

A LOOK AHEAD

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 2024

The **A Look Ahead** conference series brings together expert speakers for training that focuses on improving the quality of life for individuals living with disabilities and the people that support them.

A Look Ahead partners include:
The Arc of DFW Area, FEAT-North Texas, The Self-Determination Group
and First United Methodist Church of Arlington

Website: <https://thearcofdw.org/a-look-ahead-series/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alookaheadseries/>

#alaseries



Welcome to the A Look Ahead Quarterly Mini Conference Series!

A Look Ahead is brought to you by four partnering agencies: The Arc of DFW Area, FEAT- NT, The Self-Determination Group and FUMC-Arlington. We have gathered today to offer a half-day conference for individuals with disabilities, their families and friends and the professionals who work with them. We offer you a day filled with important information, resources, and strategies to help you look ahead and create a plan with hopes and dreams for the future.

*Inclusion gives you a voice.
You can choose to stay or go.
You can choose to participate or not.
You can choose to take it or leave it.
With exclusion, there are no options.
There are no choices. There are no voices.*

~ Unknown

Our knowledgeable and engaging lineup of speakers, panelists and topics is sure to help fill your toolbox of strategies and ideas. Take advantage of these sessions and learn all you can and leave here with a renewed determination to create a good life for your child, friend, family member, student, or yourself.

We have a great group of exhibitors today. Please visit their tables. You will find valuable information and can connect with resources in our community.

While passing in the hall or visiting the exhibitor tables, be sure to meet other conference attendees. This conference offers some great networking opportunities.

Thank you to our volunteers that made today possible. It takes a lot of hard work and commitment to pull off an event of this size and frequency.

If you would like to receive information about further A Look Ahead events, be sure to sign up with the conference planning partner organizations so that you will be added to the email distribution lists.

Enjoy the conference - you are in for a real treat!

The A Look Ahead Conference Planning Partners

CEU's AVAILABLE FOR TEXAS EDUCATORS AND TEXAS SOCIAL WORKERS

To receive CEU credit for attendance, you **MUST** complete **ALL** the following requirements:

- **SIGN IN** and **SIGN OUT** at the **CEU table** located near registration.
- **SIGN IN** to **each session** on the sheets provided in each classroom.
- **COMPLETE** and **RETURN** an evaluation form for **each session** to the facilitator.

Certificates will be **emailed** after the event if **ALL** requirements are met.

CEU's are provided by The Arc of DFW Area

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Registration	8:30 am – 9:00 am
Welcome	9:00 am – 9:20 am
Plenary Session	9:20 am – 10:35 am
– Living the Good Life – Enabling Vulnerable People to Have Valued Social Roles: An Introduction to Social Role Valorization Great Hall	
1 st Set of Breakout Sessions	10:45 am – 12:15 pm
– Inclusive Community Living Across the Age and Life Span Rm #155-156	
– Texas Medicaid LTSS Programs & Wait Lists Rm #154	
– The Road to Employment: Competitive, Integrated, Customized and Accommodations Rm #152	
– THINKing College – The Who, When, Where, Why and How of College for Students with Intellectual Disabilities Rm #151	
Lunch (on site)	12:15 pm – 1:00 pm
2 nd Set of Breakout Sessions	1:10 pm – 2:30 pm
– Beyond the Comparison Chart: The Ins and Outs of Medicaid Waiver Programs Rm #154	
– If I Knew Then, What I Know Now: The Ah-Ha Moments That Made a Difference Rm #151	
– Mastering Autonomy While Transitioning into Adulthood Rm #152	
– Media Imagining and Disability Rm #155-156	

“When people become intentional and creative about how disabled people might participate AS THEY ARE, new feasible and exciting solutions emerge.”

- Norm Kunc

A Reflection on Ten Years...

I sat as a participant in the very first A Look Ahead Conference in August 2015. My son was not even two years old, and we were new to the disability journey. My husband, James, and I had no idea what we were doing and what we even needed to know. On Facebook, we ran across a posting for the A Look Ahead Conference, and we decided that I would go. I still remember the feeling of being overwhelmed and not sure where to start, but I also remember the sweet faces and people that day that comforted me as tears poured down my face.

As I think back to that day, I know that one decision changed our son's life, and our lives for the better. I left that afternoon with more knowledge and more hope. I had tools and new friends that could help guide us in this journey. It was the start of us creating a vision for our son's life that most doctors and people would not expect of him.

I also couldn't imagine on that day in 2015 that I would get to be here to help the A Look Ahead conference kick off its TENTH year! I am so thankful for all the visionaries...Cindi Paschall, Ellen Bauman, FEAT-NT, FUMC-Arlington, and others that created A Look Ahead so that families like mine and yours could benefit from gaining **HOPE, VISION, and GUIDANCE**.

Thank you for joining us as we kick off our TENTH year!

