

SD COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
GRANT APPLICATION - - TITLE PAGE

Applicant Organization: Soteria Education Solutions

Address: 1108 West Glen Eagle Circle, Sioux Falls, SD 57108

Telephone: 605.690.3666 **Federal ID Number:** 92-3633839

Project Directors: Dr. Celeste Uthe-Burow (LPC, LMFT, RPT) and Dr. Michelle Powers

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Email Address: powers@soteriaed.com

Type of Organization: Nonprofit **Tax Exempt?** Yes

Title of Project: MIND-Net: (Mental health IDD Network and Development)

Project Begin: July 1, 2026 **Project Ends:** December 21, 2027

Total Council Funds Requested: \$30,000.00 **Total Project Budget:** \$ 40,000.00

Authorizing Official (please type name): Soteria Educational Consulting by Dr. Michelle Powers

Signature



Title and address, if different from Project Director listed above. (Same)

ABSTRACT

Applicant for funds: Soteria Education Solutions

Need for the project: The South Dakota Council for Developmental Disabilities has identified a critical goal for 2026: improving community-based mental health access for the approximately 35% of individuals with IDD who experience a dual diagnosis. Currently, systemic barriers—including provider stigma, a lack of specialized university coursework, and an absence of professional development initiatives—leave many clinicians unprepared or unwilling to treat this population. This training gap creates a significant service deficit for individuals requiring complex, personalized support for conditions such as bipolar disorder, anxiety, and PTSD.

Beyond the needs of the individual, research emphasizes the urgent requirement for mental health wellness support for family caregivers and direct support professionals. Chronic caregiving stress leads to documented physiological and psychological impacts that can diminish the long-term health of the family unit.

Brief description of the proposed project: Through the MIND- Net (Mental health IDD Network and Development) project, Soteria will develop an on-demand virtual training for mental health professionals to impact understanding and increase confidence in mental health service provision to individuals with IDD and mental health needs. Soteria will also develop a social media min-series on mental health wellness for caregivers.

Goals and objectives to be met and methods to be used: The MIND-Net project aims to bridge the service gap for South Dakotans with dual diagnoses through a four-pillar strategy:

- Goal 1: Specialized Training Development (July 2026 – July 2027) Project staff will research, draft, and vet a virtual, on-demand training series for mental health providers. The curriculum will cover IDD history, person-centered approaches, and ethical therapeutic practices, with an emphasis on securing continuing education (CE) credits to drive participation.
- Goal 2: Awareness and Outreach (February 2027 – August 2027) To boost enrollment, staff will present the training opportunities at major state conferences (Counseling, Social Work, etc.) and execute a broad digital marketing campaign targeting a wide range of professional healthcare and behavioral health associations across South Dakota.
- Goal 3: Searchable Provider Network (July 2027 – December 2027) A public, searchable database will be launched to host a directory of providers who successfully complete the MIND-Net series. This network will be cross-promoted by state agencies and advocacy groups (e.g., Disability Rights SD, Parent Connection) to ensure families can easily find qualified care.
- Goal 4: Caregiver Wellness Mini-Series (July 2026 – July 2027) A social media-based "mini-series" will be produced for TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. This content specifically targets the mental health needs of family caregivers and direct support professionals, leveraging partner networks to maximize reach and engagement.

Brief description of the evaluation process: Using pre and post online surveys, project staff will evaluate for for increased knowledge and prophecies in IDD service history and policy core philosophies such as person-centered thinking, self-determination, choice, etc., and clinical applications of effective therapeutic approaches and increased confidence in treating dual-diagnosis populations. Evaluation of the social media series will be gathered through the public interactions with the various videos, collection of impressions, and comments to assess the impact of the training.

Total Council funds requested: \$30,000.00

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Statement of Need:

The South Dakota Council for Developmental Disabilities has established a primary goal for 2026: **ensuring that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have improved access to specialized mental health services within their own communities.**

The Need for Specialized Mental Health Care

Research confirms a significant demand for mental health support among individuals with a dual diagnosis (IDD and a co-existing mental health disorder). Current data from the National Association for Dual Diagnosis (NADD, 2026) and the Healthy Minds Initiative (2024) estimate that 35% of the IDD population experiences a dual diagnosis. Common conditions—including bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression, and PTSD—require therapeutic treatments specifically adapted to accommodate the unique needs of this population.

