

2022-2023

Evaluation Plan for
Mandy's Farm

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1. Organization and program overview

Organization: Mandy’s Farm is a not-for-profit organization that began in 2000. Mandy’s Farm is an organization dedicated to providing individualized support for adults with disabilities in Albuquerque, NM, to live full, autonomous lives (Mandy’s Farm, 2022a). Their programming includes residential facilities, employment preparedness and job placement, as well as agricultural and animal programs. Mandy’s Farm is able to provide many of their programs and services to participants for no cost through their contracts with the Developmental Disabilities Support Division through the Department of Health. Additional programming support comes from donations, grants, and volunteer support.

Program: This year, the Evaluation Lab team will be focused on the Customized Community Supports (CCS) program. This program is for “individuals 18 years of age and older who have an intellectual or developmental disability and currently receive DD or Mi Via waiver services” (Mandy’s Farm, 2022b) The CCS program focuses on providing inclusive, facility free opportunities for individuals to build relationships, develop physical strengths, and to participate in activities of personal interests. CCS activities may be provided individually or in small group settings. This program was paused during the pandemic due to physical health risks. Mandy’s Farm is preparing to relaunch the CCS programs in 2023. Some participants will be returning to CCS and Mandy’s Farm will also be recruiting new participants.

Lessons from literature: Mandy’s Farm is working to reintroduce their CCS program. The literature on the topic shows just how important this type of program currently is. COVID had a detrimental effect on everyone, but especially on people with disabilities. Jesus et al. (2021) shows that people with disabilities experienced restricted access to healthcare, social isolation, lack of personal assistance, and reduced employment, among other problems. All these issues directly affect the clients of Mandy’s Farm. Now that the pandemic is ending, Mandy’s Farm is seeking to restart their CCS program in order to meet some of these needs, namely as an answer to social isolation. Oh et al. (2021) also shows why the CCS program is so sorely needed. This article establishes just how important community engagement is for adults with disabilities. Without socialization and community engagement, these adults are in danger of losing their self-identity. After such a prolonged period of isolation, it has been too long without this much-needed engagement. The activities that are selected for the CCS program will need to include a high degree of community socialization.

The relaunch of the CCS programs will focus on organizing inclusive, facility-free programming. This is a shift from the last version of the CCS program. Where the earlier version centered

Mandy’s Farm as the main location, this version will focus more on connecting individuals with activities and programs around Albuquerque. Mandy’s Farm aims to center the specific interests and goals of participants in the planning, which aligns with best practices noted in Shogren et al. (2018), an evaluation of interventions aiming to support individual agency and goal-setting and achieving of people with disabilities. The other main thing to consider is the places in which these activities will take place. Dashner et al. (2019) talks about the needs of disabled adults. Specifically, when it comes to transportation, both the vehicle and the destination need to be accessible. Mandy’s Farm has their own vehicles which are wheelchair accessible, but the destinations are also under consideration. To get participants from either their homes or Mandy’s Farm to the community-based events, there may be specific transportation needs and there may be accessibility considerations of the specific venues.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation and Evaluation questions

Evaluation goal: The purpose of this year’s evaluation is to evaluate the relaunch of the CCS programs. Mandy’s Farm aims to conduct a process evaluation throughout the relaunch in order to optimize the experience for all participants.

Evaluation questions: The process evaluation questions are developed from process evaluation guidance from the Rand Corporation’s program evaluation resources (Ebener et al. 2017). Our team has one overarching question, which will guide the evaluation, and four sub-questions to guide each of the types of process evaluation strategies:

- How will Mandy’s Farm successfully relaunch the Customized Community Support (CCS) program?
 - What do participants need/want from the CCS program relaunch?
 - How effectively is the CCS relaunch program going?
 - How satisfied are participants with the CCS program relaunch?
 - What are staff perceptions of the CCS program relaunch?

How it will be used and by whom? The results of this process evaluation will be used by Mandy’s Farm staff to prepare for the relaunch of the CCS program, to identify opportunities for improvement throughout the beginning period of the relaunch, and finally to document the success, as measured by attendance and satisfaction, of the CCS program relaunch.

3. Stakeholders

The Mandy’s Farm CCS primary stakeholders include CCS participants, both returning participants and potential participants, participants’ caregivers, Mandy’s Farm staff who support CCS programming, and community partners, including programming partners and event venues. Other indirect stakeholders include Mandy’s Farm financial supporters.