-Michelle Lunday



**HOPE
VISION
GUIDANCE**

PLENARY SESSION

9:25 am – 10:55 am

Living the Good Life – Enabling Vulnerable People to Have Valued Social Roles: An Introduction to Social Role Valorization

Presenter: Dr. Guy Caruso, Institute on Disabilities at Temple University

Room: Great Hall

Social Role Valorization is the hope, framework and promise to help people who are devalued or at risk of being devalued by society achieve greater well-being and social inclusion. Join Guy to learn about the Social Role Valorization, a theory that is influencing the development of inclusive lives for people with disabilities in powerful ways.

Our Plenary and Breakout Session Speaker Biography



Guy Caruso Ph.D., FAAIDD – Guy is the Senior Department/Western Coordinator for the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, which is Pennsylvania's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service. Guy has worked in human services for 51 years both in institutional and community settings and in several capacities and as a consultant in the US and Canada. Much of his work has been with families and people with disabilities using person centered approaches in helping family and people with disabilities plan their futures.

He received his master's and Ph.D. from Syracuse University, studying and mentoring with Wolf Wolfensberger, Ph.D., where he became a teacher/trainer in Normalization and now Social Role Valorization, a theory/practice to help people with disabilities, often devalued by society, gain valued roles in life.

Inclusive Community Living Across the Age and the Life Span

Presenter: Dr. Guy Caruso, Institute on Disability at Temple University

Room #155-156

The ultimate goal of inclusive community living is the participation of people - across the age and life span - with disabilities covering a range of areas, including education, recreation & leisure, spiritual-faith, housing-home, medical, and more.

During this presentation and discussion, Guy will share the points along a scale for inclusion/exclusion and full support/no support and the domains of life we all spend our lives in and the options available to us. Do we want people with disabilities to be citizens or clients, living in or apart from the community?

Texas Medicaid LTSS Programs & Wait Lists

Presenters: Jeff Miller, Disability Rights Texas and Cindi Paschall, M.O.M and Disability Rights Advocate

Room #154

Texas' Community-based Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) help people with disabilities (of all ages) live in the community. Understanding the eligibility requirements, service options, and other unique characteristics of each program is important. Information you've received may not be accurate or complete. If you have questions, concerns or have received confusing information, this session is for you! Presenters will provide an overview of Texas' LTSS Medicaid Waiver and State Plan programs that answer these questions: What are LTSS programs? Who is eligible to receive services? How are services accessed? When can I expect to receive Services? And more... They will also address why there is such a LONG wait for some services and how you can become involved to help reduce the waiting lists.

The Road to Employment: Competitive, Integrated, Customized and Accommodations

Presenters: Aracely Fuentes, UNT WISE, and Kellie Nix, UNT ENGAGE

Room #152

For people with disabilities, employment means greater economic self-sufficiency, an opportunity to use their skills, and more active participation in community life. Obtaining a job when you have a disability may come with challenges, but with the right support, it's completely possible! During this session Aracely and Kellie will provide an overview about competitive, integrative, customized employment and how integration and use of accommodations throughout the process helps prepare individuals for employment!

THINKing College – The Who, When, Where, Why and How of College for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Presenter: Dr. Mindy Lingo, THINK College

Room #151

Did you know there are now 330+ higher education options for students with intellectual disabilities in 49 U.S. states, including 17 in Texas? With this expansion of programs, there's a growing need for awareness and access. In her presentation, she will review higher education options and equip educators, students, and families with essential resources to prepare for and support college access. Students with intellectual disability are frequently overlooked in college discussions. This session helps rectify this by furnishing the necessary information to foster awareness and create meaningful access opportunities. Join Dr. Lingo in bridging this gap in education.

***“There is only one success...
to be able to spend your life in your own way.”***

Christopher Morley

Beyond the Comparison Chart: The Ins and Outs of Medicaid Waiver Programs

Presenters: Jeff Miller, Disability Rights Texas and Cindi Paschall, M.O.M and Disability Rights Advocate
Room #154

The online LTSS Medicaid Waiver Comparison Chart provides helpful information. What's lacking is detailed information such as who can provide a service, rates of pay, how to make the system work for you, and more. If you want to know more than what is listed on the comparison charts, this session is for you. Cindi and Jeff will explore these questions and others.

If I Knew Then What I Know Now: The Ah-Ha Moments That Made a Difference

Presenters: Jennifer Jordan and Michelle Lunday, M.O.M.s
Room #151

Raising a child (regardless of age) with a disability often comes with a steep learning curve and decisions that must be made to help your child live a meaningful life – one with hopes and dreams for now and in the future. This session was created by experts in the trenches – parents who are raising a child with a disability. During this session they will share their experiences, ah-ha moments, and resources that helped them embrace the journey, find their people, see past attitudinal barriers, and challenge the status quo.