Identified Barriers to Access

Despite the high prevalence of these needs, individuals with IDD face systemic barriers to receiving care:

- **Provider Stigma and Lack of Training:** Mental health and medical professionals frequently report a lack of comfort and specialized knowledge in working with the IDD population (Barth et al., 2020; Healthy Minds, 2024).
- **Service Gaps:** Research by Costello et al. (2009) confirms that this lack of expertise leads many providers to decline services to individuals with IDD, as they lack the foundational training to offer effective treatment.
- **Complex Support Requirements:** According to the National Core Indicators (Bradley et al., 2019), individuals with dual diagnoses require more complex, personalized support structures to successfully integrate into their communities.

A January 2026 review of South Dakota’s professional mental health associations revealed an absence of initiatives or professional development focused on the IDD population. Furthermore, university-level pre-service training programs provide minimal or no coursework or practical exposure to this specialty.

The intersection of provider inexperience and a lack of specialized training creates a significant barrier to care. By addressing these training deficits, we can bridge the gap between existing professional standards and the urgent needs of the IDD community, ensuring equitable access to effective mental health treatment.

In addition to the need for training for mental health professionals, the need for mental health wellness for family caregivers and direct support professionals is present in the literature as well. In particular, families who are primary caregivers were observed to incur additional stress over time due to their roles (Auerbach et al, 2019; Thompson et al., 2025). Repeated stress can result in both physiological and psychological impact which can have a negative impact over time, despite caregivers reporting the positive impact of having a family member with an IDD (Auerbach et al, 2019). This reality means caregivers must be provided with support and access to easily accessed tools to help their own wellness while in their important role.

References

Auerbach, E., Perry, H., & Chafouleas, S.M. (November, 2019). Stress: Family caregivers of children with disabilities. Storrs, CT: UConn Collaboratory on School and Child Health.
<http://csch.uconn.edu/>

Barth, S., Lewis, S., & Simmons, T. (October, 2020). Medicaid Services for People with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities – Evolution of Addressing Service Needs and Preferences. Health Management Associates.

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Bradley, V., Hiersteiner, D., Maloney, J., Vegas, L., & Bourne, M.L. (2019). What Do NCI Data Reveal About People Who Are Dual Diagnosed with ID and Mental Illness? National Core Indicators Data Brief. https://legacy.nationalcoreindicators.org/upload/core-indicators/NCI_DualDiagnosisBrief_Oct072019.pdf

Costello, H., Holt, G., Cain, N., Bradley, E., Torr, J., Davis, R., ... Weber, G. (2007). Professional training for those working with people with intellectual disabilities and mental health problems. In N. Bouras & G. Holt (Eds.), *Psychiatric and Behavioural Disorders in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* (pp. 400–411). chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Healthy Minds Initiative. (June 27, 2024). *Barriers to care for people with co-occurring mental health disorders and intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Healthy Minds Policy Initiative. <https://www.healthymindspolicy.org/research/barriers-to-care-for-people-with-co-occurring-mental-health-disorders-and-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities>

National Association for Dual Diagnosis. (2026). IID/MI Diagnosis. NADD. <https://thenadd.org/idd-mi-diagnosis/>

Thompson, P. A., Summers, E., Caton, S., Hayden, N., Todd, S., Oloidi, E., Taggart, L., Kelly, R., Bradshaw, J., Maguire, R., Jahoda, A., Hatton, C., Hastings, R. P., & Coronavirus and People with Learning Disabilities Study Team (2025). Wellbeing of Family Carers of Adults With Intellectual Disabilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the UK: Longitudinal Study. *Journal of intellectual disability research : JIDR*, 69(4), 265–273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.13206>

Purpose of the project:

The purpose of the first part of the MIND-Net project is to improve access for individuals with a dual diagnosis to individually designed mental health services in their own communities through the development of specialized training for mental health providers across the state of South Dakota. This training, planned to be provided at limited or no cost, will immediately reduce the barrier of a lack of training and knowledge, and increase capacity of mental health providers in South Dakota. With a cadre of trained providers, access for individuals with a dual diagnosis will be positively impacted due to an increased availability of trained service providers, who reported a level of competency and understanding for effective mental health treatment and therapy for individuals with IDD.

