Increasing Levels of Knowledge & Exposure:
Development of Online Caseworker Resource Regarding Children with Disabilities

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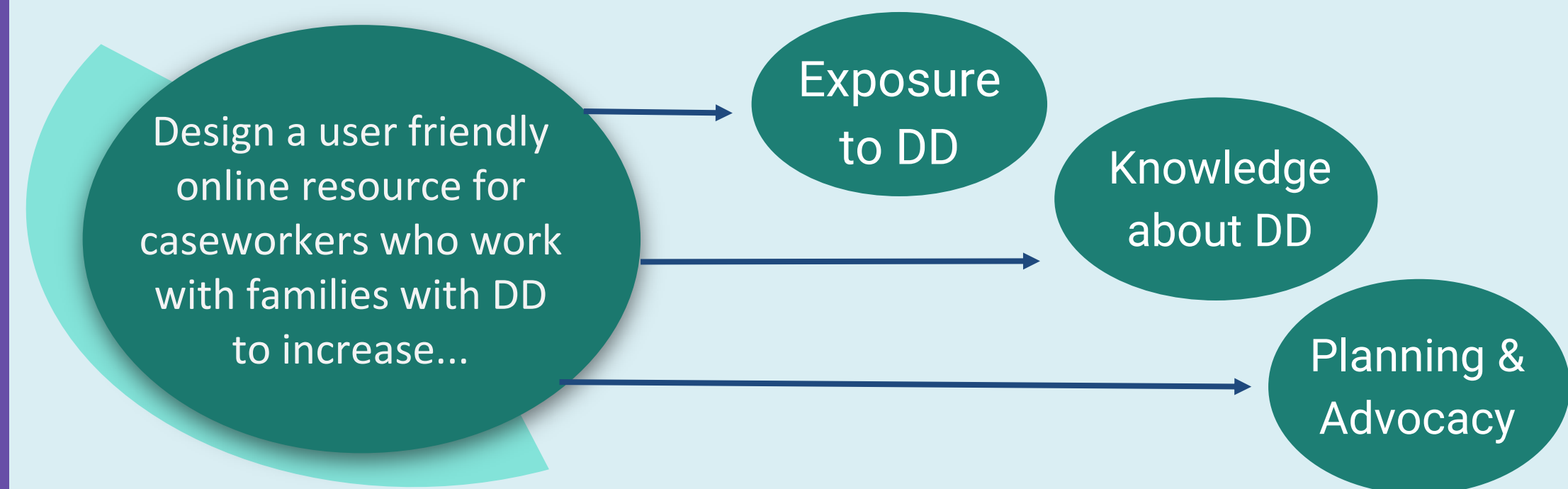
Background

Developmental Disability and Child Welfare:
- Developmental Disability (DD) is inconsistently tracked within child welfare.
- 28% - 50% of youth are estimated to have a diagnosis of DD.
- Children with DD are:
  - In foster care for longer periods of time.
  - Less likely to be reunified with their birth parents.
  - At greater risk for mental health care needs.
- Prior LEND projects have determined that:
  - Caseworkers report having difficulty referring and accessing disability specific services.
  - Caseworkers identify a need for professional training and additional knowledge to appropriately case plan for children with DD.

Best Practices in Online Training:
- Online training shown to be as, or more, effective than traditional learning.
- Use of user-controlled multi-media resources such as pause and playback functionality.
- Immediate corrective feedback in quizzes and exercises.
- Clearly defined learning objectives, presented to the user.
- Shorter module lengths = increased user compliance with trainings.

