

CAPTAIN

California Autism Professional Training
and Information Network



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When I was approached by Anne Delfosse, CSHA President-Elect, to share about CAPTAIN in the CSHA Magazine, I didn't hesitate for a second and responded immediately with a resounding, "Yes, of course!" It has been an exciting journey collaborating with others to develop and launch CAPTAIN, a cross agency network developed to support the understanding and use of evidence based practices (EBPs) with individuals affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in California.

It is a well-known fact that there is an increase in the reported prevalence of children with an ASD estimated by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be around 1 in 88 American children. ASD is identified as the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the United States. Consequently, personnel from school districts, public and private agencies are experiencing greater demand for providing high quality clinical, educational and family support services. In addition, legislation, policy and position statements require all service providers to implement research based/evidence-based practices (EBPs). That is, treatment selection needs to be made by a team of individuals (including the family) to consider the unique needs and history of the individual with an ASD, and then use that information to carefully select those EBPs that have evidence of efficacy demonstrated by rigorous research design. And, of course, the SLP is an integral member of any team that serves an individual with an ASD; it is a life-long neurodevelopmental disability that can cause significant social interaction, social

communication and behavioral challenges that affect all aspects of an individual's functioning.

Our outcome expectation of CAPTAIN is that through our collaborative efforts to increase networking and knowledge about EBPs, individuals with an ASD will be better able to participate and contribute to society as independently and as fully as possible. In addition, as the California Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders states so eloquently, "Together we can bring hope and opportunity to many of our families, friends, and neighbors who are facing the challenges of ASD."

CAPTAIN LEADERSHIP TEAM

The CAPTAIN Leadership Team is made up of professionals from the Diagnostic Centers, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UC Davis MIND Institute and University of Southern California), Regional Centers/Department of Development Services, Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPAs), County Offices of Education, Local Education Agencies, California Department of Education, and Family Resource Centers. Most of these professionals participated as State Trainers in the National Professional Development Center on ASD (NPDC-ASD) statewide training project in California for the past few years. These State Trainers provided hands on coaching and technical assistance throughout California over two school years to teach multidisciplinary schools teams about EBPs for individuals with an ASD.

CAPTAIN SUMMITS FALL 2013

A little over 300 invited interagency individuals are anticipated to participate in two Summits:

October 3-4, 2013:

Located at Riverside County Office of Education

October 17-18, 2013:

Located at San Joaquin County Office of Education

We have been planning these CAPTAIN Summits for the past year and are looking forward to next October when we meet with the invited CAPTAIN Cadre from across the state to teach them about EBPs for individuals with an ASD. The two day Summit will focus on instructing the CAPTAIN Cadre about the National Professional Development Center on ASD's 24 Evidence-Based Practices, tools and resources; the Established Treatments from the National Autism Center's National Standards Project; presentations and

discussions about "hot topics" based on local needs assessments, and facilitating/fostering interagency collaboration and planning time.

CAPTAIN CADRE MEMBERS:

CAPTAIN Cadre members were nominated from SELPAs, Regional Centers and Family Resource Centers/Family Empowerment Centers throughout the state of California in January 2013. The number of Cadre slots per agency was determined using a formula developed by the CAPTAIN Leadership Team based on the capacity for the annual Summits and enrollment availability in the online *Foundations of Autism* 10 hour online course that is a requirement for each CAPTAIN Cadre member. CAPTAIN Cadre members will provide a voice and perspective representing their constituency and agency and are expected to return to the area they serve locally and serve as a "trainer of trainers" to disseminate the information they learned at the Summit. The goal is to build capacity in those who serve individuals and their families facing the challenges of ASD.

CAPTAIN WEBSITE

To learn more about CAPTAIN visit our website at www.captain.ca.gov. You will find links to the Evidence Based Practice Resources, Leadership Team, CAPTAIN Cadre Members, and Partners as well as CAPTAIN Summit information. In the future, the CAPTAIN website will also contain all of the training resources from our Summits.

WORKING TOWARD A COMMON GOAL

I hope you are as excited about CAPTAIN as I am! It is a wonderful and amazing opportunity to collaborate with many different agencies toward a common goal: to establish an interagency network of dedicated individuals to disseminate information that would result in an increased awareness of and equitable access to EBPs that improve outcomes for individuals with an ASD across the state of California. Stay up to date about CAPTAIN by visiting our website or emailing us at: autismebp@gmail.com ♦

REFERENCES

- California Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders <http://autism.senate.ca.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov>
- National Autism Center, National Standards Project <http://www.nationalautismcenter.org>
- National Professional Development Center on ASD <http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ann England, M.A., CCC-SLP-L is the Assistant Director of the Diagnostic Center, Northern California, CDE. She is also a leader of CAPTAIN and serves as the Legislative Liaison & Association Services for CSHA District 4. Ann provides professional development throughout California and nationally on the topic of ASD and has served on the California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism: Task Force on Education and Professional Development, and is a lead contributor to ACSA's *ASD Goals Aligned to the Common Core Guide*. Additionally, she is the author of *Ask A Specialist-ASD* at www.askaspecialist.ca.gov and maintains the CAPTAIN website www.captain.ca.gov. You can reach Ann at aengland@dcn-cde.ca.gov