Additionally, the Council has an objective to offer an event or resource that provides information for family caregivers and direct support providers to maintain their own well-being. As an additional component of MIND-Net, we propose to provide a mini-series of social media videos on mental health wellness as a caregiver. These would be designed to be accessible to family caregivers and direct support professionals in brief videos “Tik Tok” style, for ease of access and consumption.

Evidence of need for Council assistance:

According to the FFY 2025 Annual Report from the South Dakota Council for Developmental Disabilities, approximately 6500 individuals receive support through two HCBS waivers (Family Support 360 and CHOICES). Of these 6500, it can be estimated that 35% of these individuals have a dual diagnosis, which places the number of potential individuals requiring services due to a dual diagnosis of IDD and a mental health diagnosis at 2,275 people.

The development of a comprehensive training series represents a significant investment in impacting access to mental health services for individuals with a dual diagnosis, as well as the mini-series on social media targeted towards family caregivers and direct support professionals. To reach the goal of delivering these series, it will require research, program development, vetting and the support of technology

developers to produce and launch the resources. The assistance requested of the Council is needed to ensure there is adequate funding to launch the programs and make them available with limited or no cost to mental health providers, family caregivers and direct support professionals.

Target Population:

According to the FFY 2025 Annual Report from the South Dakota Council for Developmental Disabilities, approximately 6500 individuals receive support through two HCBS waivers (Family Support 360 and CHOICES). Of these 6500, it can be estimated 35% of these individuals have a dual diagnosis; which places the number of potential individuals requiring services due to a dual diagnosis of IDD and a mental health diagnosis at 2,275 people (NADD, 2026; Healthy Minds Initiative, 2024). South Dakota has not collected data in terms of how many individuals are lacking access but anecdotal data across these populations supports the need. Additionally, within this group of individuals, all are surrounded by family caregivers and direct support professionals who will be impacted by the social media series.

Collaboration with other entities:

As recommended by the Council reviewers, we reached out to the Division of Developmental Disabilities and spoke with Director Dunn and Assistant Director Spencer regarding collaboration with the Crisis Care Continuum group. In conversation with Directors Dunn and Spencer, they shared the composition of the group, which covers the spectrum of service providers for individuals with IDD including community support providers, case management and family support, as well as medical providers such as Monument Health, division staff and representatives from behavior health in South Dakota.

In conversation with the division directors, they indicated they felt the continuum group would be important to communicate with, but did not feel it would take the place of mental health providers who will be invited to vet the draft course material, and give input on dissemination to critical providers. We did discuss the potential of dissemination in collaboration with the Division after completion of the grant to ensure the materials remain publicly available for five years after grant completion.

Collaboration with individuals with developmental disabilities and other agencies:

Dr. Uthe-Burow is a member of the Sanford Mental Health Collaborative Board, as well as the South Dakota Association of Play Therapy Board. She provides mental health services for the Viborg area at Pioneer Regional Hospital and clinic as well as the Viborg/Hurley School District. She has worked in collaboration with staff from the Southeast Area Cooperative to serve the needs of students and parents in the school setting and through the IEP process. Dr. Burow also serves the Freeman Regional Hospital and clinic as well as Freeman Public Schools and Freeman Academy.

Goals, Objectives and Action Plan:

Expected outcomes: Mental health providers in the state will increase their awareness of the need for trained providers in the field, helping to reduce stigma and misunderstanding of the effectiveness of mental health therapies for individuals with IDD.

