Handout for AHEAD 2014

People are our greatest asset in actualizing access.  This session fosters the conference theme of "Access Always in All Ways" by assisting professionals who may feel marginalized or isolated to build a sustainable support network.

Professionals need "access" to a large enough support system of professionals to be able to reach someone when they need to bounce ideas off a peer.  This can be quite difficult if you don't have many professional connections or the connections you have are on vacation, sick, or in meetings all day. Have you ever asked yourself "How do I grow professionally?" or been to a session where someone asks an insightful or interesting question only to find that you never get the opportunity to connect with them? When you are a one person office, a new professional, in a small system, or at a private institution it is imperative that you develop a network of professionals to turn to with the tough questions.

Developing a peer network from around the country can provide invaluable information, resources and feedback when you are trying to reason through complex issues, whether they are about student or faculty requests, developing programs or institutional policies, or strategies for garnering additional support from administration.

This roundtable discussion will provide guided discourse on topics highly apposite to the emerging trends in the disability services field.  Attendees (maximum of 45) will be divided into three groups rotated to maximize the number of other attendees each person will have a chance to interact with.  Each group will be provided with a list of questions, each attendee will answer a different question.

Questions for discussion will include;

1. How do I grow professionally?
2. In the coming year what situations do you anticipate the most difficulty with?
3. What was your greatest success this past year?
4. Who are your current "go to" people and how did you connect with them?
5. How can I expand that circle of support for “the hard questions” or “difficult situations”?
6. How do you keep up to date on new developments in the field?
7. What are you most proud of from this past year?
8. What has been your best learning experience since starting as a professional?
9. How do you determine who your institutions "institutional peers" are across the country?
10. Why would that be important to determine who your institutional peers are?
11. You're among friends, what or who is your biggest obstacle to equal access on your campus?
12. What project caused you the most frustration this year?
13. At this point, what do you wish the most for, for your office?
14. What do you wish you had known when you started in the field?
15. What was your first step toward implementing universal design for instruction on your campus?
16. Ask any 1 member of the group a question that you've struggled with.
17. Explain your philosophy or approach to documentation review.
18. How do you prioritize requests and documentation as they come in?
19. How do you determine what is a "reasonable accommodation"?
20. What do you wish you had a stronger foundation in when you started working in disability services?
21. What was your proudest moment for a student this past year?
22. How do you handle faculty that don't respond to email and/or phone calls?
23. What keeps you going into the office each day?
24. Who is your biggest ally on campus?
25. What would cause you to consider leaving the field of disability services?
26. What does it take to move up the ladder and out of disability services in higher education?
27. What is the most unusual accommodation you have approved and why?
28. Have you ever approved an accommodation that you didn’t personally agree with? If so, why?
29. What technique(s) do you use to disarm resistant or combative faculty?
30. What has been the most interesting response you have heard in this session and why?
31. Have you had success in generating additional staffing support for your office?
32. What was or would be the most valuable training you have or could provide for your campus?
33. Where do you see the field in 5 years? How about 10 years?
34. If you could have any position in higher education what would it be and where?
35. Tell the group about the best training or webinar you’ve participated in.