



# Division of Regional Centers

Bridging the Gap: Immersive Technology at the Division of Regional Centers (DRC)

Elaine Fisher, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, CMS



**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services



## Division of Regional Centers

 Address

1575 Sherman St.,  
Denver, CO 80203

 Email

Arista Cruse  
[arista.cruse@state.co.us](mailto:arista.cruse@state.co.us)

 Phone

720.498.3851

## Grand Junction Regional Center

 Address

3199 D Road, Building A  
Grand Junction, CO 81504

 Email

Jennifer Brown, director  
[jennifer.a.brown@state.co.us](mailto:jennifer.a.brown@state.co.us)

 Phone

970.245.2100

## Pueblo Regional Center

 Address

270 W. John Powell Blvd.  
Pueblo West, CO 81007

 Email

J.R. De Maria, director  
[jr.demaria@state.co.us](mailto:jr.demaria@state.co.us)

 Phone

719.585.4001

## Wheat Ridge Regional Center

 Address

10285 Ridge Rd.  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

 Email

Joelle Tramma Santillán,  
director  
[joelle.trammasantillan@state.co.us](mailto:joelle.trammasantillan@state.co.us)

 Phone

303.463.2500



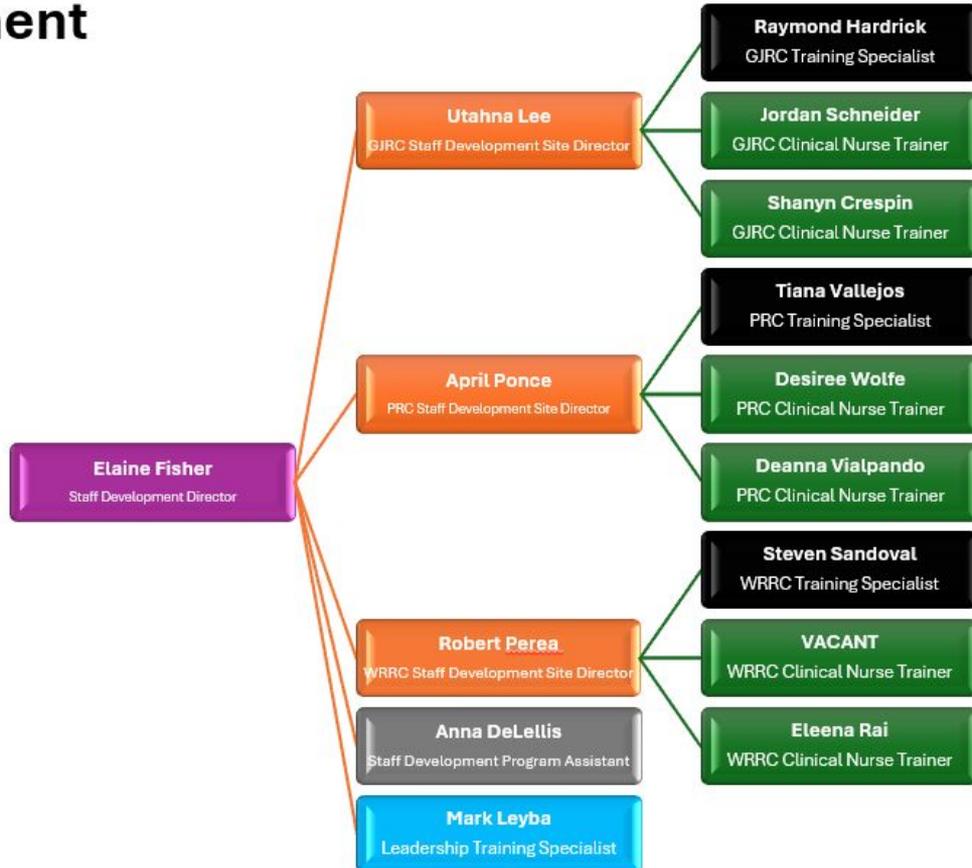
[Follow us on Facebook](#) to keep up with what's going on at the Regional Centers.