4. Evaluation Design and Data Collection

Design: Our process evaluation design follows best practices as delineated by the Rand Corporation resources (Ebener et al. 2017). Specifically, these materials recommend developing a clear process evaluation plan prior to launching (or in our case relaunching) the program, including a plan for tracking the number of participants and their attendance, monitoring the program adherence, and have strategies to determine how well the organization follows through on the plan. Recommendations also include analyzing the process evaluation data throughout and after the implementation of the program and to have strategies in place for making evidence-informed mid-course corrections as needed.

Based on best practices, we have developed a multi-pronged process evaluation approach to answer our main evaluation question, which includes tailored data collection approaches for each of the sub questions.

Data collection tools:

- What do participants need/want from the CCS relaunch?

In order to answer this question, we will survey the returning CCS participants (about 10 participants are returning to the program). We are working with Mandy’s Farm staff to draft the initial CCS participants needs survey. Mandy’s Farm will revise this survey. We will create and quality-test the survey using Google Forms. Then, Mandy’s Farm will be sending this survey to the 10 returning participants. As it is such a small sample size, we will compile the results into a report using descriptive statistics and summarizing key considerations for building participants’ needs into the programming.

- How effectively is the CCS relaunch going?

We have several strategies to measure the success and effectiveness of the relaunch. First, we will document how many activities are scheduled and occur. We will also document how many participants sign up for and how many attend each activity. Evaluation Lab team members (either UNM or Mandy’s Farm team members depending on the type of program) will conduct participant observation of activities in order to gather information about the events. We will create a report showcasing the variety of activities and the total number of participants

between January and March 2023 and detail summaries of these events drawing from the participant observations.

- How satisfied are participants with the CCS relaunch?

In addition to the number of activities and attendees, Mandy’s Farm also wants to measure how satisfied participants are with the activities they attend. We will design and implement an inclusive, accessible measure of participant success. We will randomly select activities (this number will depend on the number of activities scheduled) and participants at these activities will be asked to report their satisfaction with a red/yellow/green (dissatisfied/neutral/satisfied). We also will continue to investigate other ways of getting feedback from participants and participants’ caregivers to best understand both the successes and the opportunities for improvement.

- What are staff perceptions of the CCS relaunch?

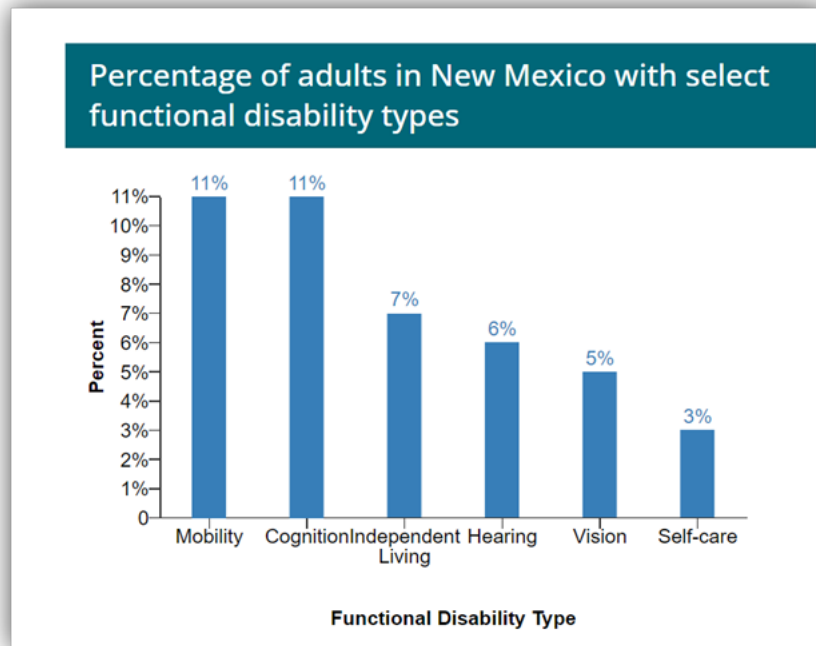
Finally, we will conduct interviews or focus groups (TBD) to assess staff perceptions of the CCS relaunch. As the relaunch will be more focused on inclusive, facility-free programming, there will be different logistical challenges than if the programming was hosted at Mandy’s Farm. Staff perceptions will be invaluable to identify areas that are working well and areas that need to be adapted.

