

TIOGA COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
MH – ASA – OPWDD Subcommittee Meeting

PENDING APPROVAL

November 4th, 2025

9:30 a.m.

Via: Hybrid

Member Attendance: Katie Wait Laura Smith
Renee Nuzak Gabriella Ayers
Karen Warfle Shannon Westbrook
Sarah DiNunzio Gayle Pado
John Crosby Kylie Holochak
Bob Williams
Guest Attendance: Kari Nichols

Mental Hygiene Staff Attendance: Lori Morgan, Director of Community Services
Sarah Begeal, Deputy Director of Community Services
Danielle Fabregas, Clinical Program Director
Porshea Moore, Peer Advocate
Sue Graves, Secretary to the Director

Meeting called to order at: 9:34am

Topic: Review October 2025 Minutes – Approved with changes

Topic: Director’s Report – Lori Morgan

Discussion: Updates:

- Budget
 - No changes
- RFP – Opiate Settlement Funding
 - On county website
 - Q & A page posted
 - Copy of RFP being emailed to subcommittee
- Counseling on demand being provided to Weitzman employees
- Criminal Psych
 - Budget line will be exceeded after this week
 - Finding money in budget through the end of the year
- Mobile Crisis Program
 - All are required to obtain a special designation to use codes
 - Meeting this week

Status: Informational - Complete

Topic: Deputy Director’s Report – Sarah Begeal

Discussion: Updates:

- Clinic pause for October has ended.

- Open for intakes
- Staff
 - Social worker hired
 - Offer out to an additional social worker
 - Looking for senior level social workers as well

Status: Informational - Complete

Topic: Clinical Program Director Report – Danielle Fabregas

Discussion: Updates:

- Census
 - Mental Health - 573 clients
 - ADS - 85 clients & 36 continued care

Status: Informational - Complete

Topic: ASA Subcommittee – Kylie Holochak

Discussion: Trinity Report – Laura Smith

- CASA programming has started in Waverly & Spencer VanEtten schools
 - Josh in Waverly with grades 4-8
 - Kim is in Spencer VanEtten with grades 4-9
 - Teen Intervene in Newark Valley, Spencer VanEtten & Waverly
 - Meeting with Newark Valley Elementary
 - “Too Good for Drugs” for grades K-3
 - Newark Valley High School – “Too Good for Drugs” program
 - Participated in Owego’s Red Ribbon Week
 - May possibly offer lunch groups at Owego
- Numerous trainings are coming up

ASAP Coalition – Kylie Holochak

- Guest speaker, Kin Laube from HUGS Inc. presented
- Parent Education Night at Candor – 17 people participated
 - Tabled at Candor/Spencer vs Newark Valley football game and Owego vs. Waverly football game
 - Stress footballs and other items given away
- Narcan Trainings completed at the Council of Governments, Berkshire Library & Tioga County Public Works
- Drug Take Back Day
 - 117 pounds of medication collected
 - 5 large boxes of sharps
- CLYDE surveys being completed
 - Wrapping up before Thanksgiving
- A lot of messaging regarding vaping being done via TV and radio
- Plans being made for 2026

Peer Advocate Report – Porshea Moore

- Tabling at the Winter Resource Fair this week

- Porshea -ADS
- Angel Deyo-Cruz -Children's SPOA
- Kate Mikulski – new Mobile Crisis Unit
- Attending the Voices dinner on Wednesday night

Coroner/EMS – Bob Williams

- EMS had their County Planning Assessment meeting last week
- LAPC meeting is Wednesday 11/5 with Corrine presenting
- COAD held the 4th Monday of the month
 - 211 speaker
 - Looking to expand resources information
- TAM
 - Currently have 3 cases
 - Trainings available
 - Contact Bob for trainings
- Coroner
 - No new findings for October
 - One potential – waiting on report

Sheriff's Office – not present

Status:

Informational - Complete

Topic:

MH Subcommittee – Larissa Brower

Discussion:

A New Hope Center – Sarah DiNunzio

- October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month
 - Held numerous events
- First month being down three advocates
- Shelter remains at capacity
 - Lack of affordable housing continues to be an issue
- Safe Harbor Advocacy
 - In Spencer VanEtten, Candor & Newark Valley schools
 - Teen safety matters (Erins Law)

RSS Report – Not present

Public Health Report – Katie Wait

- Working on Community Health Assessment
 - Report to be released at the end of the year
- Suicide Prevention Coalition
 - Strategic planning meeting
 - Working on goals & objectives for 2026

Hea Hea – not present

Status:

Informational – Complete

Topic: OPWDD Subcommittee – John Crosby, Chair

Discussion: DDSO/DDRO Report – Renee Nuzak

- CANS Forum on 11/5 – information to follow
- Plain language direction report being emailed

Achieve – Shannon Westbrook

- Tioga is full – staff hired
- Recertifying for a higher capacity
- Floors being done before winter
- Working on other building plans/programs
- Looking for a greenhouse for the property

John inquired about the physical fitness of the Special Olympic athletes. Some are not maintaining the level needed to train successfully. Sharon will speak to her supervisor.

FFS Report – Gayle Pado

- Statewide Family Supports meeting being held December 10th
 - Local council accepting new members
 - Brief explanation of the local council purpose given

CCO Reports – not present

Rackers Report – Gayle Pado

- Celebrated Trunk n Treat Resource Fair in Candor
 - Over 245 individuals participated
- Self-Direction is open without waiting
 - Accepting new referrals
- Family Support Calander (attached)
 - Numerous events for November

Catholic Charities – Gabby Ayers

- Talent Show December 9th
- Craft Show November 15th at the office
 - All proceeds go toward the OPWDD program
- Looking for staffing
- Restructuring programs

Self-Advocacy – Karen Warfle

- Shared both negative & positive experiences her son had this past month
 - Negative: Experienced a lack of patience by staff while trying to communicate with him during his visit to a camp
 - Positive: Online group with AAC devices
 - All used the app to communicate
 - Really positive experience for those participating in the event.

Status: Informational - Complete

Topic: Other Business

Discussion:

- Abby is looking for volunteers to assist in the annual PIC count coming up. Please reach out to her if interested.
- December subcommittee meeting
 - Motion made to not meet in December and reconvene in January
 - Motion approved unanimously

Status: Informational - Complete

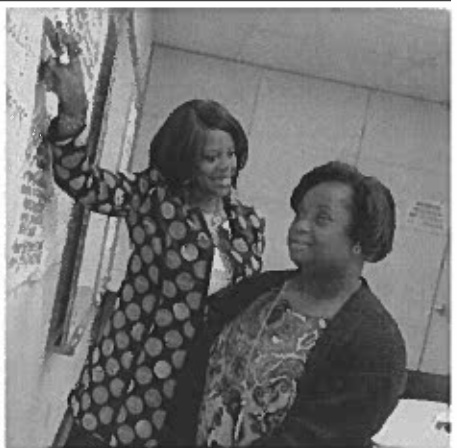
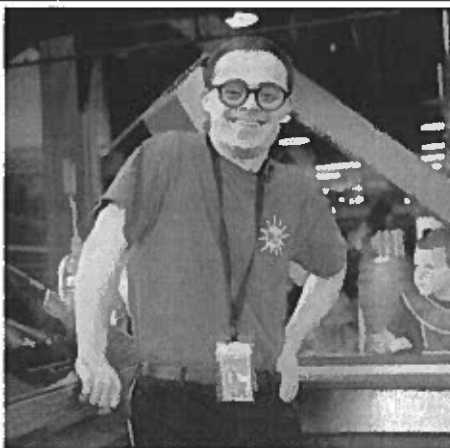
Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:12am. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 6th, at 9:30am

DRAFT



Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities

Self-Direction Assessment Final Report in Plain Language



September 2025

Self-Direction Assessment

Final Report in Plain Language

OPWDD hired a company called Guidehouse to look at the Self-Direction model and give suggestions about how to make improvements.



As part of the review, Guidehouse talked to people who are self-directing and to the service providers that support them.