Objectives

Design a user friendly online resource for caseworkers who work with families with DD to increase...
- Exposure to DD
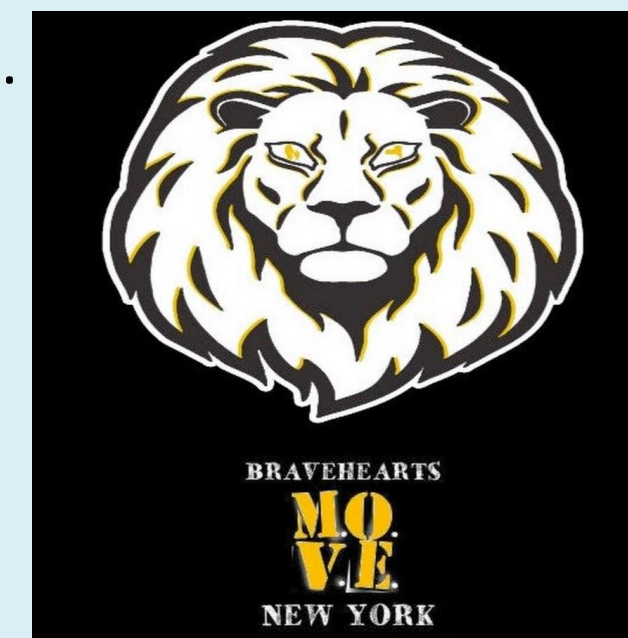- Knowledge about DD
- Planning & Advocacy

Methods

- Best practice literature review to create an online training tool.
- Created content for Online Training Toolkit.
- Developed detailed script for voiceover and activity narrative within tool.
- Merged content, voiceovers, & activities into finished Online Training Tool using Adobe Captivate software for animations.
- Invited Westchester County Department of Social Service (DSS) caseworkers to complete the training.
- Compiled feedback to further revise training tool content.

Community Partner

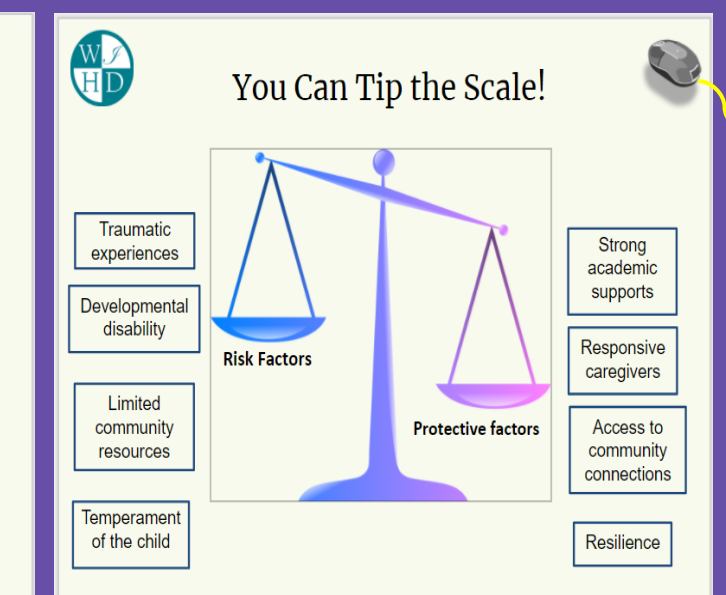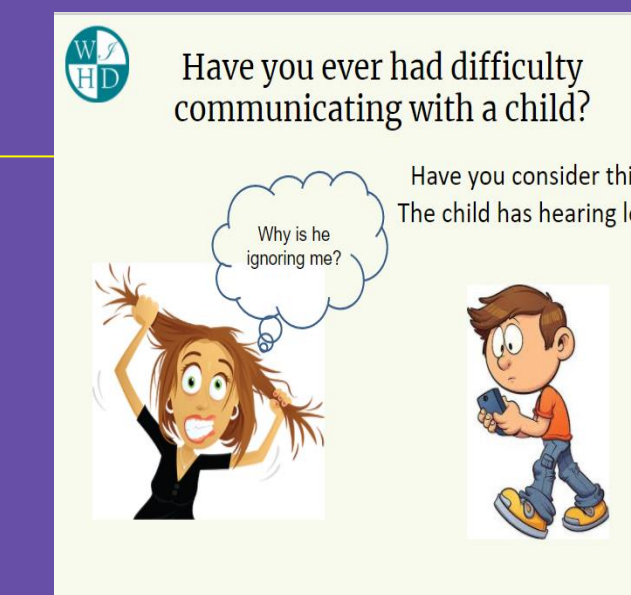**Jessica Grimm, Executive Director, Bravehearts**

