



Two-Day In-Person

Supported Life Institute presents
our 38th Annual Conference

Supported Life 2024:

Empowering Independence:

Innovation is at the Heart

*Empowering All People with Developmental Disabilities
to be Fully Included in the Community*








Wyndham Sacramento Hotel ~ Sacramento, CA



Session Descriptions

Including Session Changes, Cancellations, & Lead Speaker Updates

Use Topic Icons to Help Choose from 31 Session Choices:

	Communication / AAC		Personal Power & Rights
	Family Supports / Transition		Policy & Legislation
	Living / Community		Self-Determination Program
	Organizational & Staff Development		Social / Recreation / Health

October 17 - 18, 2024
Wyndham Sacramento Hotel



Transition / School / Employment

1A The Sierra College LIFE Program: The Student Experience. Willy Duncan, President, *Sierra College, Rocklin* This morning's Opening Keynote Speaker leads a Panel detailing development & implementation of the newly launched Learning Independence for Future Employment (LIFE) program at Sierra College. They explain the 2-year program to provide training, support & community integration programming to individuals with I/DD, via classroom experience & practical learning opportunities in & outside of the community college environment to prepare them to transition to adult independence. Panelists - deans, program managers, staff, & current LIFE program participants - emphasize both student and community needs.



Organizational & Staff Development

1B Building "Leadership Culture": Why it Matters. Mary Ellen Sousa, *Creative Support Alternatives, Mountain Ranch*. What is "Leadership Culture" & why does it even matter? We often seem to "know it when we see it": we can identify when an organization "feels good", when a team embraces both the talents, & the challenges, of those who serve, as well as those who are being served, where relationships are intentionally supported & nurtured...and when an organization builds true community based upon lasting shared values & beliefs. This successful organization knows that Leaders set the tone, & Leaders who are well-supported will in turn, support others well. Relationships are an integral part of Leadership Culture. This benefits every individual who is a part of the organization, no matter their role.



Social / Recreation / Health

1C BUILD Advocacy and Social Skills to Engage in New Social and Recreational Opportunities. Andrew Flaherty, *Compass Disability Services, Clover, South Carolina* Finding and engaging in new communities & activities can be difficult but can have a big impact on overall Health & Wellness. Dr. Flaherty presents key findings from the Build Project - a DDS-funded social & recreation development project from several No. Calif. communities - about best practices to support self-advocates to increase their level of social recreation engagement in activities cultivating Health & Wellness. Attendees get to participate interactively to experience practical social & emotional learning skills.



Self-Determination Program

1D Lessons Learned: Five Years into My Self-Determination Journey. Daniel Meadows, *Supported Life Institute Peer Advocacy Network, Sacramento* This is a first-hand account of the Self Determination experience, how to get started & how to maintain & manage the process. Starting his journey 5 years ago as one of first Sacramento area participants in Self-Determination Program, the early months were a true learning experience - for participants AND Service Coordinators, service providers, fiscal management agencies, & administrators. Officially starting on June 1, 2020, Covid-19 pandemic was in full force, adding a new set of challenges! SDP participants & those considering it can all learn from obstacles he encountered & how he overcame them.



Transition / School / Employment

1E Let's Work! California Activity Guide and YouTube and Videos to Use in the Classroom. Pj Swan and Richard L. Rosenberg, *CA Transition Alliance, Whittier* California Transition Alliance is proud of the efforts & outcomes of having Students / Youth voices involved at local, state, & national levels. This session, teamed by a self-advocate speaker & a longtime educational professional, shares the evolution of the work from California's LET'S WORK materials that are available on the website CaTransitionAlliance.org - as well as networking guides on their YouTube channel.



Personal Power & Rights

1F Living Your HCBS Rights. Kaitlin Olson, *Alo Consultation, Benicia* In this hands-on session, the presenters use real materials to build a Vision Board to show what you want your HCBS Rights to look like. This is a collage of pictures & words that represent what you value or want more of in your life. Each person will leave this workshop with tools to take home to continue the conversation. Let's build your vision board to align with your HCBS rights. This presentation is for self-advocates. Family members & professionals are welcome to participate & share these tools with their communities.