More than 9,000 people who use Self-Direction, their families, Care Coordination Organizations, Fiscal Intermediaries, and Support Brokers talked to Guidehouse about how Self-Direction is working or not working for them.



Guidehouse also looked at articles and research, data and Self-Direction models in other states for new ideas about how to best support people using Self-Direction.

Guidehouse looked at the current model's accessibility, communication, training, quality and sustainability.

The goals of the review were to:

- Learn how Self-Direction can better support people, especially when they do not have family or friends to help them
- Share how to provide clear and easy to understand information about Self-Direction
- Better understand the needs of children who use Self-Direction
- Improve and clarify the role of Fiscal Intermediaries, Support Brokers and Care Managers
- Support all people who need OPWDD services to learn how to access self-directed services
- Provide a way for people who use Self-Direction and providers who support them to work together and tell OPWDD what they want us to know



- Make the Self-Direction model long-lasting for people who use it and cost effective to implement
- Look at how Self-Direction rules could be changed to support growth of the Self-Direction model

Using the information collected, Guidehouse created a report that shares what they learned about the Self-Direction model, gives 8 recommendations for how OPWDD could make the Self-Direction model better, and provides data and insights from the feedback that was collected.



EIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS

To Help People Who Use OPWDD Services

1. Make Sure All People Who Choose Self-Direction Can Access It:

- Learn about who is not able to access Self-Direction, such as where they live and what languages they speak
- Support providers to hire staff who speak more than one language
- Share Self-Direction information with people who do not have access now in the languages and formats they use
- Make information accessible and available in one easy to access place



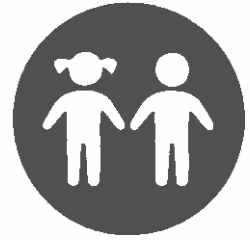
2. Make Sure People Get Help to Reach Their Goals:

- Give Care Managers responsibility for a person's Circle of Support (A Circle of Support is made up of the people that a person trusts to help them with decisions)
- Make sure a person's Life Plan includes ways to strengthen their natural supports and Circle of Support
- Identify the people who need a higher level of care planning and who have fewer natural supports (such as family and friends) earlier in the process
- Develop best practices for Support Brokers and Care Managers to support people throughout their lives



3. Better Understand Children Who Self-Direct:

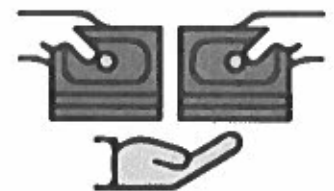
- Break up Self-Direction data for children and young adults into two age groups: 0-17 and 18-22 to better understand different service needs between children and young adults
- Explore service options for children and young adults to support the transition out of school
- Partner with the NYS Department of Education and Office of Special Education to share information about OPWDD services
- Consider making changes to the OPWDD Waiver to better match self-directed services to support children



To Help Support Staff and Service Providers

4. Improve the Quality of Fiscal Intermediary Services:

- Provide the same expectations for all Fiscal Intermediaries
- Make information for and about Fiscal Intermediaries accessible and available in one easy to access place
- Do annual satisfaction surveys to get information about how the Fiscal Intermediary providers are performing
- Require more regular reporting by Fiscal Intermediaries
- Develop high standards for which agencies are allowed to provide Fiscal Intermediary services
- Make sure the right number of Fiscal Intermediaries are available and funded to effectively serve people
- Explore Waiver changes to improve the quality of Fiscal Intermediary services



5. Improve the Effectiveness of Care Coordination Organizations to Support People Who Self-Direct:

- Meet regularly with Care Coordination Organizations to talk about challenges in Self-Direction, share information and solve common problems
- Better explain the role of the Care Managers for people who self-direct and how it is different than the role of Support Brokers
- Provide Care Managers more education and trainings on Self-Direction
- Create a tool for Care Managers to use with helping people decide if Self-Direction is right for them
- Hold trainings for Care Managers, Support Brokers, and Fiscal Intermediaries to share the best way to work together to support people using Self-Direction