5. Activities and Timeline

Activity	Anticipated Completion Date
Hocus Focus Magic Event	11/9/22
Create CCS Participants’ Needs Assessment Questionnaire Questions	12/9/22
Distribute CCS Participants’ Needs Assessment Questionnaire	12/15/22
Receive CCS Participants’ Needs Assessment Questionnaire responses	12/30/22
Implement activities based on Needs Assessment Questionnaire results	2/1/22
EvalLab “Participant Observation” of relaunched activities	2/1/23-3/1/23
CCS Participant Satisfaction Activity	2/1/23-3/1/23
Staff perceptions of relaunch (interviews/survey)	2/15/23-3/1/23
Analyze the data	3/2/23-3/20/23
Begin drafting report	3/20/23
Begin drafting poster	3/20/23
Finalize report	4/15/22 (subject to change)
Finalize poster	4/15/22 (subject to change)

Appendices

Data Compilation



26% of New Mexicans have a disability (CDC, 2022). That is 1 in every 4 New Mexicans that fall into one of the disability categories above. As you can see from the first graph, 11% of adults in New Mexico have a cognitive disability and 7% have an independent living disability. This is important because Mandy’s Farm is hoping to address people with developmental/cognitive disabilities while simultaneously improving independent living skills. As $\frac{1}{4}$ of New Mexicans have some sort of disability, one can see the need for services that this presents to New Mexico for citizens with disabilities. Mandy’s Farm not only has the residential program, but historically has day programs that can reach higher numbers of clients in NM. These day programs enhance socialization for people who participate.