- Former foster care youth led organization

- Themes Identified:
  - Difficulty accessing education services.
  - Limited social supports.
  - Multiple changes with caseworkers.
  - Eligibility concerns.
  - Limited connections to community resources.
  - Lack of services upon aging out of foster care.
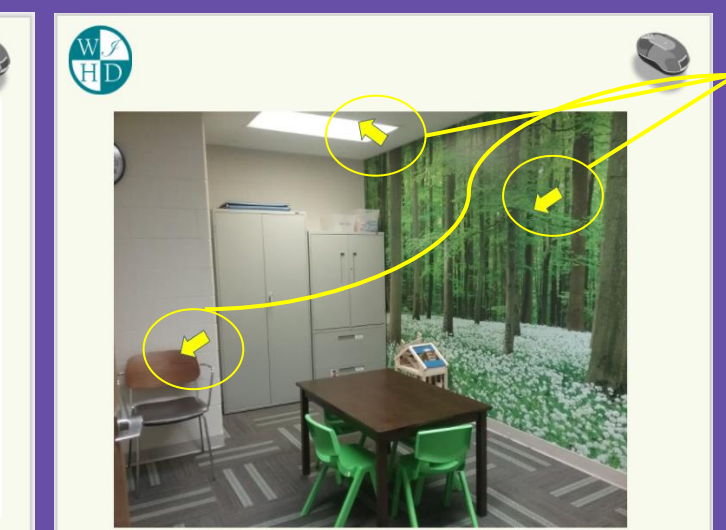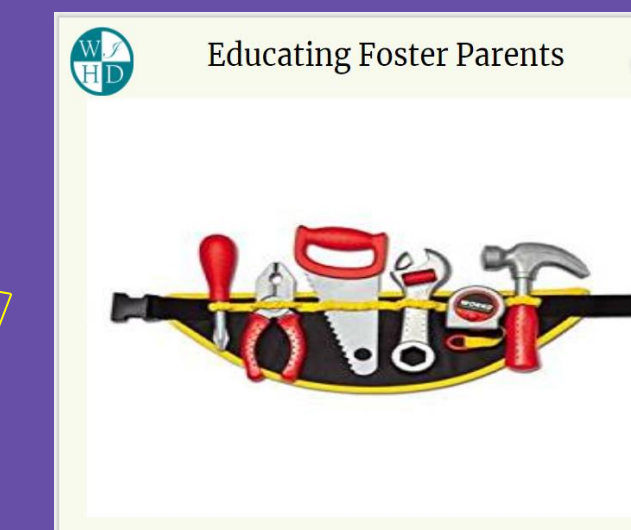
Results

- Successfully created an Online Training Tool through Adobe Captivate utilizing best practices in online teaching, and content from research about DD.
- Training estimated to take 1 hour to complete, via five, 10 minute modules.
- Training included features such as multiple choice quizzing, matching, and open ended questions with immediate feedback.
- **Screenshots from training pictured below:**

Critical thinking about the role of disability on observable behavior.

A mouse image in the corner, informs users that a slide is interactive.

Clicking prompts a voiceover providing a clinical "tool."

Arrows highlight actionable environmental considerations for visits.

Example:
Title: Normalization of self-advocacy
Voiceover: Remind caregivers that it is ok to ask for help.

Discussion

- This project was able to successfully create a prototype online training tool to help address the disparity between caseworker education on DD, and the rates at which they service clients with DD.
- Follow up with caseworker feedback may bring changes in the tool to best support caseworker learning and needs.
- Next steps include: presenting tool to caseworkers, and assessing the impact of training on outcomes for those with DD in the child welfare system.