



**Project SEARCH® 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**Baltimore Hilton Inner Harbor**  
**401 W. Pratt St., Baltimore MD**  
**Pre-Conference Sessions**  
**Tuesday, July 21, 2020**



***7 CRCC Continuing Education Credits available for these six Pre-Conference Sessions***

**1: Building Healthy Relationships in the Workplace and Community: New Project SEARCH Lessons**

Join us for an interactive, engaging, and practical workshop and learn how to teach interns skills needed to form healthy workplace relationships, keep their jobs, and feel connected to others at work and in the community.

We all want to live full and satisfying lives with the ability to learn new skills, live independently, work, and have healthy relationships with friends and significant others. This is true for young adults with developmental disabilities as well, and one place they can form relationships with others is in their workplace or at a Project SEARCH host site. Many times, our interns and graduates lose their jobs due to their interactions with co-workers, managers or even customers. Inappropriate conduct such as hugging, following others around or too many emails can be problematic. Workplace relationships are unique in that they require certain ways of interacting and interns need to learn how to navigate these relationships in order to be successful in the worksite and keep their jobs.

During this workshop, you will receive the newly created, “Building Healthy Relationships in the Workplace and Community Curriculum” which includes 10 new lesson plans. Topics include: “Who am I”; “Gender Expression and Identity”; “Types of Relationships”; “Public and Private”; “Friendships, Communication and Decision Making”; “Social Media and Relationships”; “Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships”; and “What is Abuse and Sexual Harassment?” Effective tips and techniques for teaching these topics are included and attendees will have an opportunity to practice teaching as well.

As a result of this workshop, participants will have the tools, resources, and skills to lead “Healthy Workplace Relationship” classes in the Project SEARCH Program.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Explore the necessary skills for having healthy workplace relationships
2. Review the curriculum and teaching tools
3. Examine tips and techniques for teaching these topics
4. Practice teaching the curriculum lessons

**Katherine McLaughlin**  
Founder &  
Director of Training  
Elevatus Training, LLC



## 2. Creating Robust Internships: Multi-level Tasks, Measurable Skills Gain, VocFit, and More!

Internships are at the core of the Project SEARCH intern experience. It's the environment where marketable and competitive skills are acquired, and the interns can practice those work and social skills in a learning and supportive environment. For our interns to learn complex and transferable skills, the internship must be rigorous and include a breadth of tasks with high expectations of safety, quality and productivity that are practiced and evaluated over the ten-week period.

This session will assist the participants to design internships that incorporate these qualities while keeping in mind the culture of their host business as well as the unique challenges of the interns. It is recommended for Skills Trainers and Instructors and/or their supervisors as they work collaboratively to create these robust internships. This session is for new teams developing internships for the first time and experienced teams that want to enhance their internships. Topics covered will include:

- Standing in the Circle – an intense observation of the internship department and their entry level tasks
- Working with the manager and mentors to design a task list that includes competitive and marketable skills that can grow over time
- Training the managers and mentors before and throughout the internship experience to help them become comfortable and confident to support and evaluate the intern
- Taking honest data on the intern's performance and making ongoing training decisions based on that data
- Recording and communicating "Measurable Skills Gain" at the Employment Planning Meeting and other events with tools including training matrices and competency checklists
- Using the VocFit Assessment for matching and training purposes
- Ensuring that the intern is constantly challenged in their work and social skill development
- Learning Lean tools that will assist the intern and department to be more efficient
- Designing accommodations to assist interns and their co-workers to be more efficient and productive
- Using boundary spanning techniques within your host business to expand training opportunities

### Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will learn to create task lists that include multi-level tasks with productivity and quality indicators
2. Participants will understand the value of VocFit and have a basic knowledge of the assessment tool
3. Participants will be able to create data collection tools for skill acquisition and honest decision making
4. Participants will have knowledge of basic training techniques and can share that information with others

**Molly Michels**  
National Consultant  
Project SEARCH  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital



### **3. Getting to the Next Level: Understanding How A Person's Past Impacts Their Present, and Developing Skills to Improve Our Response**

Our responses to others are a direct result of the stories we make up in our minds about who they are and why they do what they do. Increased knowledge of the brain and body and of how a person's past experiences have a direct impact on their development, can help us make sense of the actions of others. By understanding that a person's past impacts their present, we can improve outcomes by improving our response to other Project SEARCH team members, partners, and the interns served in the program.