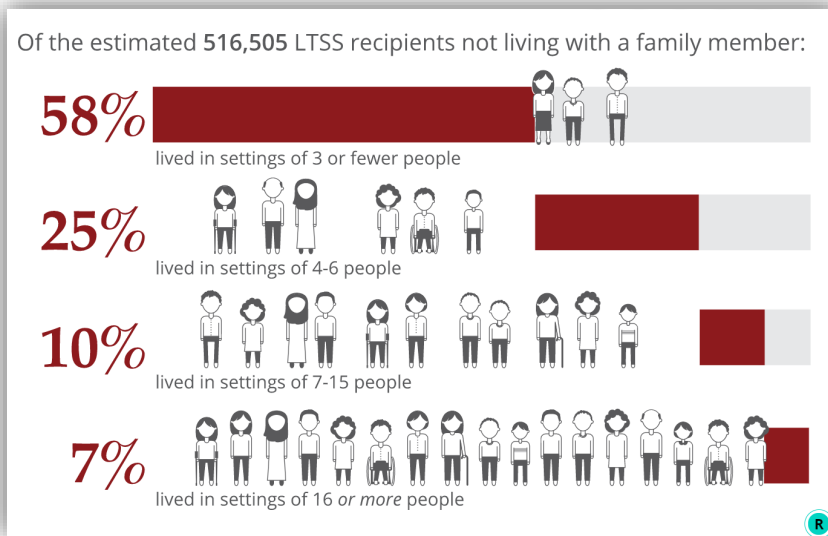
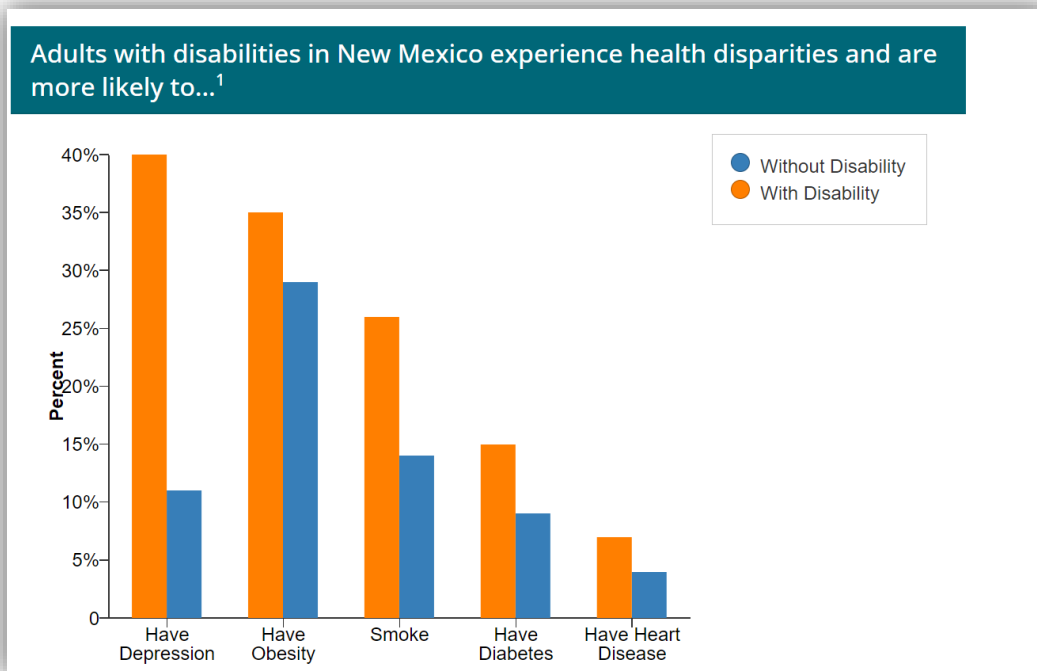
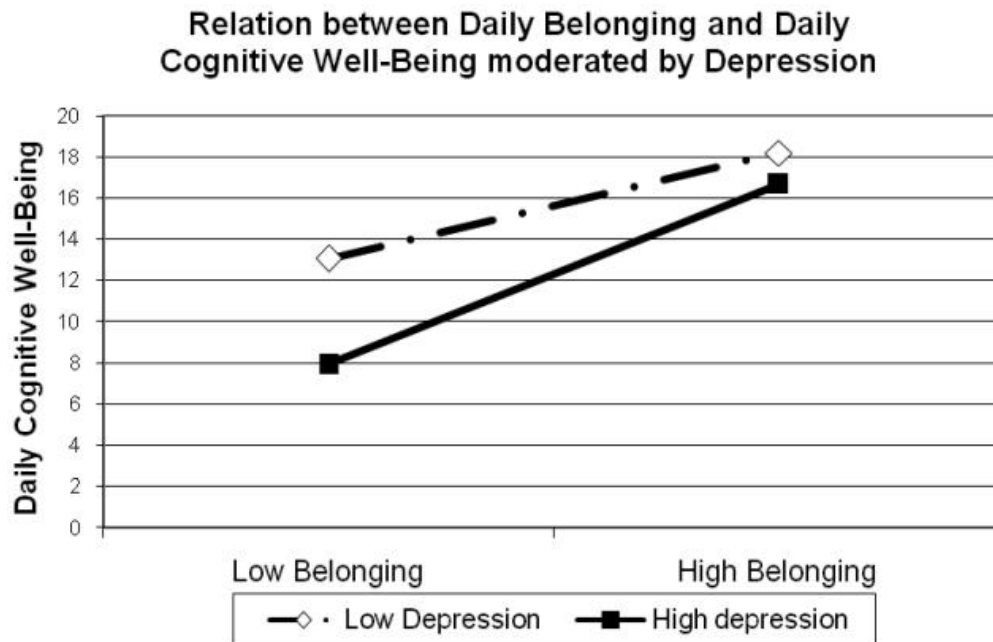


Figure 2.

In Figure 2 (*FY 2017 RISP Infographics, 2022*), we see where the 516,505 Long Term Services and Support patients who do not live with their family end up. These stats are broken up into how many people with disabilities are in a singular center. Since Mandy’s Farm only has 4 people living at each of the residential spaces, it would fall into the category of people with 4-6 residents. This is important information because encouraging independent living task learning can be hard with more people. What this graph fails to show us however is the amount of peoples with IDD that do not live in a residential center and what programs they participate in for socialization.



Day programs are an important way to increase socialization in people with developmental disabilities (CDC, 2022). As you can see in the graph above, 40% of people with disabilities have depression compared to just over 10% of people without disabilities. This is a very high statistic and we can attribute part of it to lack of socialization and activities of interest that are offered to people with disabilities. There are about 440,000 people with disabilities in New Mexico. Using this graph that means that about 176,000 people with disabilities in NM suffer from depression. Social barriers and social isolation is one of the leading causes of depression in people with disabilities according to Karla Thompson’s *Depression and Disability – A Practical Guide*.