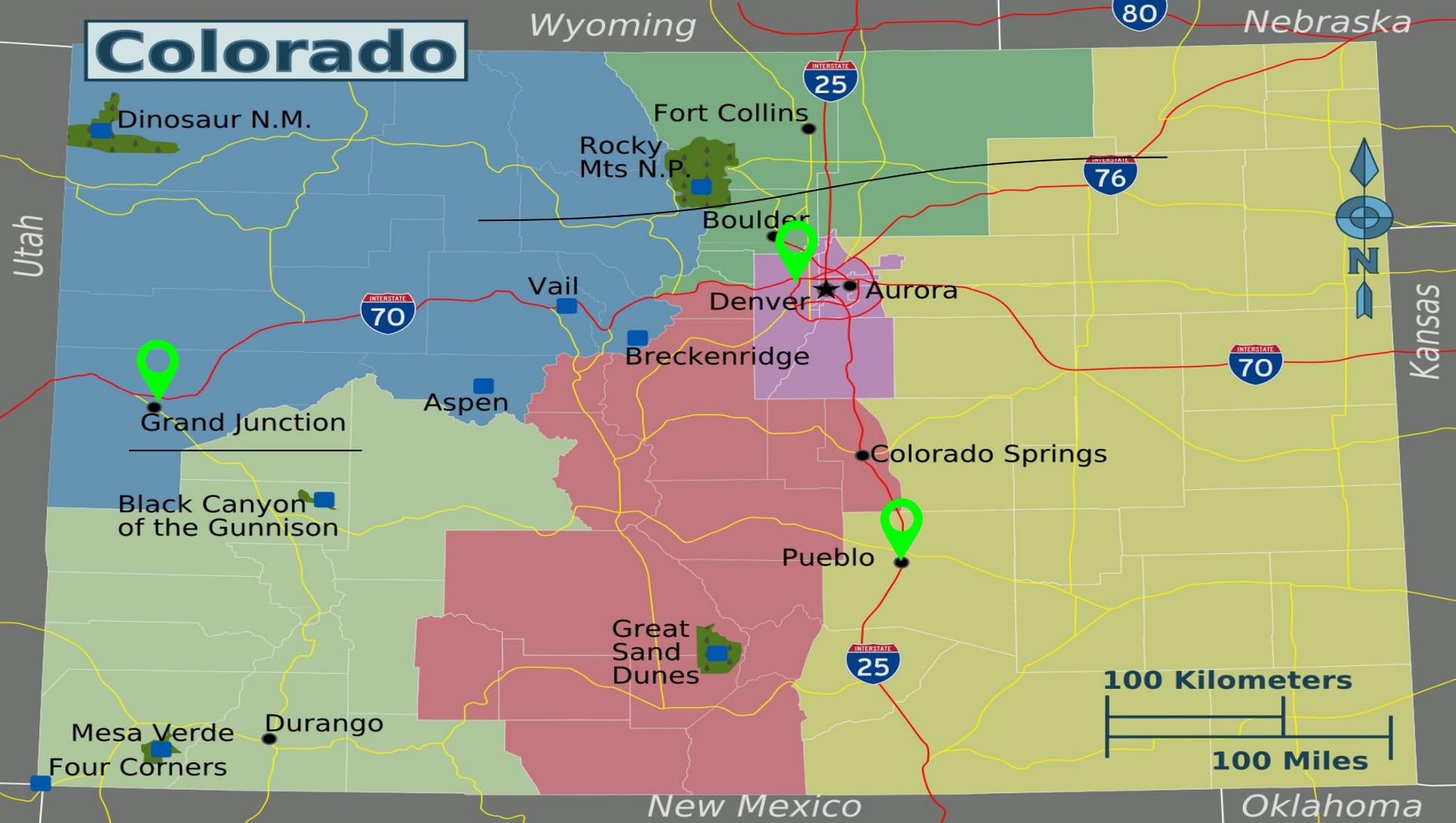
**COLORADO**

Department of Human Services

# Staff Development Department



# Colorado





## OUR MISSION

We support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services to empower individuals to live the lives they choose.



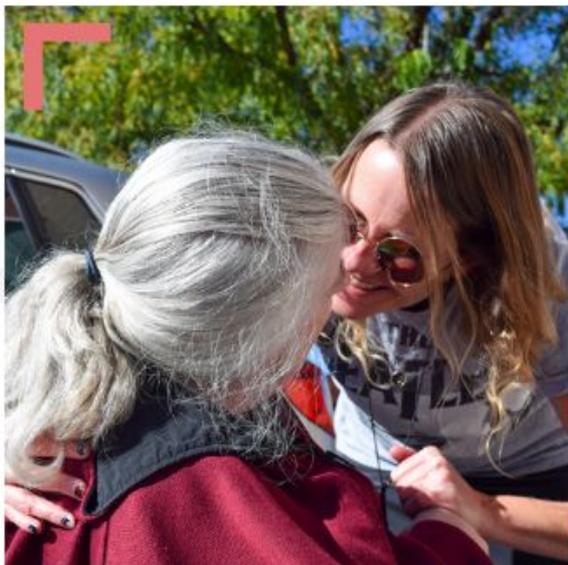
## OUR VISION

We will become the center of excellence for services in Colorado for the intellectual and developmental disability community.



## OUR VALUES

Integrity  
Belonging  
Innovation  
Community



The Division of Regional Centers (DRC) offers comprehensive services and supports for adult individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in community-based group homes located in the Denver metro, southern and Western Slope regions of Colorado.

# Why Immersive Training?

01

Provide a realistic preview of key healthcare issues impacting adults for new employees.

03

Experience realistic scenarios in a safe environment.

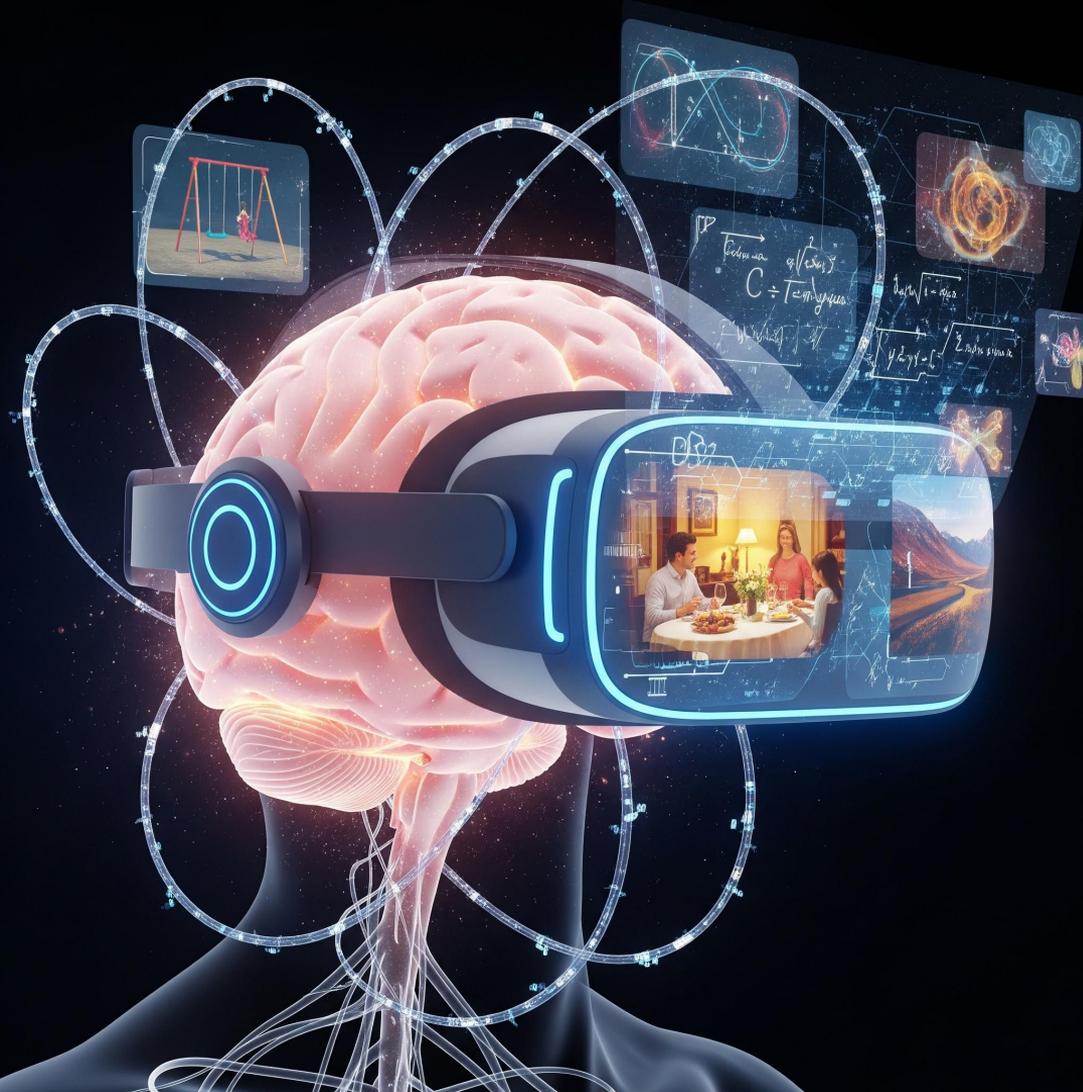
02

Transition from merely telling staff to actually showing them.