When we think of trauma, we sometimes overlook developmental and relational trauma. Many of the struggles and challenges people encounter in the present are rooted in the worldviews, beliefs, and behavioral patterns they developed throughout their upbringing. Without realizing it, everything from how people view themselves to the expectations people have of others can be traced back to their past experiences. This engaging and experiential training provides space, time, and structure to explore these concepts.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn how trauma and adverse experiences impact the brain, body, and behavior
2. Explore the 5 Core Issues of Developmental Immaturity
  - a. Self-Esteem: how one values oneself
  - b. Boundaries: how one protects oneself
  - c. Reality: how one shows up in the world
  - d. Dependency: how one takes care of oneself
  - e. Spontaneity: how one moderates oneself
3. Develop a strategic plan to address each of the 5 Core Issues within ourselves and those we support
4. Identify practical shifts in language that deepen empathy and compassion

**La Shanda M. Sugg, LPC**  
Therapist and Consultant  
Labors of Love Counseling  
and Consulting, LLC



#### **4: Project SEARCH 101** (recommended for new instructors, skills trainers and other team members)

If you are beginning a Project SEARCH program to launch in the fall of 2020, are a new Project SEARCH Instructor or Skills Trainer (even if it's an established Project SEARCH program) or any new team member, this session is for you! This session will take a deep dive into Project SEARCH to assist you in implementing the program successfully. We will explore the fundamentals and key topics to build a comprehensive Project SEARCH foundation. Topics will include:

- History, data outcomes, and philosophy of the model
- Project SEARCH Model Fidelity Components
- Partners, Collaboration, and Teamwork
- Student Criteria, Recruitment, and Selection
- Database and Member Portal
- Project SEARCH Toolkits including the Curriculum and Resource Guide
- Annual Calendar and Daily Schedule including Employment Planning Meetings
- Roles and Responsibilities of Team Members
- Establishing Robust Internships that Lead to Employment
- Vocational Fit Assessment
- Aspirational Job Development: Reaching the Goal of 100% Employment – for every intern!

Join this opportunity to network with other new Project SEARCH sites and staff during the session and throughout the conference. It will also create a knowledge base to reference other key information and workshops.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn about the key components of Project SEARCH including the philosophy, model fidelity and funding.
2. Learn to establish career development and internship process for interns leading to the goal of Project SEARCH: competitive employment
3. Learn about the annual calendar including orientation, internships, curriculum and transition weeks
4. Learn about the roles and responsibilities of the partner organizations, collaborations and specific roles including the instructor, skills trainers, business liaison, mentors, and all supporting staff
5. Learn how to use the database and member portal to enter key information about your site, training opportunities, accessing critical information about Project SEARCH

**Susie Rutkowski**  
Co-Founder / Co-Director  
Project SEARCH  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital



**Erin Riehle**  
Founder/Director  
Project SEARCH  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital



## **5. Technology for Staff and Interns: Tools for Curriculum, Data Collection, Professional Portfolios, and Skill Acquisition**

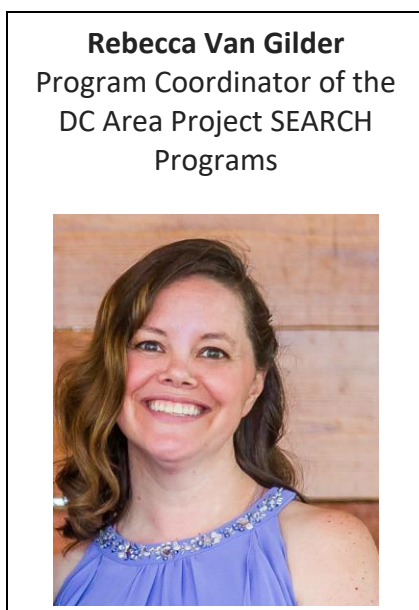
The target audience for this session is Project SEARCH staff members, such as instructors and skills trainers, who are comfortable with technology and are passionate about learning more ways to incorporate technology with their team members, as well as with interns in the classroom and at internship sites. To get the most out of this session, participants should bring their smart devices, as well as a laptop or tablet. Please also be prepared to share ideas of how you and your teams are using technology.

In the Staff Support section of this session, participants will be exposed to the Google Suite of tools, such as Google Drive (for Cloud Storage for files and portfolios), Google Classroom (for Lesson Plans and Template sharing), Google Forms (for various data collection), and Google Photos. Participants will be instructed on how to use additional tech options, such as Evernote (document storage and sharing on-the-go) and Trello (for Project Management).

In the Intern and Post Hire Support (Graduate/Employee) section of this session, participants will also learn about smart device uses in the classroom and at internship sites, using apps such as Weebly (website to create professional portfolios) and iMovie (to create movies of interns doing tasks), as well other apps (such as Seeing AI, Clips, and more!).