Mental health providers who take the course series will report:

- An increased understanding of the history and background of services and supports to the IDD population,
- An increase in knowledge regarding concepts of person-centered thinking, self-determination, charting the life course, choice, HCBS settings rules, competitive employment, and positive behavior supports,
- An increased knowledge in effective therapeutic approaches for the IDD population, and
- An increased knowledge in ethical considerations for therapy and the IDD population.

- An increase in reported confidence in serving populations of individuals with a dual diagnosis (IDD and mental health disorder)

These outcomes have the potential to increase access to individually designed mental health services for individuals with a dual diagnosis of IDD and mental health disorders due to the increased availability of trained mental health providers who will have exposure and knowledge to ensure they can provide therapy under their professional scope of practice.

Mental health professionals who complete the training will be identifiable through a voluntary network tool which is searchable for individuals with IDD and their families seeking mental health support. Family caregivers and direct support professionals will have a quick and easily consumable resource via a mini-series on social media for their own mental health and wellness.

Goal 1 - Develop a virtual, on-demand training series for mental health providers which will provide history and background of IDD, concepts of person-centered approaches, charting the life course, self-determination and choice, along with other relevant points, effective therapeutic approaches for the IDD population, and ethical considerations for the IDD population. *Timeframe: July 1, 2026 through July 1, 2027.*

Measurable objective 1a - Project staff will research and write the curriculum and content for the two course series (mental health professional training and social media).

Measurable objective 1b - Project staff will conduct a vetting process of the course content for the series with selected mental health providers.

Measurable objective 1c - Project staff will work with IT partners to develop the on-demand course series.

Measurable objective 1d - Project staff will pursue continuing education credits approval from related professional organizations to further increase interest and participation in the course series.

Goal 2 - Mental health providers awareness of the availability of training will increase through presentations at relevant professional conferences across South Dakota, where MIND-Net project staff will present on the opportunity to participate in the course series developed under MIND-Net. *Timeframe: February, 2027 through August, 2027.*

Measurable objective 2a - Project staff will apply to present at the South Dakota Counseling Association to be held in Sioux Falls as well as the Social Workers of SD conference (NESW) also in SF.

Measurable objective 2b - Project staff will present at selected conferences.

Measurable objective 2c - Project staff will disseminate written materials and electronic marketing to generate awareness and interest in the course series to a variety of professional associations including the National Association of Social Workers (SD chapter), SD Association of Addiction and Prevention Professionals, SD Counseling Association, SD Psychological Association, SD Council of Community Behavioral Health, SD School Counselor Association, SD Association of Healthcare Organizations and SD Nurses Association.

Goal 3 - Develop a searchable network of trained mental health providers for the state of South Dakota. *Timeframe: July 1, 2027 through December 2027*

Measurable objective 3a - Each mental health provider who successfully completes the course series will be listed on the searchable network resource held on publicly available spaces and disseminated through various agencies

Measurable objective 3b - The network will be listed on publicly available spaces and disseminated through various agencies and partners (Disability Rights, Parent Connection, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Case management agencies, Mental health providers).

Goal 4 - Develop a social media “mini-series” focused on mental health for family caregivers and direct support professionals. Timeframe: July 1, 2026 through July 2027

Measurable objective 4a - Project staff will write and create the content for the mental health mini-series.

Measurable objective 4b - The social media series will be uploaded to various social media sites (Tik Tok, YouTube, FaceBook, Instagram) to promote access to mental health for caregivers

Measurable objective 4c - Project staff will follow and share with other online entities which may assist in promoting the mini-series on their own social media (Disability Rights, Parent Connection, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Case management agencies, Mental health providers)

Indicate how the applicant plans to reach currently unserved or underserved populations through this project (i.e. Native Americans, Hispanics, rural, etc.).

The training series developed through the MIND-Net project is intended to result in virtual courses which can be accessed throughout the state, in an on-demand capacity for providers. This means any provider, in any location, including rural and remote regions of South Dakota, will be served by this funded series of training courses. The mental health mini-series will be provided via social media channels such as Youtube and Tik Tok, meaning it is accessible across the state and various populations.

Products developed with Council funding (infographics, videos, and other resources) should remain publicly available for a period of 5 years after the project ends. Products should use plain language and/or captioning as appropriate.

