



# Project Fact Sheet: Enhancing Community Participation through Consumer Training

Our mission:  
To increase and enhance the interdependence and full participation in the community of people with disabilities through the use of scientifically sound, theoretically driven sustainable interventions and measures that lead to effective community living solutions and policy change.

## The Bottom Line

We expect that people with disabilities who use a personal assistant (PA) can enhance their participation in the community by learning managerial and communication skills. This research project measures the effectiveness of a new Consumer Training Program designed to fill this need.

The training presents strategies for hiring/firing and managing/training attendants and other important information noted in the box at right.

## Background

The four-hour training is being implemented at Paraquad, a center for independent living in St. Louis. Participants complete a survey about their relationship and satisfaction with their PA, then they are evaluated on their skills and knowledge before and after the training.

## What We've Learned So Far

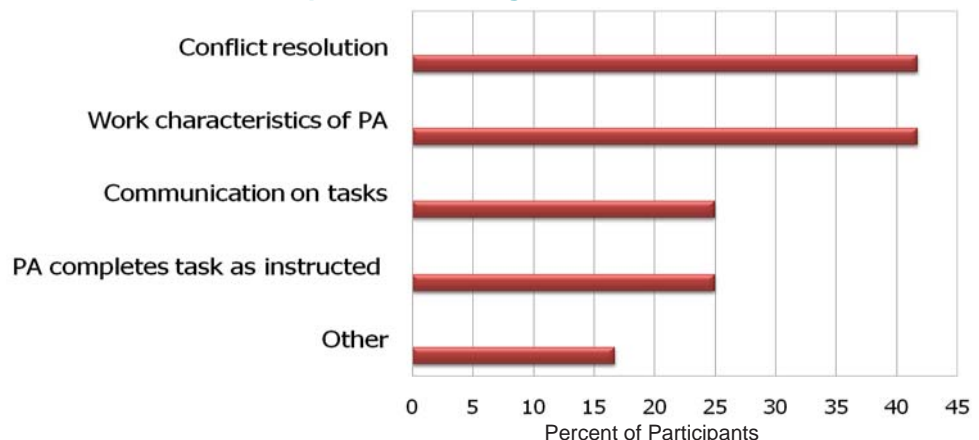
Fourteen participants have attended one of seven pilot training sessions and completed initial and follow-up surveys about their community participation four to six weeks after the training. The results have been positive, as shown in the following charts.

(continued on back)

## Consumer Training Program Topics

- Personal assistant (PA) recruitment
- Topics to cover when interviewing
- Tips for training a new PA
- Managing a PA
- Effective communication
- Conflict resolution
- Feedback techniques (avoiding the blame game)
- Back-up and emergency planning
- Secondary conditions (respiratory problems, urinary tract infections, pressure sores)
- Assistive technology (wheelchairs, walkers, shower bench, bedside commode)

## Improvement in Consumer-Attendant Relationship After Training



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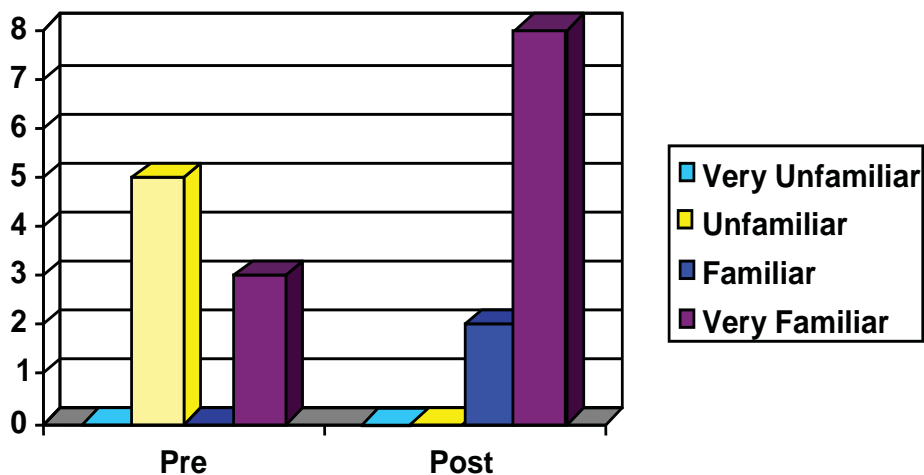
**Translating  
research into  
enhanced  
community  
participation**

**Overall Satisfaction with Attendant**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied
Prior to training	75%	25%
After training	91.7%	8.3%

In terms of knowledge, all of the PAs improved their familiarity with the early indicators of health conditions. This was true for urinary tract infection (see chart below), bowel impaction and pneumonia.

**Familiarity of PA with Early Indicators of Health Conditions  
Before and After Training: Urinary Tract Infections**



**Information Sharing**

In a social connectivity activity, participants also identify places in the community that they visit and discuss which places are accessible and receptive to people with disabilities. Information is provided about local support groups and resources that could enhance community participation, such as Paraquad’s Assistive Technology Reutilization Program and its exercise program. (See photo below.)



**Consumers in the program learn about Paraquad’s exercise program and tour its Enabling Mobility Center.**

**Project Investigators**

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