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Obtain hands-on, supported exposure to web-based and mobile apps
2. Identify new uses for technology for the Project SEARCH staff
3. Develop an action plan to incorporate new technology into daily Project SEARCH staff needs
4. Identify the appropriate technological platforms for engaging new interns and graduated post hires in portfolio creation and management, as well as in task supports



## **6: Tools to Enhance Workplace Success: Strategies for Interns with Autism and Complex Social and Communication Needs**

Project SEARCH has been instrumental in demonstrating that people with disabilities can succeed in competitive employment settings, demonstrating their unique strengths and abilities. With the rates of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) steadily on the rise, recent employment efforts and initiatives have turned their focus to the transition to adult employment for this specific population. While many Project SEARCH programs can successfully integrate individuals with ASD into their programs, the unique and often challenging characteristics of this disorder create initial and long-term barriers to learning opportunities and overall employability. Individuals with ASD may demonstrate significant social and communication difficulties including literal interpretation of and response to social situations, repetitive patterns of behavior, or restricted interests that may interfere with daily work activities, and a greater likelihood of problem behavior because of these difficulties. Despite such challenges, individuals with ASD are just as capable of succeeding on the job, and their unique characteristics and skills may help them contribute greatly to the workforce. Our intent in this session is to provide a greater understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder in order to help ALL Project SEARCH programs feel equipped to take on and support interns with more challenging needs. We will offer a perspective of the strengths and weaknesses related to the spectrum of autism, and how symptoms of ASD can impact (positively or negatively) employability, to provide an understanding of the function of challenging behaviors that may arise in a work setting and how to successfully intervene and manage issues, provide strategies for teaching others to work with this population, and find resources to support interns with ASD. Through interactive case discussion, problem solving, and opportunities to interact, share, and ask questions, we will equip everyone with the tools needed to assist individuals with ASD and related disorders succeed.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the symptoms of ASD as they apply to and potentially interfere with employability.
2. Understand the function of problem behaviors that may occur in a work setting.
3. Prevent challenges and reinforce the positive in employment training settings.
4. Set the stage for successful ongoing employment for individuals with ASD and related disorders.

#### **Cara Inglis, PsyD**

Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
Nationwide Children's Hospital  
Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders



#### **Laura Shick, MA**

Transition Specialist  
Nationwide Children's Hospital  
Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders



**7 Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) Continuing Education (CE) clock hours have been approved for the six Pre-Conference Sessions listed above (*at no additional fee*).**

These CE hours could apply to:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and other VR staff
- APSE members
- Community Rehabilitation Partners
- Other Vocational Rehabilitation / Supported Employment providers

## Business Liaison Meeting – For Host Business Liaisons Only

This special session is for Business Liaisons *only* to learn and share best practices together. Our host businesses are the anchor of our programs and Project SEARCH values the role of the Business Liaison. One of our core Model Fidelity Components states “The program is business focused”. We value our Business Liaisons strong involvement as they are instrumental in crucial decisions affecting the program.

Business Liaisons meet annually as a group to exchange ideas on topics such as

- Marketing Project SEARCH throughout their organizations
- Developing creative internships for interns to learn competitive, transferable skills
- Giving honest feedback to instructors, skills trainers and interns
- Collaborating with all Project SEARCH partners
- Sharing information about Project SEARCH with other local businesses
- Training managers and mentors to work successfully with interns

This session is also beneficial as it provides an opportunity for business partners to share the good and bad, the successes and challenges. In a fun and collaborative environment, the session will not only focus on Project SEARCH model fidelity as it relates to the business, but it also provides opportunities to look at how the program helps with corporate culture and hiring and retention best practices. The session will also provide opportunities to discuss cultural competencies, mitigating bias, and more. It is led by Mitch Morgan, from Fifth Third Bank who has been the Champion Sponsor of the annual Project SEARCH conference for over 10 years.

Join with other Business Liaisons from across the country and learn from others how to continuously improve your Project SEARCH program. Erin Riehle, Director & Founder of Project SEARCH will begin the day with the state of Project SEARCH and goals for the 2020-2021 year.

*This session is reserved for staff from our host businesses only. If you are a manager, department leader, mentor or other employee from one of our host businesses, this session is designed for you! However, if you are employed by any of our other collaborative partners (education, vocational rehabilitation, community rehabilitation provider, Developmental Disability agency) we reserve the right to move you to another pre-conference sessions. We have received feedback in the past, that the Business Liaisons enjoy the time together to discuss challenges and successes that affect the host businesses and benefit from the space to work together on these issue. Thank you for valuing the time and support the Business Liaisons bring to Project SEARCH.*

### **Mitch Morgan**

Vice President, Senior Inclusion  
and Diversity Manager  
Fifth Third Bank



### **Erin Riehle**

Director /Founder  
Project SEARCH  
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital

