct support staff during this process. You should have a list of these questions. Kelli McLees is in the process of providing this information to all employees along with a question of the week which everyone has the opportunity to take part in. One question that will be asked which I would like to assist you in becoming familiar with is, What Is The Medicaid Waiver And How Do You Appeal Denied Services?

Answer: The Medicaid Waiver is the way states can use Medicaid dollars for services for people with mental retardation. It lets the state pay for services in the community, not an institution. If services are denied, the person has the right to appeal. To appeal, call the TennCare Solutions Team at 1-800-878-3192. They can process the appeal by phone or send an appeal form.

Please read all of the information that is sent out about upcoming surveys as your awareness and knowledge will make us successful and remember your actions and statements will make a big difference in the quality of care that our folks receive.

It's Me and I have Autism....

Continued from page 2

would do whatever it would take to exist. This is what I have to do every moment of every day.

Remember my staff have to watch me much more closely than they do some other people. This is for my own safety and to facilitate my integration with you. My support staff are good people and

need your support.

Parties and gatherings are filled with sights, sounds, and smells. The average household is turned into a busy, frantic, festive place. Remember that this may be fun for you but it's very hard work for me to conform. If I fall apart or act out in a way that you consider socially inappropriate, please re-

member that I don't possess the neurological system that is required to follow all your rules.

I am a unique person- an interesting person. I will find my place at this celebration that is comfortable for us all, as long as you'll try to view the world through my eyes!

WHAT IS TITLE VI?

Title VI deals with nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs. It covers all forms of federal assistance except contracts of insurance and guaranty.

Title VI does not cover employment unless

- employment practices result in discrimination against people who receive benefits from the program, or
- the purpose of the federal assistance is to provide employment.

Title VI says:

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Title VI is available online at: <http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/42/2000d.html>

Simply stated, all persons receiving services must be treated without regard to race, color, or national origin. People may not be

- excluded from participating in,
- denied the benefits of, or
- discriminated against in the programs, service, or activities of an agency receiving federal financial assistance.

In addition, agencies receiving assistance must make sure that its policies do not have the effect of discriminating against people because of their race, color, or national origin.

What kinds of actions are discriminatory?

- ▼ Not allowing a person to have a service, opportunity or other benefit he/she is entitled to because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Giving a person a service, opportunity, or other benefit that is different than others receive because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Providing services, opportunities, or other benefits to a person separately because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Stopping a person from enjoying facilities that others can visit because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Having rules and processes that limit participation because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Talking to someone in a way that is disrespectful because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Not allowing a person the chance to become a member of a planning or advisory board because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Separating, housing, or transferring a person because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Not providing free interpreters for a person with Limited English Proficiency
- ▼ Permitting discriminatory activity in a facility built in whole or in

part with federal funds.

- ▼ Requiring different standards or conditions as prerequisites for accepting a person into a program that receives federal funds based upon race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.
- ▼ Retaliating against a person who makes a Title VI complaint or a person who participates in the investigation of a Title VI complaint.

Who can file a Title VI complaint?

Any person who receives any benefit or service provided by TDMHDD may file a complaint if he or she has had unfair or different treatment because of race, color, national origin or Limited English Proficiency.

Where are Title VI complaints filed? Title VI complaints must be made in writing and can be filed in the following three levels:

1. The Local Level
Kelli McLees,
Local Coordinator
Michael Dunn Center
2. The Departmental Level
TDMHDD Title VI Coordinator
Office of Consumer Affairs
425 5th Ave. North
Cordell Hull Building
Nashville, TN 37243
3. The Federal Level
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Atlanta Federal Center,
Suite 3B70
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909

Say always to yourself, "first with the head, then with the heart, that's how a man stays ahead from the start"

Hoppie Groenewald

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS AND ERRORS IN INCIDENT REPORTING

Roger Richmond

Misconception: Only one consumer's name may be used on an incident report.

Fact: All individuals who are involved in an incident should be named in the body of the report. In fact, all individuals who are involved in an incident need to be named, in order for the report to fully represent the incident. In years past, more than one consumer could not be named in order to maintain confidentiality for all individuals who were involved. This no longer holds true, as incident reports are no longer placed in each individual master file, but are maintained in a separate incident report file.

Misconception: Staff person's names may not be used in incident reports.

Fact: Staff, as well as consumers should be identified in the report. Individual staff do not have to be referred to only as "staff", but should be identified by name so the

incident is reported as clearly as possible.

Error: Incident reports involving ER or hospital care often do not include vital information.

Correct Procedure: Whenever someone is taken for medical care, the person writing the report must be very careful to include all vital information in the report. For example, if an individual is seen in the Emergency Room and treated for a particular injury or illness, the report must very clearly state exactly what the physician's findings were as well as any treatment or recommendations. A copy of the ER report must be attached to the incident report.

