Meeting Summary

On October 10th, 2019 the Center for START Services held its Inaugural meeting for the National Research Consortium in Mental Health in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MHIDD) at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, MD. The Consortium is made up of 34 individuals - including self-advocates, caregivers, trainees, researchers, policy experts, and clinicians – from across the United States. The goal of the Consortium is to advance research on best practices and policy changes that promote positive outcomes among individuals with MH/IDD.

The day was lead off by Dr. Yona Lunsky, Director of the Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre and Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. Dr. Lunsky gave an inspiring talk on current evidenced-based programs (EBPs) around the globe for individuals with MHIDD. Next, Dr. Angela Hassiotis, professor in the Division of Psychiatry at UCL London, gave an important update on various efforts taking place in the UK around treating mental health conditions in IDD. Stakeholder partners, who fund and/or guide the priorities of the Consortium, presented their background and priorities for the field. The remainder of the day was spent conducting breakout sessions. The six breakout areas included advancing EBPs, services and linkages, trauma informed care, crisis interventions, advocacy, and integrated care.

The day concluded by each group sharing concrete projects that can advance each of these areas while also drawing on the Consortium’s considerable expertise. Potential projects discussed included improving prescriber biases, investing Beat It and StepUp in the US, developing MHIDD trainings for employee assistance programs, and developing a public health campaign to destigmatize MHIDD.

The Consortium is now in the process of reviewing these and other ideas that have come from the day. They will be making decisions about which project to pursue in early 2020.