Thursday

2:10 – 3:15 Concurrent Sessions 2A - 2F

Supported Life 2024 Conference - Session Summaries



Transition /



Organizational & Staff Development

2A A Perspective on 48 years of Professional Services. Jeffrey Popkin, *Independent Contractor, Bakersfield*. This speaker notes: “this presentation promises to be an enlightening narrative of progress, highlighting pivotal stories & examples that have shaped the current landscape of service systems. With nearly 5 decades of service, my experience offers an insight into the evolution of our service systems. I have tenure at a Regional Center & in Service Provision, complemented by my involvement in statewide task forces & committees, which has equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of the transformative journey from the 1970s to today's developmental policies.”



Organizational & Staff Development

2B Beyond Self-Care Basics for Professionals. Rosalind Henderson, *Leadership Keys Unlimited, Bellflower*. This session “is designed to empower professionals with research-based, atypical self-care strategies & tools to mitigate chronic stress. As a result, professionals will enjoy more energy, focus, mental clarity, & regulated emotions which will enhance productivity while achieving work/life balance.” Professionals in attendance learn about the importance of managing chronic stress, how to advocate for their well-being by collecting tools they can use in real time to address specific stressors they encounter throughout the day; and about a cognitive therapy tool to help them confront emotional stress and transform it.



Social / Recreation / Health

2C Racial Equity in Access to Social Recreation and Camping Services. Vivian Haun, *Disability Rights California, Los Angeles*. In 2021, the Legislature restored the ability of regional centers to pay for social recreation & camping services after over a decade of suspension. Hopes were high that the return of these services could help address racial disparities in the regional center system. However, structural barriers immediately made these services difficult to access, especially for low-income families & communities of color. Learn how California has now redefined social recreation and camping for a new generation of community living, & what we have learned about embedding equity in state policies & practices.

SDP

Self-Determination Program

2D Self-Determination Program: Your Life, Your Choices, Your Services Katie Dempsey & Tim Jin, *CA Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Sacramento*. This session will give self-advocates and families a better understanding of the Self-Determination Program (SDP) with a general overview, focusing on personal responsibility from the five principles. Attendees will learn with interactive storytelling that engages the audience. Session activities promote informed decision-making skills. Presenters teach confidence in self-advocates to take on the self-direction the program intends.

canceled

2E Canceled by Speaker: Positivity of Happiness, Joy and Success: Grateful to Have Cerebral Palsy! Wayed Kabir, *Regional Center of Orange County - Peer Advocate, Irvine*



Personal Power & Rights

2F Finding My Voice Through Advocacy. Brandon Gruber, *Self-Advocate / TASH & Cal-TASH Board Member, Brentwood*. This presenter says: “I moved when I began high school. Many thought I was limited, so I was excluded from classes and activities. I ‘fired’ my parents half way through my Junior year & I decided I needed to become my own advocate. Things changed as I predicted that I was going to “Blow Up!” my last year in high school, if I was just given a chance. I never gave up. Hold on, you’ll find out what happened. My story was on many TV networks and in magazines , including PEOPLE (twice). I finally found my own voice and I am continuing my journey.

Thursday

3:25 – 4:30 Concurrent Sessions 3A - 3F



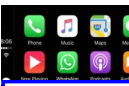
Personal Power & Rights

3A Q&A with Our Luncheon Keynote. Cody Clark, *Magician and Speaker, Louisville, Kentucky*. This afternoon's Keynote Speaker, Cody is celebrating his 10th anniversary as a professional magician & speaker this year! Over a decade worth of experience with different disability service systems & in being self employed, plus a lifetime of living with autism gives him a unique knowledge base - which you can take advantage of! In this session, you're the star of the show - you can ask Cody ANYTHING! Whether it's about magic, autism, being self employed, his transition to adulthood, or life in general, he is happy to answer - & may even share some of his newest magic tricks with you all as well!



