



Program Evaluation Report

Supported Living Services (SLS)

January 1, 2008 - August 31, 2009
Submitted October 15, 2009

SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES PROGRAM EVALUATION
January 1, 2008 - August 31, 2009

Submitted October 15, 2009

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Program Outcome Objectives	3
III.	Evaluation Design	4
IV.	Consumer Information	5
	Number of Persons Served	
	Needs Encountered	
	Progress Related to Individual Support Plan Objectives	
	Decreases in Paid Supports and Increases in Natural Supports/Self-Reliance	
	Support Configurations	
V.	Consumer Satisfaction	8
VI.	Staff Training and Qualifications.....	10
VII.	Grievances/Incident Reports	13
VIII.	Summary of Strengths, Challenges, and Recommendations	14

I. Introduction

Community Interface's Supported Living Services (SLS) are designed to provide support for adults with developmental disabilities who wish to live in the community but need significant support to do so. Key SLS principles are listed below and provided by the Department of Developmental Services *Developing Supported Living Services: A Guide to Essentials for Service Agencies and Regional Centers, September 2000*:

1. A Home of One's Own

- ▶ Individuals live in homes that they own, lease or rent like other members of their community.
- ▶ Individuals choose where they live and with whom and they control what happens in their home.
- ▶ Individuals' housing is separate from their services so they are secure in their homes and do not have to move if their needs, their services or their service agency changes.
- ▶ Individuals are safe in their home and neighborhood.

2. Choice and Self-Directed

- ▶ Individuals make their own everyday choices.
- ▶ Individuals plan for their futures.
- ▶ Individuals direct the services they receive and have a choice of agencies and staff.
- ▶ Individuals are supported (e.g., technology, communication devices, behavioral support) to communicate their preferences, choices and needs.
- ▶ Individuals are satisfied with the services they receive.

3. Relationships

- ▶ Individuals have family, friends and neighbors who support them in regular ways or as paid help.
- ▶ Individuals and their circle of support work together as a team with the supported living agency and others to share responsibility for his or her well being.

4. Community Membership

Supported Living Services Program Evaluation
Vendor #H39475
May 15, 2007

- ▶ Individuals fully participate in the mainstream of community life according to personal choice and preference.
- ▶ Individuals have opportunities to join clubs, groups, organizations, and religious groups.
- ▶ Individuals use local community resources and generic services.

5. Flexible, Tailored Services and Supports

- ▶ Individual Service Plans are developed through a person-centered planning process.
- ▶ Service plans reflect the support that each individual wants and needs and plans change as wants and needs change.
- ▶ Individuals have opportunities to increase their abilities, confidence and quality of life and support to maintain an adequate level of health and safety.

Community Interface's Supported Living Services include: (1) assessment, (2) supported living plan development, (3) procurement of services, and (4) ongoing provision of supports.

II. Program Outcome Objectives

The ultimate goal of SLS is to assist adults with developmental disabilities to become as independent as possible while receiving necessary supports to live in their own communities. This goal can be met through any number of different support arrangements, and the exact structure of supports will vary depending on individual needs and desires.

To meet the overall program goal, two measurable objectives have been identified for the SLS program. The first objective is to facilitate each participant to meet or partially meet at least two measurable community living skills objectives as identified in the Individual Support Plan (ISP). One hundred percent of the individuals that had ISP periods ending during the reporting period met or partially met at least two objectives.

The second objective of the program is for at least 80% of consumers to maintain a community living situation. This objective was exceeded, with 100% of the program participants maintaining a community living situation.

III. Evaluation Design

The purpose of the evaluation is to assist Community Interface in determining service effectiveness and efficiency in relation to program design and satisfaction with services. Aggregate data on consumer progress is collected from individual support plan reports. Consumer feedback information is collected through satisfaction surveys completed throughout the year.

Service evaluation information is distributed to San Diego Regional Center and Community Interface Services' Board of Directors, agency directors, and unit supervisors. The evaluation report is also reviewed with Community Interface Services' direct service staff members and the Advisory & Safety Committee. This report covers the period from January 1, 2008, through August 31, 2009, as specified in contract #H39475.

