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Slide 1: Introduction

- From Advocacy to Action: Enforcing ADA Protections with IDD
- MJ (Maleeka Jihad)
- MJ Consulting Firm
- Conference Name: The Association for Successful Parenting (TASP)
- Date: Thursday, March 12, 2025

Slide 2: About MJ Consulting

- Team of diverse professionals—including attorneys, educators, social workers, psychologists, treatment providers, and individuals with lived experiences—offers expert consultation services. Deliver personalized guidance to help clients make informed decisions, overcome obstacles, and achieve positive outcomes.

Slide 3: Importance of ADA Protections

- What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?
- Purpose: Protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination in various settings, including family services
- Importance for parents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)

Slide 4: Vulnerabilities Leading to Family Separation

- Over-representation of parents with IDD in child welfare systems
- Risk factors:
 - Lack of tailored support and accommodations
 - Bias and misconceptions about parenting capacity
 - Systemic barriers and inadequate service provision

- Consequences: Disproportionate family separations

Slide 5: Common ADA Violations Impacting Families with IDD

- Failure to provide necessary accommodations in parenting services
 - (e.g., clear communication, accessible materials)
- Denial of reasonable modifications in family reunification plans
- Lack of appropriate assessments and supports in recognizing parenting strengths and needs
- Insufficient training of child welfare professionals on disabilities and ADA compliance

Slide 6: How to Identify ADA Violations

- Signs:
 - Services not adapted to cognitive or communication needs
 - Parents are not provided with assistive technology or support persons
 - Procedural exclusion or dismissal of parents' voices and rights
 - Documented refusals or barriers to accommodations in case plans or court proceedings
- Importance of documentation and advocacy

Slide 7: Strategies to Stop ADA Violations

- Educate child welfare staff and family courts on ADA requirements and disability rights
- Ensure individualized assessments and accommodations for parents with IDD
- Incorporate supported decision-making and family-centered approaches
- Partner with disability rights organizations and legal advocates
- Empower parents through knowledge of their rights under the ADA

Slide 8: Case Example

- Brief anonymized example illustrating ADA violation and successful advocacy intervention
- Outcome and lessons learned

Slide 9: Role of Research and Education

- Ongoing research highlighting disparities and barriers
- Training programs for professionals working with families with IDD
- Education materials for parents on rights and advocacy

Slide 10: Service Recommendations and Community Impact

- Developing accessible and culturally respectful services
- Supporting family preservation and reunification with accommodations
- Community capacity-building to promote inclusion and equity

Slide 11: Call to Action

- Advocacy is essential to enforce ADA protections
- Collaboration between disability advocates, child welfare, and courts is crucial

- Invest in training, resources, and policy reforms to support families with IDD

Slide 12: Questions & Contact Information

- Questions / Conversations
- Schedule a training or Case Consult
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