6. Strengthen the Ability of Support Brokers to Support People Self-Directing:

- Better explain how the role of Support Brokers is different than the role of Care Managers
- Make the job of a Support Broker more professional
- Work with Fiscal Intermediaries to put standards and monitoring systems in place to make sure Support Brokers are doing their jobs correctly
- Ask Support Brokers who are doing a good job to mentor others
- Develop new and improved trainings and make information available to Support Brokers



Other Things OPWDD Can Do to Make Self-Direction Work Better



7. Make Individual Directed Goods and Services* easier to understand and access:

- Provide clear and consistent Individual Directed Goods and Services rules
- Standardize how Fiscal Intermediaries approve or deny requests for Individual Directed Goods and Services
- Provide training and toolkits about Individual Directed Goods and Services
- Collect and track data on Individual Directed Goods and Services

8. Use Data to Improve the Outcomes for People Who Self-Direct and Make the Model Cost Effective in the Long Term:

- Track Self-Direction service data and develop dashboards to monitor
- Regularly review overutilization and underutilization of services in the Self-Direction model
- Refine how Self-Direction Personal Resource Accounts (the maximum yearly dollars in a Self-Direction Budget) are projected
- Study service usage to improve value and outcomes for people who self-direct



* Note: Individual Directed Goods and Services is a Waiver Service available with your Self-Direction budget that helps you take part in community activities, like community classes, and club memberships by paying for eligible costs.

NOVEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3 Book Club Caregiver Group	4 Cortland Craft Club 4:30-8:00	5 Game Night	6 FIDGET LAB	7 MILK STREET 60	8
9 ADAPTIVE CROSSFIT EVENT	10 Book Club	11 GAME SHOW NIGHT 5:30-7 PM	12 Game Night Ithaca 5-7pm	13 FIDGET LAB	14 MILK STREET 60	15
16 MOVIE TIME "UNSEEN" 2-4:30 PM	17 Book Club	18 Cortland Craft Club 4:30-8:00	19 Game Night	20 FIDGET LAB CORTLAND CLOSED	21	22
23	24 Book Club	25 GAME SHOW NIGHT 5:30-7 PM	26 Game Night	27 CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY	28	29

For more information, contact LendingLibrary@racker.org

More information about events can be found below:



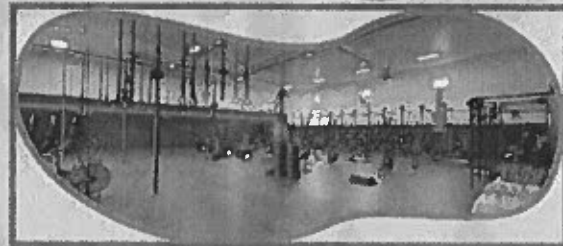
ADAPTIVE CROSSFIT



With Sam Fishman
This exclusive event is open to those with all abilities.

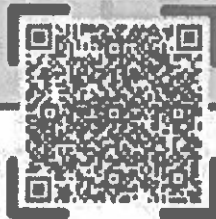


AnyBody & EveryBody
241 CHERRY ST.
ITHACA NY 14850



Rescheduled to:
Sunday November 9th 11:00-12:30pm
Adult Event
(Age 16+)

REGISTRATION REQUIRED



SCAN HERE

Events are made possible by Family Support Services grant funding from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

www.racker.org/events
Need help registering?
Contact (607) 272-5891 Ext 355 or LendingLibrary@racker.org

Click here to sign up for Adaptive CrossFit w/ Sam Fishman – Fill out form



Bi-Weekly, Online
GAME SHOW
Night

Get ready for an evening of fun, learning, and connection at our Virtual Game Show Night from Racker's Autism Lending Library!

This inclusive event features interactive trivia challenges, engaging activities focused on disability rights, and playful games designed to build social skills in a supportive, judgment free environment.

Whether you're a trivia buff, curious about advocacy, or just looking to meet new friends, this night is all about celebrating strengths, learning new skills, and having a blast together!