04

Improve role preparation for staff based on feedback regarding the population served-staff retention.





## Science

- Immersive technology triggers "embodied cognition" in the brain.
- The brain processes the simulation as a lived memory, not just information.
- Immersive learning increases learning retention compared to traditional classroom settings.
- Stepping into an individual's shoes moves learning from the head to the heart.



## Who is Using It?

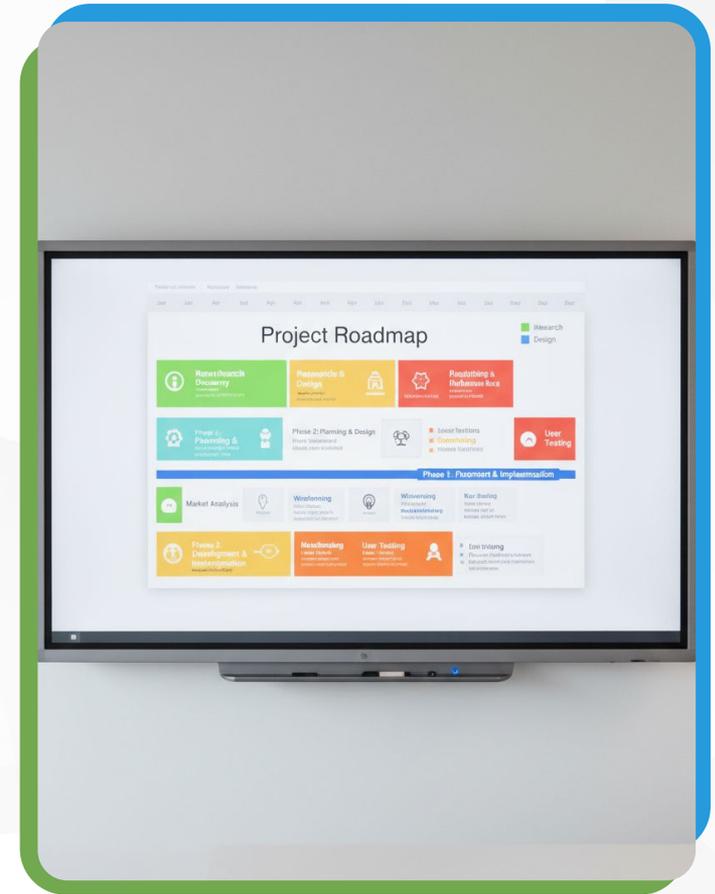
Primary Focus: New Employee Orientation (NEO).

While the primary focus is NEO, all staff are encouraged to engage with the technology. It is also encouraged for integration into personalized growth plans and ongoing learning requests.

# Strategic Implementation: The DRC Roadmap

## Implementation Steps

- Secure leadership support and budget approval.
- Address Change Management (What's In It For Me - WIIFM, communication strategy).
- Certify trainers.
- Synchronize the technology rollout with the "Go-Live" of the new standardized NEO curriculum (March 2024).
- Utilize Embodied Labs to contribute to standardizing NEO across all three Regional Centers and support best practices.
- Evaluate outcomes and efforts.
- Continuous quality improvement.



# Partnerships



Collaborated to curate a "Customized DRC Playlist" specifically relevant to our needs.

Collaborated on Exploring the Spectrum Module as SME in Trauma Informed Care.



Partnered with experts at the University of Denver to design a non-biased survey to measure the impact of NEO instruction methods and efforts, including Embodied Labs VR technology.

Currently collaborating on academic paper re: results of NEO implementation.

# Measuring What Matters

## The KIHA Survey

Designed to capture the effectiveness of VR in preparing staff for direct care.

75% of respondents rated the technology as helpful in preparing them for their role in direct support healthcare.

## Third-Party Oversight

Managed by KIHA to ensure data integrity and remove internal bias.

Staff reported feeling more "ready" and "connected" to the mission of DRC.

## Focus

Measuring confidence, empathy levels, and role preparedness.

The implementation has been a "Huge Success" across all centers.

Thank you!  
Questions?

Elaine Fisher M.Ed., LPC, NCC, CMS



[elaine.fisher@state.co.us](mailto:elaine.fisher@state.co.us)

<https://cdhs.colorado.gov/drc>



**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services