IV. Consumer Information

Number of Persons Served:

A total of 30 persons received services during the report period and 24 people were receiving services on August 31, 2009, the end of the report period¹.

Needs Encountered:

Individual needs encountered during the report period were as varied as the individuals served. These needs were identified through assessments, personal futures planning, and consumer input discussed at planning meetings and documented on Supported Living plans. Many of the needs fell into the following service categories:

- ▶ Household/Domestic
- ▶ Financial
- ▶ Health and Safety
- ▶ Mobility/Access
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Social/Emotional/Sensory
- ▶ Personal Care
- ▶ Community Involvement
- ▶ Household Maintenance/Trash Removal
- ▶ Shopping
- ▶ Health/Exercise
- ▶ Meal Preparation
- ▶ Pet Care
- ▶ Medication
- ▶ Problem Solving
- ▶ Needs Re-assessment & Support Structure Modification

¹ Four consumers passed away during this report period and two individuals transferred to another community living program.

Progress Related to Individual Support Plan (ISP) Objectives:

As stated earlier, one objective of SLS is for each participant to meet or partially meet at least two measurable community living skills objectives as identified in the ISP. Of the 27 individuals that received services and had Individual Support Plans end during the reporting period, 100% met or partially met at least two objectives.

Decreases in Paid Supports and Increases in Natural Supports/Self-Reliance:

Community Interface's SLS seek to foster the independence of all program participants. Participant skill acquisition, decreases in paid supports, and increases in involvement by informal support networks translate into greater independence. Throughout this report period, the Supported Living Program has witnessed countless examples of increased independence; some examples follow:

- ▶ Andre now uses a picture board and book to make his own decisions on what activities he wants to participate in and what food he wants to eat.
- ▶ Mike and Angie have set a wedding date and are on their way planning their life together.
- ▶ Duain opened his own bank account.
- ▶ Nick has broadened his horizons and is getting out of the house more often and trying different activities such as the horse races and meeting his friend Ron at the mall.
- ▶ Michael increased his alone time to three hours per day.
- ▶ Sean takes public transportation and attends Special Olympics events independently.
- ▶ Kevin goes home to see his family several times a month.
- ▶ Heather has taken control of her financial situation and is saving her money, which enabled her to go on vacation and take her first plane trip.
- ▶ Kevin now uses a picture schedule to complete his daily tasks with much greater independence than before.
- ▶ James went on vacation to Colorado with his family.
- ▶ Michael learned how to take the bus and trolley independently to work and is in the process of learning how to take them home.

Supported Living Services Program Evaluation

Vendor #H39475

October 15, 2009

Support Configurations:

Support configurations for the 30 individuals served during the reporting period were as follows. Some individuals utilized more than one support configuration during the year:

- ▶ Lived with one staff roommate and one or more other roommates.....4
- ▶ Lived with a staff roommate and no other roommates 23
- ▶ Lived alone with supports from rotating staff 6

V. Consumer Satisfaction

Staff members distribute satisfaction surveys to consumers, their family, and other team members several times throughout the year especially around the time of the consumer's planning team meetings and upon request. Survey responses have been summarized for this report. Any issues or concerns were addressed individually with each respondent. Of the sixteen that responded:

- ▶ 100% said that they were happy with the services they were receiving.
- ▶ 100% said that they were learning to advocate/speak for themselves and make their own decisions.
- ▶ 100% said that they were developing the skills that they wanted to learn.
- ▶ 100% said their ISP included items that were important to them.
- ▶ 90% said they have the adaptive equipment they need to help them be as independent as possible.
- ▶ 100% said that they were informed of social activities, vacations, meetings, and appointments.
- ▶ 94% said that their social activities, vacations, meetings, and appointments were accessible to them.
- ▶ 93% said they were as involved in their community as they would like to be.
- ▶ 100% said that their support staff helped them to be a part of their community.
- ▶ 100% said that they liked their Community Interface Services support team.
- ▶ 90% said there was nothing they would want to change about the Supported Living Services they receive.