Error: Incidents involving a visit to the ER are not submitted as Reportable Incidents.

Correct Procedure: Any incident in which an individual is treated or assessed at ER for

an injury are classified as Reportable Incidents and must be written on the proper form and faxed to the DMR Central Office within one working day. For example, an individual falls down and injures their arm and is taken to ER for an x-ray. Even if the arm is not broken, because the individual was taken to ER for an x-ray, the incident is Reportable.

Error: Reportable Incident Reports are not submitted in a timely manner.

Correct Procedure: All Reportable Incidents must be faxed to the Central Office of the Division of Mental Retardation Services within one working day. Therefore, all reports must be submitted promptly and immediately to Kelli McLees, MDC Incident Management Coordinator.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING

Sally Wilkerson

Do you truly understand the importance of incident reporting? Many staff seem to think that we just find more paperwork for them to do on a daily basis; however, usually paperwork is done for a good reason. A good example of essential paperwork is incident reporting. This is a very valuable tool that we as an agency use to track illnesses, behaviors, or any other thing that may be going on with the individuals that we serve.

Every Tuesday the agency Incident Management Committee meets to review and discuss incident re-

ports. We review all incident reports which have been written—both serious and non-serious (Reportable and Non-Reportable). Many times we are able to track illnesses when they are in the beginning stages. We are also able to track behaviors where the consumers need adjustments in their medications. All these documents are sent with the individual to the various medical professionals, in order to better tell the story of what is going on with the individual. Remember a lot of the consumers are non-verbal and this is a way of communication that they

have with us to let us know that something is not right within them.

So next time that you see an incident happen with those that we provide service for please write the incident up. This way everyone knows what is happening in this person's life and we are better able to serve them to the best of our capabilities. Change the mind set that it is just something else for staff to do to the mind set that it is for the benefit of our consumers.

EW! WHAT'S IN KITCHEN SPONGES?

Reprinted

If you have used your kitchen sponge longer than two or three days, listen up: It's swimming with millions of bacteria, specifically *E. coli*, salmonella, or campylobacter.

That's the word from Elizabeth Scott, co-director of the Simmons Center for Hygiene and Health in the Home at Simmons College in Boston, who told *The New York Times*, "That means that any time you use the sponge to wipe up a surface you are potentially spreading those pathogens."

Your No. 1 worry for food-borne illnesses is your own kitchen.

Although fragile individuals, babies, and the elderly are most at risk for such illnesses, anyone--no matter how healthy and strong--can easily get sick from these pathogens when they are allowed to multiply on food. There are approximately 76 million cases of food-borne illnesses annually, and most of those occur from pathogens in our own homes.

Sponges aren't the only culprits. Cooks who don't wash their hands before preparing food can also breed illness. Janet Anderson, clinical associate professor of nutrition and food sciences at Utah State University, put it this way when she told *The Times*, "Everybody is so acutely aware of mad cow disease, but people aren't aware of the fact

that they don't even wash their hands when they enter their kitchens, which is a much greater risk." When Anderson filmed more than 100 people preparing dinner, only 34 percent of the participants washed their hands before cooking, and most of those didn't even use soap.

So what can you do?

* Wash your hands in hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds

Your No. 1 worry for food-borne illnesses is your own kitchen

before you begin preparing food. This not only rinses off the surface bacteria, but also makes it difficult for bacteria to cling to your skin. Wash them again after you touch raw meat, fish, or vegetables.

* Kill the harmful bacteria from your cellulose sponges by microwaving them on high for one minute. Do it every day.

* Launder or microwave dishcloths regularly.

* Although wooden cutting boards are more likely to harbor bacteria than plastic or rubber cutting boards, wood isn't all bad. Dean Cliver, a professor of food

safety at the University of California, Davis, told *The New York Times* that cellulose in wood absorbs bacteria--but will not release it. "We've never been able to get the bacteria down in the wood back up on the knife to contaminate food later," he said.

* Plastic cutting boards are not 100 percent safe. Bacteria does get into the little knife cuts made in the plastic. While 90 percent of the bacteria die in a dishwasher during the drying period, 10 percent don't die and can live for weeks.

* Make sure the water in your dishwasher is hotter than 140 degrees or bacteria will survive. If the water temperature is lower than that, bacteria on a plastic cutting board will actually be spread around to other items in the dishwasher.

* Kitchens that look the cleanest are often the dirtiest. People who wipe their counters a lot often spread bacteria in the process. In a University of Arizona study, the "cleanest" kitchens were those of bachelors who never wiped up and just put the dirty dishes in the sink. Go figure.

Remember this: No matter how often you nuke your sponges and wash your cutting boards, no kitchen will ever be germ-free.

