

Achieving Success through Inclusion, Equity, Opportunity, and Research

Janet LaBreck, RSA Commissioner

Ms. LaBreck reminded participants that times are changing; we need to use research to build the case for what we do. Data that is collected can help to provide the evidence and accountability required to continue services. Even though statistics are not the most interesting they are important to explain why we need specially trained staff, funding for new programs, and continuation of funding for what works. Providing substantial evidence is not just necessary, but required if services are to continue to improve.

Ms. LaBreck finished with a personal story. When she was a VR consumer she requested a pair of special low vision glasses, which were a new technology at the time. Her VR counselor denied the expenditure saying that they do not fund things because they are “trendy.” Since Ms. LaBreck felt the glasses would be helpful, she requested an appeal. She asked the vendor of the glasses to provide her with research that would explain how the glasses would help someone with her condition. She also talked with her ophthalmologist and family doctors, asking them to provide letters of medical necessity. Armed with this information she went to her appeal meeting. The agency approved payment for the glasses. They also offered her a job as a client advocate.