Organizational & Staff Development

3B Autistic Cultural Competency Training. Derek Hearhtower, *Autistic Empowerment Guild*. These presenters say: "Autistic people think differently from non-autistics. In this presentation, we will discuss common autistic experiences & learn about the culture that has grown in the autistic community to help deal with our challenges. Accommodations will be presented that will help autistic people to reduce their stress & contribute to society with our many strengths. A central theme will be how to respect our autonomy in a person-centered approach to disability services."



Communication / AAC

3C Silent Strength: Empowering Through ASL (American Sign Language) Basics. D'yann E. Crosby, *Sign with Me, Incorporated, Los Angeles* As Dr. Crosby notes for this session: "Individuals young and old, with hearing or speech loss often encounter communication barriers, leading to feelings of isolation & exclusion. Acquiring basic skills in American Sign Language (ASL) is a transformative solution, bridging the gap between those with hearing loss or nonverbal & the world around them. People, businesses, & agencies learning ASL promotes empathy, enhances communication skills, customer service & accessibility. It also helps businesses tap into new markets & fosters a diverse inclusive workplace culture."



Self-Determination Program

3D Financial Management Services for the Self-Determination Program. Heidi Davis, *Public Partnerships LLC - PPL, Alpharetta, Georgia* These presenters discuss the role of the Financial Management Services (FMS) agency in the Self-Determination Program (SDP). They are passionate about spreading information & awareness about SDP, to allow people to make an informed decision about how they receive services. They review how FMS agency supports SDP so the person maximizes their services. Getting started with SDP can feel intimidating, so they discuss how a smooth transition can occur, take the mystery out of SDP, & answer any questions attendees may have.



Family Supports / Transition

3E Saving and Investing with a CalABLE Account. Thomas Martin, *CalABLE, Sacramento*. CalABLE is a savings and investment plan offered by the state of California to individuals who developed a disability by age 26. Eligible individuals, family, friends, & employers can contribute up to \$18,000 per year, and up to \$100,000 total, without affecting eligibility for public disability benefits. Presenters discuss how to open a CalABLE account., how an account can be used to support independence and financial literacy, & how to maximize a CalABLE account through saving, investing, and spending money in their account.



Living / Community

3F Where to Live: A Discussion of Living Options. Elizabeth Campos, *Disability Rights CA / No. Calif. Outreach Coordinator, Sacramento* The audience will learn about different living options in the community. They will also learn about their right to get the support they need - no matter where they live. Attendees will learn about different living options - like living alone. Or like living with a roommate. Or different living options like living in a group home or with a foster family, among others.

Supported Life 2024 Conference - Session Summaries

Friday

10:10 – 11:20 Concurrent Sessions 4A - 4F

canceled

4A Canceled by Speaker: Positive, Proactive, and Person-Centered Social-Sexual Supports. Shanya Luther, *Among Friends, LLC, McMinnville, Oregon*



Organizational & Staff Development

4B HCBS: Thinking Beyond Compliance. Carol Carlson, *Progressive Employment Concepts, Citrus Heights.* Why are HCBS regulations important? This session reviews each HCBS federal regulation & relates it to our core values. It provides real life examples of implementation & how these regulations impact people's lives. Participants learn the importance of HCBS federal regulations for the individuals they serve, identify the values inherent in HCBS federal regulations, AND gain an understanding of how the values within the regulations impact people's lives.



Policy & Legislation

4C Voting Rights. Ibrahim "Bebo" Saab, *Disability Rights California / Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy - Supervising Attorney for Outreach, Los Angeles*

The audience will learn that people with disabilities have the right to vote, learn what political parties are, who is eligible to vote, why voting is important, & their responsibilities as a voter. The training will also have a fun quiz at the end to test how much the audience has learned.

