Community of Practice on Autism Spectrum Disorders
and other Developmental Disabilities
Practice Group on Youth Transition
February 10, 2010

Present
Nancy Alar, Bill Helm-Quest, Nate Helm, Erin Miller, Amy Whitehead, Nel Corton

Notes
Meltdown Plan: Erin shared her Meltdown plan with the group and asked for feedback. Everyone commented on what an important tool this is to have and then specific feedback followed about words to use etc. The visuals were really helpful. The information is intended to be on a two-sided card with one side having reminders for the individual with ASD and the other side has information for the person (e.g., law enforcement, teacher) who is present during the meltdown. Nancy asked if Erin would share this with the AUsome social group. Also it was suggested that Erin could share this with the large group at a future CoP meeting.

October 21st CoP Planning: The group gave input into ideas for the October 21st CoP, which will be co-sponsored by the CoP on ASD/DD, the CoP on Transition and the Autism Society of Wisconsin. We brainstormed ideas about the new resources around post-secondary opportunities, including internships and colleges that specialize in supporting young adults with ASD. We talked about having a theme around Managing the Future/Taking control of your life. Maybe we could have display tables to highlight resources. We discussed why futures planning can be challenging for individuals with ASD, including the need for visuals and that there is a lot of uncertainty. We discussed the importance of translating between people on the spectrum and everyone else. People look at you and think you don’t need help, but actually you do need help. One young adult said in our meeting: “Language itself is my second language.” For many there is a history of failed dreams and a sense of being put down. We could have the theme be: Dealing with uncertainty and planning for the future. Address ways to build independence and finding places where the youth can have success. We could frame the topic as things you absolutely need to know as you transition: nutrition, transportation, education, housing, finances, employment, and relationships.

As we closed we all commented on how critical it is to our group that we have individuals on the spectrum participating. It makes what we doing much more meaningful.

Next Steps
If anyone wants to join a planning group for October 21st, just let Amy know.