Planning for support post-grant has occurred in preliminary conversations with the Division of Developmental Disabilities staff to consider cooperative support to make the training available on an ongoing basis, past the end date of the grant. All materials will be developed in accordance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) currently set at WCAG 2.1 Level AA.

Organization & Staff Qualifications:

Soteria Education Consulting is a non-profit company owned and operated by Drs. Celeste Uthe-Burow and Michelle Powers. The company provides direct, as well as virtual, training and coaching to schools and agencies based on assessed need and desired outcomes for each individual entity. Together, Drs. Uthe-Burow and Powers have over 80 years of combined experience in providing direct services to schools and staff across the state of South Dakota and they will serve as co-administrators for this grant.

Dr. Uthe-Burow, LPC, LMFT, RPT, is a certified mental health therapist and long-time educator who currently works as an associate professor of psychology at Augustana University, in addition to her private practice. She currently teaches undergraduate courses in human development. The courses she teaches are: PSYC 1120 Lifespan Human Development; PSYC 2130 Psychopathology; PSYC 3221 Child Psychology; PSYC 3222 Adolescent Development; PSYC 2970 Introduction to Play Therapy. In her mental health practice, she provides direct therapy to individuals in the Sioux Falls and surrounding region. She also provides counselor supervision to clinicians that are working to satisfy the hours to become licensed professional counselors. Please see Dr. Uthe-Burow's resume/CV for further information on qualifications.

Dr. Powers is a long-time educator and advocate in the field of special education/disabilities and is the parent of an adult child on the autism spectrum. Her background includes service at the state and local district level as a special education administrator, as well as time as an assistant professor of special

education at Augustana University. In her university role, Dr. Powers taught undergraduate and graduate coursework on foundations and methods for special education, as well as graduate research and special education law. Most recently, she served as the chief executive officer for a community support provider. Please see Dr. Powers resume/CV for further information on qualifications.

Evaluation & Consumer Satisfaction Information

To assess the effectiveness of the training on each mental health provider who completes the course series to determine if they report, project staff will evaluate/gather data on:

- An increased understanding of the history and background of services and supports to the IDD population,
- An increase in knowledge regarding concepts of person-centered thinking, self-determination, choice, HCBS settings rules, competitive employment, and positive behavior supports,
- An increased knowledge in effective therapeutic approaches for the IDD population, and
- An increased knowledge in ethical considerations for therapy and the IDD population.
- An increase in reported confidence in serving populations of individuals with a dual diagnosis (IDD and mental health disorder)
- Level of satisfaction with the training provided and suggestions for improvement and/or expansion of training

The methods for measurement of the project outcomes for the training series will be a pre and post online survey submitted by each person completing the course. Analysis of the data will be completed by project staff who will gather course survey results and aggregate the data to determine if there is a measurable change in the reported areas being evaluated. Information will be gathered related to further training and needs that can remain as unmet needs for the future.

Evaluation of the social media series will be gathered through the public interactions with the various videos, collection of impressions, and comments to assess the impact of the training.

MIND-Net project staff, Drs. Uthe-Burow and Powers will be responsible for program monitoring, evaluation and any needed corrective action steps. Consumer satisfaction will be incorporated into the course survey post evaluations, and will include a component for additional suggestions for improvement or expansion of the training.

Performance Measures

The performance measures of S.C 1.3, S.C. 1.4., and S.C1.5 will be achieved through this project. We estimate creating one course series, and one self-help social media series, which means we will have created two promising or best practices under this grant. The number of people trained or educated is undetermined at this point, as we do not know how many mental health professionals will take advantage of the course series. Collection of social media impact on people is also unable to be estimated, however, we will be able to collect the number of interactions with the social media series as an estimate of people who interacted with the self-help training. The course series will be promoted in cooperation with other organizations, including the South Dakota Counseling Association and Association of Play Therapists. We will invite other partners, such as Disability Rights and Parent Connection to be actively involved in the dissemination and awareness raising of this project.