Supported Living Services Program Evaluation

Vendor #H39475

October 15, 2009

Some of the responses to the question, “What do you liked best about Supported Living?” are listed below:

“I get to do fun things with people I like, they explain things to me and allow me to express my opinion.”

“Living on my own-being my own man.”

“It helps me keep my independence.”

“There’s always someone there when I need them.”

“The thing I like best is that I have a supported living roommate that’s positive and encourages me to not be so negative.”

“Still being able to enjoy family life.”

“I know that my autistic son is well cared about.”

VI. Staff Training and Qualifications

Applicants for employment with Community Interface Services are screened through a rigorous process including staff member interviews, consumer interviews, site visits, and reference verifications. All job offers are contingent on the employee passing the agency's screenings.

All Supported Living positions require the following minimum staff member qualifications, skills, or education, to ensure that direct service personnel provide the highest quality support possible to consumers in the Supported Living program:

- ▶ The skill, training, or education to do the following:
 - ✓ establish and maintain constructive and appropriate relationships with consumers
 - ✓ minimize risks of endangerment to the health, safety, and well-being of consumers
 - ✓ certify in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation and operate 24-hour emergency assistance system, as appropriate to the need with respect to any specific consumer (after appropriate training)
 - ✓ achieve the intended results of the service being performed
- ▶ Current and valid licenses, certificates, or registrations legally required to provide service
- ▶ Demonstrate dependability and personal integrity as verified by employment and character references
- ▶ Valid California driver's license, motor vehicle insurance, a safe driving record, and a vehicle in safe working condition
- ▶ Confirmation of a passing TB test and drug screening
- ▶ Fingerprint clearance(s) through the Department of Justice and/or the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- ▶ Willingness to adhere to and support Community Interface Services' philosophical orientation regarding service delivery

SLS at Community Interface are provided through the Supported Living unit, with a program director, a unit supervisor and two coordinators working with SLS recipients, and supervising and providing support to the direct service staff.

Supervisors and coordinators are required, at a minimum, to have three years of experience in a human services delivery system, including at least one year in a comparable program or a bachelor's degree in a human services related field, and the demonstrated ability to provide staff member training, supervision, and planning. Supervisors and coordinators are also required to have the ability to effectively communicate with adults having developmental disabilities, have strong communication and organizational skills, and have the ability to function effectively in pressure/crisis

Supported Living Services Program Evaluation

Vendor #H39475

October 15, 2009

situations. *Preference* is given to internal candidates over external candidates when both are equally qualified.

The education and experience of the Supported Living program director, unit supervisors and the Supported Living coordinators that provided support during the report period are as follows:

Education		Experience	
15 to 16 years:	3	3 to 9 years:	1
17+ years:	2	10+ years:	4

Education level ranged from 15 to 18 years, with an average of 16 years. Experience level ranged from eight and a half years to 25 years, with an average of 14 years.

The direct service staff members at Community Interface Services are a diverse group, coming from many different backgrounds. The education and experience levels of the 36 full-time and part-time Supported Living direct service staff members are summarized below:

Education		Experience	
12 to 14 years:	22	0 to 2 years:	7
15 to 16 years:	11	3 to 9 years:	14
17+ years:	3	10+ years:	15

Education level ranged from 14 to 18 years, with an average of 14 years and 3 months. Experience level ranged from four months to 35 years, with an average of 10 years and 7 months.

Community Interface Services is committed to the professional development of its staff members. New employees generally complete approximately two weeks of new employee orientation training. During this two weeks, each trainee receives training on Community Interface's mission, policies, practices, and philosophy; the use of Supported Living Services to promote self-reliance; consumer protection and rights, including Community Interface's internal grievance procedures, Fair Hearing provisions, Special Incident reporting, rights of consumers, and protections from abuse and financial exploitation; appropriate conduct of staff members in establishing and maintaining personal relationships; participation of consumers in teaching and consulting; office procedures; general agency information; developmental disabilities; and the California service delivery system.