SDP

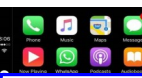
Self-Determination Program

4D Unleashing Your Potential. Mary Hellen, *Self-Advocate, Roseville.* This speaker says: "Living with a disability such as slow processing disorder has unique challenges & opportunities for growth. The journey towards independence involves setting realistic goals, celebrating small achievements & maintaining a positive outlook. I started receiving regional center services at 32. I grew up knowing I was different from others, & was not sure why. I wanted to be just like everyone else. Although with challenges faced with my disability I still attended school, got my diploma, then went to college & received my AA degree. I got my license & drove for about 10 years. I joined the Self-Determination Program last year & started receiving job support, as well as Independent Living Services."



Living / Community

4E Regional Center Efforts to Promote Housing Security. John Decker, *Alta California Regional Center (ACRC), Sacramento.* Dr. Decker will provide an overview of the activities at this Regional Center: the assessment of need for housing for regional center clients; caregiver succession planning; & new types of housing developments that incorporate assistive technology. Attendees learn about this agency's approach to addressing housing insecurity. He also delves into new partnerships promoting housing development throughout California, plus a look at what new types of housing opportunities are enabling ACRC clients to live independently.



Communication / AAC

4F The Art of Mentorship Kristine O'Keefe, *Supported Life Institute / CTEC, Sacramento* During this panel presentation, CTEC peer mentors will share their experiences in supporting others to learn & use Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. You will hear about their journey with AAC and Assistive Technology (AT) and what they have learned through their role as mentors. Skills & responsibilities of a successful peer mentor will be shared, along with tips & strategies for leading a chat group.

Supported Life 2024 Conference - Session Summaries

Friday

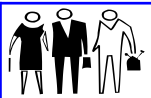
1:45 – 2:55 Concurrent Sessions 5A - 5F

Supported Life 2024 Conference - Session Summaries



Organizational & Staff Development

5A Animation: the Possibilities are Endless. Diva Johnson, *Tri-Counties Regional Center, Santa Barbara* Our Luncheon Keynote Speaker is joined for a breakout session by three of those who made the HCBS Animated Series a possibility. She welcomes Annie Award-winning writer/producer/director, Joe Sichta (Thomas and Friends, Muppet Babies, Scooby Doo), award winning Mobile Gaming veteran Dave Bezahler, both of Public Pixels Media, along with Mark Wolfe, retired Hollywood movie producer, former owner of beloved long running PBS brand Reading Rainbow & recent President of Tri-Counties Reg. Ctr. Board, & recent Board President of ARCA (Assoc. of Reg. Ctr. Agencies). The panel details how the Animated Series on the key topic of HCBS was initiated & carried out; and how Animation might be used going forward in our field for making complex ideas understandable & relatable for educating & training ourselves: service agencies, families, self-advocates, & regional center staff alike.



Employment

5B Thriving in the World of Work - Pathways to Independence, Equality, and Employment. Elizabeth Musgrove, *CA Department of Rehabilitation, Sacramento* The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) provides services aimed at inspiring & encouraging eligible individuals to achieve their employment goals. DOR may be an option for you, your family member, or someone you support! DOR's pre-employment & employment-related training services & supports can begin while a student is still in high school. In this session, attendees hear from the Chief of the Statewide Student Services Section of this State agency about individuals who have partnered with DOR to explore & plan for a career, gain work experience, & are now thriving in the world of work.



Social / Recreation / Health

5C Health and Wellness. Renard Stanford, *South Central Los Angeles Regional Center, Advocates Advisory Committee, Los Angeles* The self-advocate tells about the importance of becoming & staying healthy, & living a good life. He says: "I'm also going to discuss health & wellness, secrets to staying healthy, & why taking self care physically is very important also. Maintain a good, healthy life if you want to live longer. Loving yourself for maintaining a good life." He encourages everyone to "be smart" by doing things that will help them be as healthy as possible.