Participant Information Required

Collection of participant information will be requested as part of the intake to register for the course series. The short video series for families and direct support professionals will be made available via social media; this will not allow for collection of participant information.

BUDGET SHEET & NARRATIVE

Description	(A) Requested DD Council Funds	(B) Allowable Match from Applicant **	(C) Allowable Match from Other Agencies **	(D) Total Contract Grant Budget (A + B + C)	(E) Un-allowable Match from Applicant & Other Agencies	(F) Total Project Budget (D + E)
PERSONNEL						
Course development - Uthe-Burow	11500.00	3500.00		15250.00		15250.00
Course development - Powers	11500.00	3500.00		15250.00		15250.00
TRAVEL						
Conference travel and registration - Uthe-Burow		500.00		500.00		500.00
Conference travel and registration - Powers		500.00		500.00		500.00
Collaboration		250.00		250.00		250.00
CONTRACTUAL						
Platform development	6400.00			6400.00		6400.00
Stipends	600.00			600.00		600.00
OPERATING EXPENSES						
Printing		150.00		150.00		150.00
Office supplies		100.00		100.00		100.00
EQUIPMENT						
NA						
OTHER						
Continuing education credit		1000.00		1000.00		1000.00
Marketing and dissemination		500.00		500.00		500.00
GRAND TOTAL	30000.00	10000.00		40000.00		40000.00

Personnel: \$30,000.00

Course Development by project staff (Drs. Uthe-Burow & Powers): This constitutes the primary investment of the grant. It covers the extensive research, curriculum development of the mental health training and "mini-series" social media content. This also encompasses the quality-assurance phase, where content is vetted by active providers, and completion of the final evaluation. Cost is based on a professional rate of 120.00 per hour with an estimate of 125 hours for project completion.

- **Match:** Soteria provides \$7,000 in unbilled professional hours as an in-kind contribution to meet the 25% requirement.

Travel: \$1,250.00

Conference travel and registration: Drs. Power and Uthe-Burow will attend selected conferences (based on presentation acceptance) for the South Dakota Counseling Association and NESW. Both of these conferences are set to occur in 2027 in Sioux Falls, meaning travel will be local for Dr. Uthe-Burow and Dr. Powers will travel from Brookings. Costs are restricted to registration (2 conferences x 2 attendees, which equals 4 total registration fees, as well as mileage at the state rate and minimal overnight lodging/per diem for the selected conference dates (SD Counseling Association and NESW).

Collaboration: Covers local travel for coordination meetings with mental health professionals for vetting, and other agencies as needed at state rate.

- **Match:** Soteria will provide all travel expenses as part of the required in-kind match to meet the 25% requirement.

Contractual: \$7,000.00

Platform Development: Fees for external IT services to develop and produce the on-demand virtual training modules and the public, searchable provider network database, as well as ensure all digital platforms meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards for users with disabilities.

Stipend: To properly vet the course content series, project staff will reach out to multiple mental health professionals to review the series and provide feedback. We anticipate providing stipends to each reviewer in the amount of \$200.00 for their professional input. Budget amount is \$600.00 in total to support vetting by a minimum of three mental health professionals.

Operating Expenses: \$250.00

Printing: Costs for printing materials for conference presentations, and marketing materials.

Office supplies: Costs for paper, folders, pens and other materials needed to produce presentation materials.

- **Match:** Soteria will provide all operating expenses as part of the required in-kind match to meet the 25% requirement.

Other: \$1,500.00

Continuing Education (CE) Credits: Costs for program staff (Powers and Uthe-Burow) to pursue submitting the training series to professional boards for continuing education approval to incentivize provider participation.

Marketing & Dissemination: Costs for program staff to complete digital outreach to ensure professional associations across the state are aware of the training and searchable network.

Costs for these activities are based on an hourly rate of 75.00 an hour for a total of 20 hours..

- **Match:** Soteria will provide all other expenses as part of the required in-kind match to meet the 25% requirement.

ATTACHMENTS

- Letter of support from a person with a disability or a family member (sent separately)
- Resume/CV for Dr. Uthe-Burow
- Resume/CV for Dr. Powers