Trainees also view training videos on lifting techniques, defensive driving, person centered planning, teaching methods, and positive behavioral intervention. Additionally, trainees typically "shadow" an experienced employee or supervisor to observe direct service activities and then receive on-the-job training with the consumer(s) they will actually be working with in their position. CPR and First Aid training are completed

Supported Living Services Program Evaluation

Vendor #H39475

October 15, 2009

within the first 30 days of employment. Positive Behavioral Intervention training is typically completed within the first 120 days of employment and a refresher course is provided to all direct service staff annually. If a caseload warrants individual training prior to attending a regularly scheduled class, arrangements are made between the supervisor and direct care staff.

Community Interface staff members participate in ongoing training each month in various forums including individual staffings, unit meetings, and in-service trainings. The topics of each training session are planned annually to include information on health and safety; recent developments in theory and practice of supported living services; policies, procedures, and practices to meet consumer objectives; identification of service delivery issues and challenges and how to deal with them; direct service techniques; regulatory requirements; and philosophical guidelines. Additional topics are added as needed.

VII. Grievances/Incident Reports

Grievance Procedure:

Community Interface Services maintains a formal grievance procedure and provides training to consumers upon intake and annually thereafter on how to follow the procedure. The grievance procedure outlines individual rights, as well as the step-by-step process for filing a complaint. No grievance procedures were initiated during the report period.

Incident Reports:

Community Interface Services completes a special incident report in the event of any unusual occurrence (i.e., service delivery-related accident, reports of abuse, etc.) in accordance with Title 17, CCR §54327(b). The incident report is completed and sent to the Regional Center within 24 hours of when the incident becomes known to Community Interface Services. Under Supported Living Regulations, any instances of abuse are also reported to the appropriate local law enforcement agency.

During the report period, a total of 23 incident reports were filed in Supported Living. Incidents were addressed with the individual consumers and planning team members as appropriate.

VIII. Summary of Strengths, Challenges, and Recommendations

The greatest strength that continues to be apparent in the Supported Living program is its staff members. The program and consumers benefit from relatively low staff turnover, and many long-term staff members. The stability and commitment of the direct care and supervisory staff help consumers to develop trust and feel comfortable, which in turn allows the consumers to try new things and develop new abilities and skills. As a result, over the years, many consumers have made outstanding progress at becoming more independent.

The quality of the staff members is due, at least in part, to another identified strength: the intense, careful, and very selective recruitment process used to bring new staff members on board. Recruitment of staff members is guided by individual consumer needs, wants, and preferences. Potential staff members are thoroughly screened and interviewed before meeting consumers. If a potential match is identified and the applicant meets the basic job requirements, then the applicant and consumer are introduced and supported to spend as much time as needed together for the consumer to decide if s/he is interested in pursuing the applicant. If the consumer and applicant decide to pursue a match, the applicant must successfully complete one or two more extensive interviews and detailed reference and background verifications. This rigorous screening process is designed to assist the agency in hiring only the most qualified, and the best suited, individuals. The agency continues to find its ability to effectively attract and retain qualified staff members to be a challenge even in the current labor market and continues to intensify use of new and innovative recruitment methods.

A challenge for many participants is the ability to financially maintain their independent living situations in light of the many cuts in resources, such as Medi-Cal and SSI, and the continuing rise in everyday living costs. Being of very limited means, most participants find their monthly budget barely covers the necessities of life. These cuts have forced many participants to budget for needed medical or dental services from their limited and diminished monthly budgets, which have made for some tough choices. The agency will continue to train staff in assisting participants in accessing generic resources available to them to help subsidize living expenses. Staff will assist participants in developing relationships with medical and dental resources to negotiate reduced rates or payment plans for medical and dental needs.

As mentioned earlier in this report, four participants passed away during this report period. At the time of their deaths, three of the four participants were living in their own homes despite significant health issues or support needs, as were their wishes. The opportunity to continue to live in their own home was of the highest priority to each of these gentlemen and allowed each individual the ability to maintain their independence and the highest quality of life for as long as possible. While it continues to be a challenge for the participant, planning team, and agency to implement support structures to meet the increasing and changing needs of a participant as they age or their health declines to

Supported Living Services Program Evaluation

Vendor #H39475

October 15, 2009

allow them to remain safely in their own homes, being able to do so is one of the core values of supported living and should remain a priority.