Every Other Tuesday 5:30-7pm



<https://racker.zoom.us/j/83422937898>

Racker MOVIE SERIES

presents:

UNSEEN

How We're Failing
Parent Caregivers
& Why It Matters

3226 Wilkins Rd.
Ithaca

Sunday
Nov. 16
2:00 - 4:30pm

827830

Unseen offers an unfiltered, honest glimpse into the lives of parent caregivers of children and adults with disabilities or complex medical needs. Many caregivers face exhaustion and isolation, creating a public health crisis that affects us all. This documentary aims to raise awareness and spark change for millions of families. After the screening, a facilitated discussion will be led by Susan Thomas, LCSW-R, and Sarah Elliot, LMSW. Light refreshments will be provided.

RSVP: MaryahW@racker.org
(607)272-5891 x 268

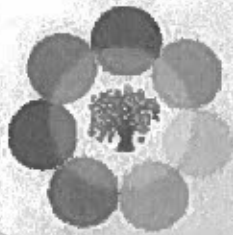


SCAN TO REGISTER

Trigger Warning: This film contains emotional stories of caregiver stress, isolation, and systemic challenges. It may be difficult to watch for those with lived caregiving experiences or close connections to disability care. Support resources will be available.

Click here to sign up for [Unseen – Fill out form](#)

Racker



Autism & Sensory
Lending Library

Craft Club



Biweekly Tuesdays 4:30-6 PM
882 NY-13 Cortland NY

Explore the senses of vision, smell & touch while coloring, painting & getting creative with the Lending Library & Sensory Room! Crafts can be customized for all needs & ages. Come once or come often.

*Made possible by a Family Support Services grant from
the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities*

Family Board Game Night

An adaptive board game night where we will learn about adapting rules to address feelings of anxiety or struggles with engagement to encourage family unity and situational flexibility all while practicing fine motor skills. Light refreshments will be served



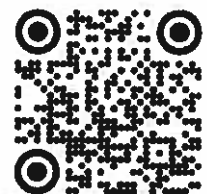
Bi-Weekly Wednesdays
5pm - 7pm

3226 Wilkins Road Ithaca, NY 14850



- *OPWDD Diagnosis
- *FSS Eligible
- *Enrolled in the Lending Library

Scan to Register:



This program is made possible through Family Support Services grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

Click here to sign up for Game Night: <https://forms.office.com/r/6TMC6e2Qzk>



Autism & Sensory
Lending Library

Racker 
Supporting People with Disabilities

ADAPTIVE BINGO GAME NIGHT

Join us from

5-7pm

for bingo every wednesday!

New bi-weekly rotating Location PLUS VIRTUAL!

3226 Wilkins Rd Ithaca NY 14850

and

882 NY-13 Cortland NY 13045

Enjoy a game designed with accessibility in mind, featuring large fonts, a relaxed calling pace, & a welcoming atmosphere.

Families and CSP's welcome.

For Questions or Registration issues, contact:
LendingLibrary@racker.org

Scan to Register:

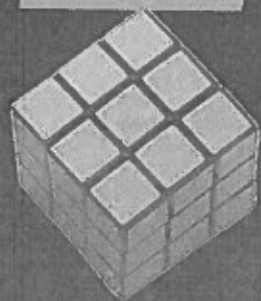


This program is made possible through Family Support Services grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

A Weekly "Build Your Own" Fidget Workshop

FIDGET LAB

Every Thursday
4pm - 5:30pm



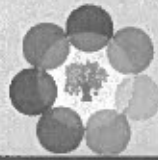
All supplies will be provided,
The whole family is welcome,
No registration needed!

