



# UCEDD *it!*

## AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

## DEAF AWARENESS

By: Lia Pelenato

### Deaf Etiquette:

- Make eye contact when carrying a conversation with a deaf person
- Announce you're leaving the room as deaf people cannot "hear" you leaving
- Do not walk "in-between" 2 deaf people during a conversation, it's considered rude and interrupting.
- Get their attention by tapping their shoulder or hand.

How aware are you of people with disabilities? May is Deaf Awareness month and American Samoa stands to celebrate this month together with our Deaf students and individuals on island. Hopefully this month will enlighten and encourage you to learn more about the deaf and their culture. The Deaf and hard of hearing individuals have the right to choose what they wish to be called and according to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) in 1991, they have chosen to utilize the term "*deaf*

*and hard of hearing.*" Deaf and hard of hearing individuals feel that the words "deaf and hard of hearing" are not negative at all. Labels can have a profound effect on people and the deaf community are sensitive as to how are they referred as they have often experienced being put down and disparaged by other people out in society. The purpose of Deaf Awareness is to draw attention to deaf people, their accomplishments, and their struggles. Communication and language access are important for intellectual, so-

cial and emotional development. If you have Deaf and hard of hearing family members, find out about all available options for your family. Making decisions will never be easy, but we will help you along the way. This is a time to rise up, unite resources, build support, educate our children and be "heard" around our local island in support of our deaf children, individuals, and community.



## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

By: Lia Pelenato

### Inside this issue:

TAOA Training	2
Child Mental Health	2
DDPC Website	3
FYI Corner: Did you know?	3
DDPC Newsletter—"Advocate"	3
Acronyms, Directory, & Mission Statement	4

May is also Mental Health Awareness Month and it helps raise local awareness about mental illnesses which was a bill passed in Congress in 1949. Mental health concerns are at greater risk that most medical diseases because the signs and symptoms of mental disorders are almost always behavioral and self-reported in nature. Awareness of mental

health issues is crucial to our local people and children. So, during this mental health awareness month, we live in a world that is increasingly focused on identifying and labeling any and all kinds of aberrant behavior that our society has associated with individuals who have intellectual disability. Help raise awareness in your community by fact sheets,

posters, and supporting our local agencies in providing services for our individuals with intellectual disability and mental health awareness. American Samoa stands to support and promote this months mental health awareness on island.



## Prepared or Never!



**Senior Citizens during an Emergency Preparedness Training at TAOA**

The University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), partnership with the American Samoa Homeland Security/TEMCO offered an Emergency Training to more than 60 senior citizens at the Territory Administration on Aging (TAOA) main office in Pago on May 09, 2011 from 8:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m. The training focused mainly on how to prepared themselves on any natural or manmade disasters. It is also important to encourage our senior citizens to develop a plan to be reviewed periodically so that they will feel confident that they have a planned routine to follow in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. In addition, it

disseminated mainly on various outlines and some steps that may help them prepare for crisis.

The steps include the following:

- Determine A Plan
- Maintain Contact & Communication
- Sheltering

Determining a plan was a way where they have to list all phone numbers and addresses of support system. Friends and family members and medical providers could be listed. It is important that the senior citizen knows and keeps in contact with the support providers listed. In the event of an emergency, they have to contact them in advance of impending emergencies to determine if

need to evacuate or stay with someone who is out of the danger area.

The September 2009 Tsunami killed 14 people, and the majority were senior citizens. It's important to create a personal support network whereas to ensure the wellness of each other. The training also reminded the senior citizens that they can work together and practice a communications system regarding how to contact each other in an emergency. Their support network should always notify each other when they are going somewhere, and also in responsible for each other.

## Mental Health Services for Children with Disabilities By Tafa Tupuola



Our health, especially mental health, is not taken as seriously until something goes wrong. Only then do we realize how important our health is to live a happy and fulfilling life.

The term mental health is often stigmatized with mental illness and intellectual disability (formerly known as mental retardation). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Individu-

als can live a healthy life in eating the right food and normal blood pressure, but unhealthy in other areas such as suffering from depression. Although the physical health can be assessed from health status measurements of the body (e.g. blood pressure, cholesterol level, and etc.) it is more challenging to assess the mental and social components. So how do you quantify a child thoughts and perceptions?

Children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning disability, or

receive special education or early intervention services are highly vulnerable to depression not just from bullying but also social isolation and acceptance amongst peers. It is critical for families to connect with a system of care, coordinated network of community-based services and supports to meet the challenges of children with serious mental health needs and their families. For more information about mental health services for children with disabilities, contact Pua Center [699-9579](tel:699-9579)

# http://asddpc.webs.com

The American Samoa Developmental Disability Planning Council (ASDDPC) launched its new website as to disseminate and direct people with or without developmental disabilities with information, and it was designed to help them find just the right information, support or equipment they need to live their life. In addition, it also listed of agencies and support services

groups that provide services. The website was designed by the University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the American Samoa Community College, under the mini award grant for this fiscal year 2011-2012. The website will have all the minutes and presentations from all of meetings, information on what partnership or other

service providers are doing and links to other useful websites. The web address will be <http://asddpc.webs.com>, and already published online!

### Agencies Listed on Website:

- UCEDD
- Hope House
- YWCA—Parent Group
- Pago Pago Lions Club
- CFIDD
- Goodwill Industries
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitations



## FYI Corner: Did you know?

Legislation to Reauthorize the Combating Autism Introduced in the House and Senate. Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) unveiled the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act (S. 1094) on May 26th. Later that day, Congressmen Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Mike Doyle (D-PA) introduced a companion bill (H.R. 2005) in the House. This legislation ensures

that the critical programs established under the combating Autism Act of 2006 continue for an additional three years, including CDC surveillance programs, HRSA interdisciplinary training programs, and research at NIH. These programs are set to expire in September of this year without any Congressional action. The House and Senate sponsors of the bill also announced intro-

duction of two additional bills, the Autism Spectrum Disorders Services Act and the National Autism Spectrum Disorders Initiative Act, to address services for youth and adults to put more federal emphasis on autism research. For more information you can find on

<http://www.aucd.org>



## ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER

The American Samoa Developmental Disability Planning Council (ASDDPC) will launched its first Newsletter by July 2011. This newsletter serves as a vehicle to communicate to a group of Individuals with or without Developmental Disabilities (IWDD), and can educate, encourage, and inform the community of services and

activities provided by each agencies for IWDD. The ASDDPC Newsletter was established by the University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the American Samoa Community College (ASCC). It also serve to provide hope and confidence to individuals and the community as a whole. It highlights various

activities of agencies that provide services to IWDD, and also provide solutions and challenges of each individuals of how they pursuit self-confidence in the real world.





## MISSION STATEMENT

*The University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) assures that individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families participate fully in activities that will design and promote self-determination, independence, integration and inclusion in all facets of life in American Samoa. The UCEDD will ensure the delivery and purpose of the Developmental Disabilities Act through culturally competent activities.*

### SEND US YOUR COMMENTS

We would love to hear from you if you have comments about our newsletter, or if you would like to be added to our newsletter list! Drop us a line at: [ucedd@amsamoa.edu](mailto:ucedd@amsamoa.edu)

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## UCEDD STAFF DIRECTORY

### ACRONYMS/MEANINGS

- ADA:** Americans with Disability Act
- ADHD:** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- ASCC:** American Samoa Community College
- DD:** Developmental Disabilities
- IWDD:** Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
- TAOA:** Territory Administration Old Age
- UCEDD:** University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities
- WFD:** World Federation of the Deaf
- WHO:** World Health Organization

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