In a study on daily belonging and daily cognitive well-being, it is noted that when people have a high sense of belonging (whether it be through socialization, purpose, activities) they have a higher daily cognitive well-being even with the diagnosis of high depression (Steger and Kashdan, 2009). This is important because it can be applied to people with disabilities. Mandy’s farm is trying to relaunch programs that will bring interest to clients. These programs, if clients are interested in them, will then help the clients form a sense of high belonging. This will enhance the daily cognitive well-being and life of the clients. We will be evaluating if clients like certain programs with hopes that through immediate feedback Mandy’s Farm can tailor the day programs to the immediate interests of the clients.

Literature Review

Mandy’s Farm is working to reintroduce their CCS program. The literature on the topic shows just how important this type of program currently is. COVID had a detrimental effect on everyone, but especially on people with disabilities. Jesus et al. (2021) shows that people with disabilities experienced restricted access to healthcare, social isolation, lack of personal assistance, and reduced employment, among other problems. Jesus et al. (2021) is a synthesis describing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with disabilities. Mandy’s Farm was affected by the pandemic in many ways, thus affecting those who used those services. These effects are identified and described, including restricted access to healthcare, social isolation, lack of personal assistance, caregiver stress, and reduced employment. The conclusion drawn from the literature is that the COVID-19 pandemic, and especially the measures taken as a result of it, disproportionately affected people with disabilities. These effects are likely matched

with those experienced by the people who used Mandy's Farm and its programs. All these issues directly affect the clients of Mandy's Farm.

Now that the pandemic is ending, Mandy's Farm is seeking to restart their CCS program in order to meet some of these needs, namely as an answer to social isolation. Oh et al. (2021) also shows why the CCS program is so sorely needed. This article establishes just how important community engagement is for adults with disabilities. Without socialization and community engagement, these adults are in danger of losing their self-identity. After such a prolonged period of isolation, it has been too long without this much-needed engagement. The activities that are selected for the CCS program will need to include a high degree of community socialization. Walker et al. (1999) paper describes a study about place and community. Adults with disabilities spend more of their time in places designated for people with disabilities, in public places, and in places characterized by business transactions. Within these places and contexts, these adults have a variety of experiences, both positive and negative. In the context of Mandy's Farm and day programs, both place and community are very important. These programs are public-facing and match a lot of the details from this study. How the participants feel about these events may be like the feelings described in this paper.

The relaunch of the CCS programs will focus on organizing inclusive, facility-free programming. This is a shift from the last version of the CCS program. Where the earlier version centered Mandy's Farm as the main location, this version will focus more on connecting individuals with activities and programs around Albuquerque. Mandy's Farm aims to center the specific interests and goals of participants in the planning, which aligns with best practices noted in Shogren et al. (2018), an evaluation of interventions aiming to support individual agency and goal-setting and achieving of people with disabilities. The other main thing to consider is the places in which these activities will take place. Dashner et al. (2019) examines how adults with disabilities participate in the community. As the population ages, we will see an increasing average age. This includes people with disabilities. Basically, as the population grows older, they will need additional access to transportation to appointments, grocery stores, and services that will help them complete their daily living activities. The access to these kinds of services is limited. Without transportation that incorporates accessibility for physical disabilities of multiple kinds this is limited. For example, if you have a 60-year-old man who is a wheelchair user, to get transportation to his appointments he will need an accessible van. Many services that provide transportation to the elderly do not have access to many vehicles like this. This is particularly important when recognizing aging adults with intellectual disabilities.

Moving forward with Mandy's farm, they have their own transportation, but access in the community needs to be adaptable. To get clients from Mandy's farm to the community, special accessibility requirements may be needed whether it be physical or something supplemental to help with intellectual disabilities. Specifically, when it comes to

transportation, both the vehicle and the destination need to be accessible. Mandy's Farm has their own vehicles which are wheelchair accessible, but the destinations are also under consideration. To get participants from either their homes or Mandy's Farm to the community-based events, there may be specific transportation needs and there may be accessibility considerations of the specific venues.

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