

Lifesharing COALITION

The Mission of the Coalition is to promote, support and embrace the concept of *Lifesharing* and the philosophy of self-determination. Throughout the years, the Coalition has played an important role in the growth of *Lifesharing*.

The Coalition meets on the third Thursday of every other month beginning in February. When the need arises, support and training opportunities are provided the Wednesday before each meeting.

People from all regions of the state participate in the Coalition, including *Lifesharing* families, individuals with disabilities, provider agencies, Office of Development Programs (ODP) staff, county staff, supports coordinators, PAR and the Bureau of Human Services Licensing.

REGIONAL COALITIONS

The four regions in Pennsylvania have their own Coalitions, which offer:

- *Networking
- *Mentoring
- * Technical Assistance
- *Licensing Supports
- * Recruitment Strategies
- *Training (based on individual needs)

The Regional Coalitions meet every other month starting in January. These meetings provide wonderful opportunities for provider agencies and *Lifesharing* families to organize events and to share information and experiences.

Please contact the following Regional Coalition members with any questions you may have:

SOUTHEAST

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PENNSYLVANIA *Lifesharing*

Coalition

Lifesharing, also known as “Family Living” (55 Pa Code §6500), officially began in Pennsylvania in 1982 with a family in Berks County who wanted to support their friend in their own home. To reflect the diversity of relationships in these living arrangements, “Family Living” became best known as *Lifesharing* to better describe the lifestyles and choices of the people being supported.

Lifesharing thru Family Living means living with and sharing life experiences with supportive persons who form a caring household. *Lifesharing* is recognized as being both a close personal relationship and a place to live. *Lifesharing* offers an individual with a disability the opportunity to live with a family or individual who will support his/her desires and needs for an everyday life.

Individuals supported in *Lifesharing* include children and adults with a wide variety of needs and challenges. *Lifesharing* enhances and enriches the lives of individuals by offering another residential living option.

“Having a place to go is HOME

Having someone to love is FAMILY

Having both is a WONDERFUL LIFE.”

Lifesharing

In Pennsylvania

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Lifesharing?

Lifesharing is living with and sharing life experiences with supportive persons who form a caring household. The Mission of Lifesharing is to enrich the lives of people with disabilities by matching those who choose this lifestyle with a family or individual who chooses to open their homes and their hearts.

How many people can Lifeshare in one home?

Lifesharing can be done with one or two people with disabilities in a single home. Individual needs and preferences are considered in making the decision to become involved in *Lifesharing*.

How can I get additional information on Lifesharing?

- ◆ Contact your local County Intellectual Disability office
- ◆ Contact a local provider agency that offers *Lifesharing* through Family Living or use information on the back of this brochure
- ◆ For additional information visit these websites:
 - <http://www.palifesharing.com/>
 - <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/>
 - <http://www.odpconsulting.net/>
 - <http://www.hcsis.state.pa.us/>

What is expected of a Lifesharing Family?

The family or individual must comply with the policies, procedures and regulations of the provider agency, the county and the state, which includes providing a safe, nurturing and healthy environment in which the person has choice.

Lifesharing

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who supports Lifesharing families?

- Regional *Lifesharing Coalitions*
- Provider Agencies
- County MH/MR Programs

What are the benefits of being a Lifesharer?

Lifesharers experience many benefits in *Lifesharing*

- A new friend and companion
- The unique gifts and talents the individual brings to the relationship
- Support of the *Lifesharing* community
- A generous stipend
- The opportunity to make a difference in someone's life
- Respite and training are also available.

What are the benefits for the individual with a disability to be a part of Lifesharing?

- ◆ To be a member of a caring household
- ◆ Friendship & trust in people who care about you
- ◆ Continuity in one's life
- ◆ Increased involvement in community life

What are some of the qualifications/requirements of a Lifesharer?

- ◆ Home Study/Intake Process
A period of three to six months is recommended to facilitate the development of relationships. However, there is no fixed timeframe – this is a natural process based on the person and his/her choices.
- ◆ Criminal Background Check
- ◆ Child Abuse Clearance
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Time and space to support a *Lifesharing* relationship