Questions? Contact: LendingLibrary@racker.org (607) 529-0142

**3226 Wilkins Rd.
Ithaca, NY 14850**

This program is made possible through Family Support Services
grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

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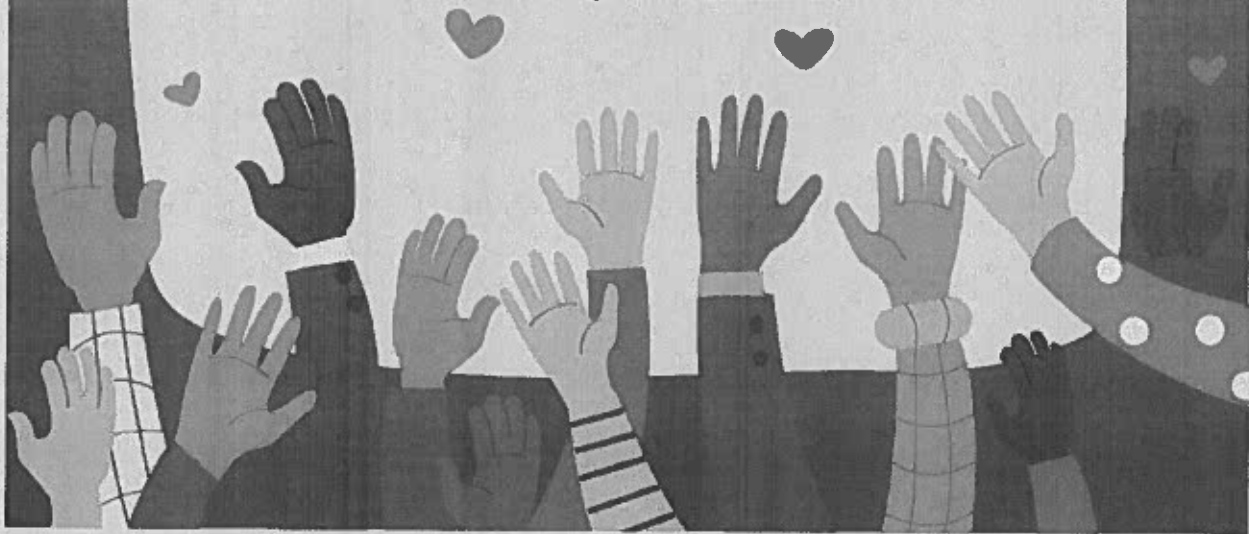
PARENT NETWORK
CAREGIVER GROUP

CAREGIVERS OF THOSE WITH DEVELOPEMENTAL
DISABILITIES (OF ALL AGES) ARE INVITED TO JOIN
THIS MONTHLY PEER-DRIVEN GROUP,
WHERE YOU CAN MEET OTHER CAREGIVERS, SHARE
RESOURCES, OFFER ADVICE, & FIND KINDNESS.

COME ONCE, COME OFTEN,
STAY FOR A MINUTE OR STAY FOR MANY,

1ST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
5:00-6:30PM VIA ZOOM

TO SIGN UP: CONTACT (607) 529-0224 OR
LYNDSEYP@RACKER.ORG



EVENTS & TRAININGS ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES GRANT
FUNDING FROM THE OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

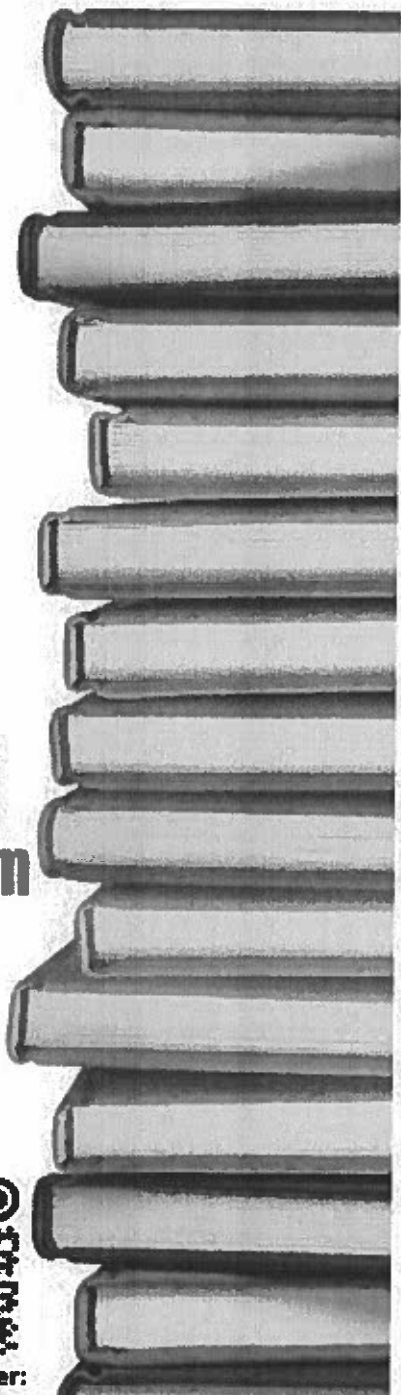
Click here to sign up for Caregiver Group: <https://forms.office.com/r/nxpACG3bD7>



