

2023 AWA Conference: Building Better Opportunities Agenda			
Wednesday, August 16th			
7:30 - 8:30 am	Check In & Breakfast	Grand Lobby	
8:30 - 9:30	Welcome	Rooms 207 - 209	
	State of the State	Dr. Syard Evans, AWA President	
9:30 - 9:45	Break	Grand Lobby	
9:45 - 10:45	Morning Keynote	Rooms 207 - 209	
	Advocating for Change	Rebecca Zimmermann, AACF Advocating for and against laws at the state Capitol can feel intimidating. But anyone can be a strong advocate at the state legislature. And every advocate is different. That is why it is important to figure out your personal advocacy style. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families Community Engagement Director Rebecca Zimmermann will go over how to create an advocacy plan that works best for you or your organization and different tactics	
11:00 - 12:00 pm	Lunch & Keynote	Rooms 207-209	
	Framing a Good Life	Jenny Wilson, Charting the LifeCourse Someone more famous than me once said, "the future is not something we enter. The future is something we create." What future are you creating with and on behalf of the people you support? And, how do you know it's the future they want? Intentional exploration, planning, and problem-solving are crucial components to providing direct supports to people and their families. During this session, learn about a framework for supporting people – all people – to develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to create the futures they want.	
Breakout Sessions		Room 207	Room 208
12:30 - 1:30		DDPA Cost & Wage Study Overview	Supported Decision Making
	Speaker	Larry Stang & Ron Ekstrand, DDPA	Derek Henderson, Disability Rights Arkansas
			Human Rights Committees
			Isis Trautman, Arkansas Support Network

	Description	This session will present the results of a study commissioned by DDPA (Developmental Disabilities Providers Association) and completed by JVGA (Johnston, Villegas-Grubbs & Associates) to ascertain the value of an hour of service in relationship to the expenditures for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) wages.	Guardianship is an extreme limitation of a person's rights to self-determination, and Arkansas laws only permit guardianship when there is no less restrictive option available to support a person with physical, cognitive, communicative, or other differences. Too often, though, caregivers, support persons, and courts default to guardianship because they lack knowledge of less restrictive options. Supported decision making is a less restrictive alternative to guardianship that empowers individuals to make their own decisions with the support of friends, family, professionals, or others of their choosing. This session will explore the purposes and structure of supported decision making, and how supported decision making arrangements can be used under current Arkansas laws.	In Arkansas Support Network, we envision a future where people with developmental disabilities have power and choice in making decisions, directing their lives, and have equal opportunities to live the life they want for themselves; we also recognize that a person's human rights will be violated when restrictive, invasive, aversive or intrusive procedures are implemented. The purpose of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) is to ensure and protect the human rights of people with disabilities. After this presentation, attendees will better understand the HRC's mission at Arkansas Support Network, recognize interventions that could potentially violate human rights, and know how to protect everyone's rights.
1:30 - 1:45	Break	Grand Lobby		
Breakout Sessions		Room 207	Room 208	Room 209
1:45 - 2:45		Leadership by the Most Impacted	Using Charting the LifeCourse to Support Good Lives	Employment First in Arkansas
	Speaker	Kasey Hodges, Arkansas Support Network	Jenny Wilson, Charting the LifeCourse	Jon Taylor, AR Governor's Council on DD
	Description	This session will provide an overview of the 10 Principles of Disability Justice, zoom in to focus specifically on the second principle of disability justice: Leadership of the Most Impacted, and illustrate work being done to support that leadership. You will see real-life examples of strategies to promote disability justice and leave with some actions steps you can take to move in the direction of justice.	Join this session to "dig deeper" into the Charting the LifeCourse framework and tools. Hear how providers across the country are using the trajectory, integrated support star, life domain vision tool to improve the quality of their services and support. Get hands on practice using the principles and resources to brainstorm how they can be used to support and enhance the work you – and your staff – already do every day.	<i>An interactive discussion about E1st. The session will define E1st, offer a history of E1st in Arkansas, illustrate the value of employment for people with disabilities, and next steps in Arkansas.</i>
2:45 - 3:15	Break	Grand Lobby		
3:15 - 4:15	Afternoon Keynote	Rooms 207 - 209 Combined		
	GoodLifeU: Solutions to Stabilize Your Workforce	Dr. Mike Strouse, Good Life Innovations To successfully combat the direct labor crisis we must better understand the needs of DSPs and the true causes of organizational instability. Dr. Strouse leads a team from GoodLife (a non-profit provider) with over 30 years' experience designing and implementing innovative labor solutions that increase provider margins and DSP wages. This session offers a comprehensive toolbox for measuring and addressing organizational (in)stability. Specific strategies for payroll/benefits, scheduling (including front/back strategies and vacancy coordination), and staff onboarding will be discussed and attendees will receive impact data from 12 case studies where GoodLife's		
4:15 - 4:30	Break	Grand Lobby		