Self-Determination Program

5D California's Continued Transformation to Person Centered and Directed Services. Tony Anderson, *Association of Regional Center Agencies, Sacramento*. This presenter reviews the myriad of service innovations in the Calif. Developmental Services System & how we have been developing more person-centered & person-directed approaches to service & case management. He discusses the pilots in services & case management; increased transparency of DDS (the Dept. of Dev. Services) & Regional Centers, & today's barriers & emerging ideas. Many new services are efforts to be more responsive to the needs of underserved people with disabilities & families, & strengthen our community system.



Transition / School / Employment

5E Coordinated Family Supports Compass: Pilot Program Experience. Joshua Flom, *Compass Redding, Redding*. Coordinated Family Supports (CFS) is a new service option designed for adults who are 18 years & older who are Regional Center qualified & choose to live in their family home. CFS was launched as a pilot program by DDS in 2023. Compass is currently vendored to provide this CFS service by four Regional Centers in Northern California. Presenters share an overview of Coordinated Family Support services, their experience in actual service provision including serving with cultural competency. They try to cast vision forward together with session attendees to consider what more is possible.

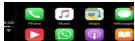
canceled

5F Canceled by Speaker: 20+ Ways to be a Healthier You Today. Gordon Durich, *Sage Services, Team Trainer, Thousand Oaks*



Organizational & Staff Development

6A HCBS Final Rule in Practice. Susie Crow, *CA Department of Developmental Services, Sacramento*. This session gives a greater understanding of the rights of individuals in receiving home & community-based services (HCBS) & how to successfully implement these rights to their full extent. Service Agencies & staff members can learn more about the HCBS final rule's principles & rights. The presenters support & give guidance to service providers on implementing the rules into practice - including techniques to resolve challenging situations.



Communication



Organizational & Staff Development

6B Technology and Person-Centered Approaches for Quality Services. Melanie Bazile Anderson, *Compass, El Dorado Hills* Person-centered approaches & technology cannot only peacefully coexist, they can synergize to significantly enhance service delivery. This presentation highlights the unique perspectives of a Software Developer & Community Living Services Program who collaborated to implement technology to maximize personalized reliable support services. Presenters share how software was developed as a system of support for services: tech tools for effectiveness; standardization of personalized service structure; ease in capturing & preserving what we learn about a person; & the development of systems of best practices & Quality Assurance.



Policy & Legislation

6C The 2024 Legislative Story, What Happened and What Can You Expect in 2025. Tony Anderson, *Association of Regional Center Agencies, Sacramento*. This is a presentation on the last year of the current two-year legislative session. It tells the story about the governor's proposed budget; the community response; the legislative response; & the final outcomes. The presenter reviews a few of the bills & what they mean for our community, as well as the budget process & what decisions were made, plus how advocacy impacted these policy decisions. Learn, too, about some of the ideas that legislators presented & how these bills were intended to support our community.

SDP

Self-Determination Program

6D PCP does not mean "Parent" or "Provider"- Centered Plan. Sandra Van Scotter, *Parent to Adult SDP Participant, Co-chair of Self-Determination Program Local Volunteer Advisory Committee at Kern Regional Center, Ridgecrest*. This presenter - a parent to 2 Adult Autistic sons, one served by the Reg. Ctr. System, the other not - offers encouragement, hope, & expects lively audience participation in discussing "What is Dignity?" "What is Dignity of Risk?" "At what age does a plan become a Person-Centered?" "What is the Parent's or Provider's Role, Really?" & other questions - sharing her efforts to apply these questions to supporting her Adult sons through their transition to Adulthood.



Transition / School / Employment

6E Twists and Turns on the Road to Independence Brandon + Tim and Teresa Gruber, *Self-Advocate / TASH & Cal-TASH Board Member + Parents, Brentwood*. Brandon's road to independence began when he was born. His parents received a diagnosis of 99% chance that he had Down Syndrome. They began their journey with this end in mind: a fulfilling, happy life for Brandon with as much independence (with support) as possible. They haven't taken the gas off the pedal since birth. Meanwhile Brandon continues to dream big & chase after his goals. Life hasn't been easy for him, navigating as a new student through high school & beyond, forging a path to the world of independence. He has a passion for creating change.