Autism & Sensory
Lending Library

Racker 
Supporting People with Disabilities

Adaptive **BOOK** **CLUB**



Mondays 6:30-7:30pm
882 NY-13, Cortland, NY 13045 & Zoom

LendingLibrary@racker.org

Join us as we explore the world of books
& how they can be adapted for all to enjoy.
Book club is an excellent way to experience new topics
together and make friends.



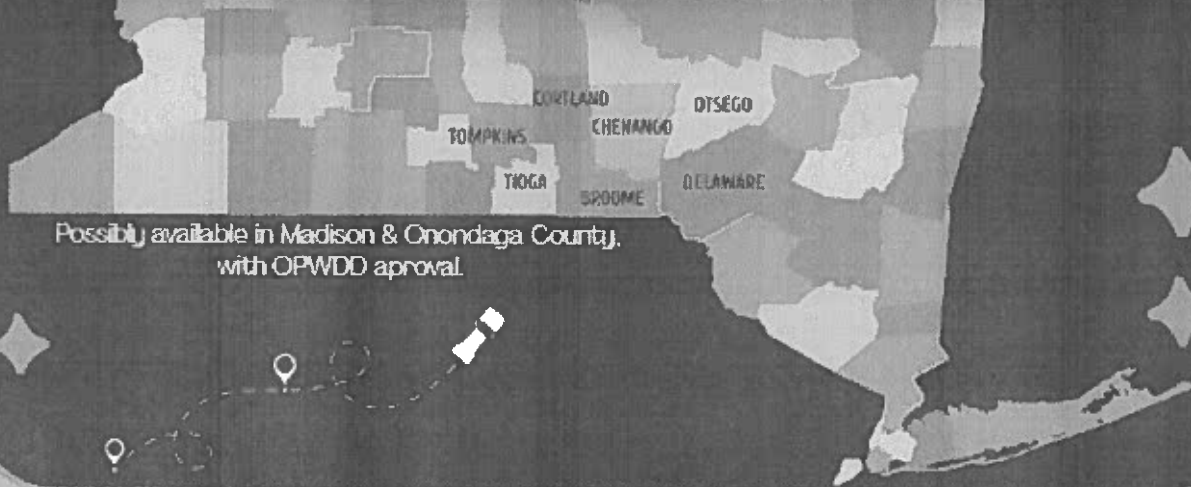
- *OPWDD Diagnosis
- *FSS Eligible
- *Enrolled in the Lending Library



Scan to Register:

This program is made possible through Family Support Services grant from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

DID YOU KNOW RACKER'S LENDING LIBRARY DELIVERS FOR FREE?



Possibly available in Madison & Onondaga County,
with OPWDD approval.

WHO CAN GET DELIVERIES?

Any family who is enrolled in Racker's Lending Library, including those who Self-Direct. We will schedule deliveries within your availability.

In order to enroll, contact the team for a referral form.



WHERE CAN ITEMS BE DELIVERED?

Our team is happy to deliver items right to your front door or a community meet up of your choosing.

We deliver to Broome, Cortland, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, & Tompkins County. As well as Madison & Onondaga, where possible.



HOW TO REQUEST DELIVERY:

To request a delivery use our digital library "hold" feature or contact us at:



LendingLibrary@racker.org



Call or TEXT
(807) 529-0142

Once you are done with your loan, you can schedule a FREE pick up!