4:30 - 5:30	Day 1 Closing Keynote	Rooms 207 - 209 Combined
	<p>Looking to the Future: Arkansas Policy Outlook and How Artificial Intelligence Fits In</p>	<p>Doug Golub, Medisked</p> <p>We seek to improve the quality of life for individuals with a developmental disability and their families through active advocacy, open communications, and an exchange of professional ideas. The goal of the PASSE system is to monitor individuals' health care needs, keep them healthy, and help them reach goals. The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has identified machine learning as a goal for person-centered outcomes by 2029. Data tools can examine unstructured data like service documentation to analyze patterns and predict when a positive or negative event may occur. This data can help us identify opportunities for interventions and unmet needs much sooner. We can equip individuals and their circles of support with the tools they need to be empowered and in charge of their own lives – and also partner better with the PASSE system. During this session, the presenters will share real data that includes negative consequences that arise when prior approvals are denied for fear of the bottom line or where the medical model of thinking reigns supreme. For too long individuals have been at the mercy of payers and the provider systems rely on. Machine learning can be used to protect individual autonomy and improve outcomes by predicting and</p>

2023 AWA Conference: Building Better Opportunities Agenda

Thursday, August 17th

7:30 - 8:30 am	Check In & Breakfast	Grand Lobby			
8:30 - 9:00	Welcome	Horner Hall			
	Speaker	Empowering Sponsors			
9:00 - 10:00	Keynote	Horner Hall			
		Nick Filarelli, Core Services of NE Tennessee			
		KEYNOTE: Forget great "services". How about great lives?	<p>Through the daily grind of surveys, audits, rules and regulations, financial worries and staffing woes, it's easy to forget why we're all here: supporting people to live awesome, self-directed, and fulfilling lives. This presentation hopes to serve as a much needed reminder to forget about the chaos and just keep it simple: what is a person's idea of a great life and how do we make it happen?</p> <p>Nick will share their journey towards becoming a person-centered organization by demonstrating real success stories. Witness people achieving their goals and living their best lives: competitive employment, independent living, dream vacations, meaningful natural supports and community connections. The end result: happier people, a happier workforce, and a financially healthy provider agency.</p>		
10:00 - 10:15	Break	Grand Lobby			
Breakout Sessions		Homer Hall	Room 207	Room 208	Room 209
10:15 - 11:15		Seated Yoga & Meditation	Addressing the Workforce Crisis through DSP-U	How Natural Language Processing Can Be Applied for Data Analysis to Advocate for the People and Services that We Support	Technical Assistance & Consultation
	Speaker	Sarah Thomas, 365 Yoga Dream	Bethany Toledo, OADSP	Doug Golub, MediSked	Content Experts
	Description	<p>Join Sarah Thomas for a rejuvenating meditation, breathing, and seated yoga class. This session will introduce you to the art of breath awareness, stretching, and mindful movements. Practicing yoga can alleviate anxiety and promote flexibility and strength. Regardless of your level of experience, this session requires no equipment. Treat yourself to a relaxing experience and join us today!</p>	<p>In this session, participants will learn about DSP-U, a Direct Support Professional (DSP) credentialing program for high students that was developed in Ohio. DSP-U combines classroom curriculum and an internship component that provides students the opportunity to earn national credentials. This session will provide an overview of the fundamental elements of DSP-U, and highlight the various partnerships between local schools, organizations, providers, and other stakeholders necessary to make a program of this nature successful.</p>	<p>Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just a plot device in the movies – but actually has potential for the work that we do. Natural language processing (NLP) is the use of software to process, analyze, and understand written data – much like the plans and notes we collect on the people we support. This form of AI is the future of what can be harnessed in home and community-based services to extract and quantify written words and study subjective information. MediSked has been engaged in significant work and studies using data tools and machine learning to analyze patterns in service note documentation such as changes in health, housing, employment, circles of support other data from providers. This will be the trend of the future, but by the end of our session, attendees can expect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Understand the basics of sentiment analysis and natural language processing and how it can be applied to advocacy in the human services field *Explore real use cases from real (de-identified) individuals and real provider agencies *Understand how to improve lives and outcomes through futuristic technologies *Learn about opportunities to use NLP to address health equity measures 	<p>Do you have questions about how employment may affect your or a person you support's benefits? Are you interested in setting up a Supported Decision Making plan for someone you care about or yourself, but don't know how to do that? Would you like to provide better options for person-centered planning for a person you support or a support team you supervise? Then drop by the Technical Assistance room and have a conversation with experts trained in Benefits Counseling, Charting the LifeCourse, and Support Decision Making. The TA experience is designed to give you the ability to discuss specific situations and access guidance and resources that you can take home and put into practice right away.</p>
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch & Keynote	Horner Hall			
		John Raffaele, NADSP			

