



Contact: Nancy Phalanukorn
FRA Executive Director
732-747-5310 x112
NPhalanukorn@frainc.org

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Bereavement, Stress Management and Social Connections

FRA continues to provide personal connections for those with developmental or acquired disAbilities as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

Red Bank, NJ – Where there is a need, there is always a way. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Family Resource Associates (FRA) has strived to provide ways to keep those with developmental or acquired disAbilities connected to each other. Earlier this summer, after receiving feedback that there was a need for mental health support for its adult students, FRA launched a COVID-19 Bereavement and Stress Management Group. FRA adults initiated their own group in an effort to stay connected with friends. Having started as a monthly group gathering these adults are now connecting for fun and games via zoom.

The COVID-19 Bereavement and Stress Management Group is led by Sue Levine, MA, CSW, FRA Social Worker, and Alexis Spektor, M.Ed. The goal is to provide a safe space for adults to express feelings of loss and grief and to address the stressors of COVID-19 and the quarantine. “Attendees not only receive support from the group leaders, but also their peers,” said Levine. “It has been amazing to see the compassion and support extended peer to peer in the group.”

The COVID-19 group meets every other Thursday morning via Zoom. All adults enrolled in any of FRA’s programs are invited to join the group. “The group is very helpful,” said Dani Z. “I’ve been stressed so I’ve enjoyed everything we talk about and the strategies really help.”

In early 2019, Spektor and Joe Martinelli, an FRA Ambassador, started a social group based on a need for adults to learn how to take charge and connect with friends outside for social gatherings. “We were looking for a loose format similar to the way adults meet up and hang out in social settings,” said Martinelli. “We named the group Social Entrepreneurs because we were taking charge of our social life much like entrepreneurs take charge in business.”



The group initially met at local restaurants, bowling allies or the boardwalk. FRA employees often volunteered their time to help facilitate conversation and organically teach social skills. The group started to slow down in Late-2019 and took a hiatus when COVID-19 hit. “It was not until Alan Sniffen, an FRA teacher, became involved that the group was revived,” said Spektor. “Alan brought new life, ideas and structure to the group, via Zoom.”

Sniffen, together with Doug W. (an FRA student), Martinelli, and his Direct Support Professional, Manuel Solorzano, have transitioned the group to a virtual platform in Spring 2020. Spektor advises the group on an as-needed basis. “The group’s mission was to teach adults how to plan and organize social gatherings, and to practice social skills at group events,” said Sniffen. “Now, due to COVID 19, we had to transition to virtual meet ups on Zoom which has been an interesting way to learn how to communicate and have fun through this platform for the first time.”

Although the group’s future is fluid, “we know that there is a desire for personal connection and we need to find a way to help facilitate that,” said Sniffen. If you are interested in joining this social group, please look up Social Entrepreneurs on Facebook or request access by clicking [here](#). To learn more about FRA – PossAbilities for People with disAbilities, please visit www.frainc.org or call 732-747-5310.

About Family Resource Associates

[Family Resource Associates, Inc. \(FRA\)](#) is a 501(c)(3) in Monmouth County helping children, adolescents and people of all ages with disAbilities to reach their fullest potential. FRA connects individuals to independence through specialized therapies and advanced technology. Acknowledging the powerful influence of the family, we remain committed to them by offering both support and education.

FRA assists individuals of all ages who have developmental delays or disAbilities as well as acquired disAbilities. FRA provides home-based early intervention for infants, therapeutic recreation programs,



pre-vocational and educational classes for adults, employability training and job coaching, along with family and sibling support groups.

TECHConnection, a signature program of FRA, leverages technology to help increase, maintain or improve the capabilities of individuals with disAbilities as a result of accident, injury, illness or aging as well as related issues affecting hearing, vision, reading or mobility. To learn more, visit frainc.org.

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FRA Ambassador Joe Martinelli and Manuel Solorzano.