MDC Training Policy

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such a manner as to be completed within allowed time frames as per DMR policy. Only one absence will be excused for any given class. Additional absences may result in a written reprimand and/or a demotion. Any un-excused absence may also result in a letter of reprimand being placed in the em-

ployee's personnel file. department Directors have the discretion to excuse absences that reflect unusual, unforeseen circumstances that are beyond the control of the employee; however, repeated absence may not be excused.

- More than one un-excused absence may result in a three-day

suspension

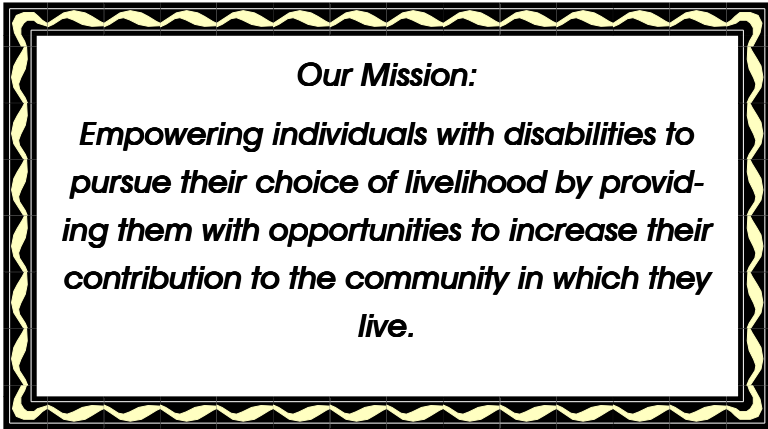
- Additional occurrences of un-excused absences may result in a suspension from job duties until all training is completed, a demotion, or termination of employment. Any absence without prior approval from the department supervisor will be considered un-excused.

**THE MICHAEL DUNN CENTER
STAFF BULLETIN**



Phone Numbers:

BIT Crisis Beeper..... 909-5593
Poison Control.....1-800-222-1222
Kyle Hauth pager.....602-9611
Abuse Investigator....1-800-579-0023



OUR QUEST FOR A SCHOOL BUS

Anita Richmond

In recent years, the use of passenger vans to transport children to and from school and school-related activities has become a significant issue. Under current Federal Law any motor vehicle designed to carry more than 10 persons is classified as a bus. A bus is classified as a school bus if it is used, or intended for use, in transporting students to and from school. Federal law now prohibits dealers from selling/leasing a motor vehicle with a capacity of more than 10 persons for the purpose of transporting students to and from school or school-related activities unless the vehicle complies with the applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses. Vans do not meet these standards.

Because of these laws the state of Tennessee has been phasing out the use of vans by schools over the past few years. As a result most insurance carriers, including ours, will no longer cover vans used to transport school aged students.

We agree that the safest way to transport students is on school buses and as a result we have purchased two small school buses to be used to transport our students. However, we serve students from five counties, many of whom live in remote rural areas, and we have found that two buses are not adequate to get all our students to school in a timely manner. In fact we are currently unable to transport three of our students at all.

After extensive research and procurement of bids we were able to purchase the two small buses for approximately \$45,000.00 each. We operate on a very limited budget and the purchase of a greatly needed third bus was simply beyond our means.

The students we serve have very specialized needs which cannot be met in their local schools, but which can be obtained from the MDC School Program. We are requesting assistance from any organizations which might help us reach our goal of a new bus. If anyone has information that might be helpful, please contact Anita Richmond at 865-376-3416 or 865-368-2984.

SUMMERTIME PRECAUTIONS

Sally Wilkerson

It is that time of the year that we need to take extra precautions with individuals when we are outdoors in the heat and sun. Please make sure that everyone has sunscreen protection on when they are outside. Many people take medications that make them extra sensitive to the sun. Therefore, they need sunscreen on, even on cloudy days, to prevent sunburns or any damage to their skin from the sun. Should people be out for any length of time please also make sure that they have plenty of fluids- preferably water, to drink. (editor's note: Remember that so-

das and caffeinated drinks can have a dehydrating effect and defeat the purpose).

Many times individuals do not realize how hot it is outside and may not let staff know they are hot or thirsty, so please monitor people very closely when outdoors. Also be aware that if they are on the vans that the van needs to be running with the air on to prevent heat exhausting. We hear on the news almost daily of people dying when they are in vehicles due to them getting to hot; however, this is something that we as an agency

can prevent from happening to those in our care.

Another key point is to always visually check to make sure that all vans are completely unloaded before locking the doors. There have been times that individuals have been left on the vans and staff were unaware. We have been very fortunate that nothing serious has occurred yet; however, if we slack in our jobs concerning these issues the next time we may not be as fortunate. Remember an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.