			John Raffaele, Director of Educational Services at the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals will frame the challenges with the nation's direct support professional workforce. But he will also address the solutions that are at hand. We don't have to be struggling to find direct support professionals if we reframe the way in which we see the role of this 1.5 Million strong workforce. There is hope and incredible opportunity if we can recognize the value of this profession... systematically. Buckle up.		
Breakout Sessions		Horner Hall	Room 207	Room 208	Room 209
12:45 - 1:45 pm		Acting Skills to Aid in Advocacy	Creating a Culture of Competence and Respect for Direct Support Professionals	Building a Better Tomorrow Starts Today	Technical Assistance & Consultation
	Speaker	Mallory Halverson & Justin Harris	John Raffaele, NADSP	John Dickerson, Quillo	Content Experts
	Description	Advocating for yourself or someone else can be a scary and challenging thing to do. This session will give attendees an opportunity to learn and practice some basic acting concepts that can help you deal with anxiety and nervousness and give power to your voices. The session will be interactive.	Employers, people with disabilities and families can all benefit from seeing the role of direct support professionals in a new light. Historically direct support workers have been viewed as entry-level companions/attendants/aides. There is nothing farther from the truth if indeed we can view the role and purpose of direct support as a profession. That said, there are expectations that come with a professional title and role. In this workshop we will explore the ways direct support professionals can be effective in allying and partnering with people needing support. Self determination and person centered practice is the ultimate goal for direct support workers. Competence can be achieved with the right mindset and	Session Canceled	
1:45 - 2:00	Break	Grand Lobby			
Breakout Sessions		Horner Hall	Room 207	Room 208	Room 209
2:00 - 3:00		Everyone Can Dance	Creating a Culture of Competence and Respect for Direct Support Professionals (continued)	Technology Leveraged Services Models: GoodLife's Neighborhood Network with iLink	Technical Assistance & Consultation
	Speaker	Marie Isler	John Raffaele, NADSP	Dr. Mike Strouse, Good Life Innovations	Content Experts
	Description	Come spend some time on the main stage learning some new dance moves and getting ready for the evening's dance activities. Not only will you practice some dances to show off at the conference, you'll also learn how dance can be an important part of good direct support services.	Session continued...	Dr. Michael Strouse leads a group of professionals from GoodLife who have partnered with KU to create, adapt and use emerging echnologies to support independent living and weave these solutions into the fabric of GoodLife's community-based services. This resentation describes GoodLife's Neighborhood Network (a neighborhood and in-home support model) that has been paired with iLink Technologies (a smart home solution that consists of advanced audio/video communication, home automation, sensors, and software that detects need and provides customized alerts for assistance). Together, the NN with iLink becomes an intentionally-designed eco-system of support for persons living in small, typical homes in the community where staffing ebbs and flows across homes, on-demand, empowering greater independence for a lower cost. The NN with iLink received the 2020 Moving Mountains Award, and was named Autism Speaks' Most Innovative Program in 2016.	Do you have questions about how employment may affect your or a person you support's benefits? Are you interested in setting up a Supported Decision Making plan for someone you care about or yourself, but don't know how to do that? Would you like to provide better options for person-centered planning for a person you support or a support team you supervise? Then drop by the Technical Assistance room and have a conversation with experts trained in Benefits Counseling, Charting the LifeCourse, and Support Decision Making. The TA experience is designed to give you the ability to discuss specific situations and access guidance and resources that you can
3:00 - 3:15	Break	Grand Lobby			
3:15 - 4:15		Horner Hall			
		Expert Advocate Panel			
	Quality Services? What Does That Even Mean?	No one knows better how important good, quality direct supports are than the people who rely directly on support services. Join a group of self advocates from across the state as they share their perspectives on Direct Support Professionals, service providers, PASSEs, and all other aspects of the IDD service system in Arkansas.			

6:00 - 9:00

Reception & Dance

Horner Hall

2023 AWA Conference: Building Better Opportunities Agenda

Friday, August 18th

7:00 - 8:00 am **Annual Board Meeting**

9:00 - 10:30 **AWA Awards Ceremony** **Rooms 207 - 209 Combined**

10:30 - 10:45 **Break** **Grand Lobby**

10:45 - 11:45 **Closing Keynote** **Rooms 207 - 209 Combined**

Andrea Palmer, Awake Labs

The Opportunity of Innovation

Awake Labs is on a mission to give everyone the mental health support they deserve. They work to support adults who have an intellectual or developmental disability, a community who is overlooked and underestimated. This session will focus on the science and research behind Awake Labs' exciting technology designed to support people with cognitive disabilities and the care teams that support them to reduce the use of intrusive measures for behavioral supports, increase independence, and improve the quality of people's lives. Andrea will be joined by AWA president, Dr. Syard Evans, to discuss the research and technology involved in Awake Labs' technology, engage with live demonstration data, hear compelling stories, and leave with a better understanding of the opportunities that existing in innovative approaches to the support service system.