Mastering Autonomy While Transitioning to Adulthood

Presenters: Daniel Durany, Self-Advocate
Room #152

What comes to mind when you hear the word, “transition?” Transition into adulthood is a pivotal moment in a person’s life. During this pivotal moment of a person’s life there are many questions and concerns. Typical questions such as, “What will my child be like when they become an adult, will they be able sustain employment, and etc. Daniel will share about when transition starts, the breakdown of various transition stages into adulthood, and how to make the transition smoother during each stage.

Media Imaging and Disability

Presenter: Dr. Guy Caruso, Institute on Disability at Temple University
Room #155-156

Images and stories in the media (including social media) can deeply influence public opinion and establish societal norms. It is not uncommon to see persons with disabilities treated as objects of pity, charity or medical treatment that have to overcome a tragic and disabling condition or conversely, presented as superheroes who have accomplished great feats, so as to inspire the non-disabled. During this session, Guy will review old disability stereotypes and the importance of and how to create a true to life image.



Please turn in your conference and session evaluation forms. Your compliments and suggestions are important to us. Each form is reviewed and considered in future planning.

Inclusion vs. Exclusion: Society is at a Turning Point

By Jack Pearpoint

Our society has reached a turning point where we must make decisions about values, direction, and budgets. We no longer have the luxury of buying a piece of all the solutions - and thus never having to answer hard questions. The hard questions are about values - what do we believe in? What kind of future do we want for our children? How do we get there?

My analysis identifies two opposing trends, two warring factions' inclusion versus exclusion. This dilemma is broader than "schooling" and education. Most post-industrialized societies have begun to come to terms with the fact of limited resources. The debate is between people who believe in exclusivity and those who believe in inclusion (egalitarian opportunity as the predominant value).

I believe that inclusive options (all welcome) will utilize the talents of people who would be discarded and written off in the exclusive model. The outsiders will bring new perspectives and new talents to policy conundrums where we are in a rut and need fresh ideas.

The meaning of a policy of exclusion is revealed by a reliable senior government official's retort when asked "What should we do about those who aren't in the mainstream?" He responded partly in jest, partly in frustration: "We train the best, and shoot the rest." The comment was off hand but identifies the dilemma.

The unstated underlying assumptions of exclusion are, among others, that:

We are not all equal in capacity or value. It is not feasible to give equal opportunity.

We must choose and thus train an elite who will take care of the rest.

They will benefit through the trickle-down theory.

Inclusion is the opposite and works from opposite assumptions:

We are unique in value; however, each has unique capacity.

All people can learn.

All people have contributions to make.

We have a responsibility and an opportunity to give every person the chance to make a contribution.

The criterion for inclusion is breathing, not IQ, income, colour, race, sex, or language.

Critics of inclusion say: It's too expensive. They can't learn. They don't know what's best for them. It can't be done.

As a critic of exclusion, I say: It's too expensive. They can learn. They - people - know a tremendous amount if asked. It can be done. It is unethical, politically unacceptable, and repugnant to write off marginalized people in our society. The cost of welfare maintenance is unbearable, either socially or economically. In short, exclusion does not work.

The critics are right if our thinking and answers are limited to the solutions we already have in place. I want to think about a new system, one that replaces the old, not just reforms it. My vision of the new system is based on the value that everyone belongs - all welcome.

We all have the power to listen to voices that are seldom heard. If we choose to make the time, to learn to listen, and to struggle with the pain and frustration that disempowered people feel, we will see new visions, feel new energy, and find hope in our future. There is power in the powerless. We can be catalysts, or encrusted residue.

The choice is ours.

A Look Ahead Conference Presenters Are The Best!

Our presenters are amazing! Please let them know how much they are appreciated!
They are here to share their knowledge and experiences with conference participants;
to offer hope and to empower and encourage you as you look ahead.

PRESENTERS:

Daniel Durany, Speaker, Author, and Advocate

Daniel Durany is a 2006 graduate from Texas Christian University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Studies and 2020 graduate from Texas A&M Commerce with a Master of Science in Accounting. Daniel volunteers with FEAT (Families for Effective Autism Treatment) and pioneered a local adult Asperger's Support Group. He makes public speaking appearances at autism conferences, colleges, and school districts around the country. His presentation discusses his childhood struggles in school, transition experience from high school-to-college & employment and approaches to help others.

Outside of the autism work, Durany is a year-round sports official in volleyball, basketball, and softball. He has officiated volleyball and softball games at the college level, and basketball games at the varsity level for high school. He recently called the UIL state championship in softball. In addition, Durany works at a tax company as a bookkeeper. He is married to his wife, Mandy, and they have a son named Benjamin.

Aracely Fuentes, UNT WISE

Aracely Fuentes is a dedicated professional whose life's work has been shaped by her unwavering commitment to helping individuals with cognitive disabilities lead fulfilling lives. That led her to earn a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from San Diego State University. Upon graduation, Aracely started her professional career with the Texas Workforce Commission. In her role as a transition counselor, she provided guidance to young adults with disabilities, helping them navigate the challenging transition from school to the workforce. Aracely's career trajectory reached new heights when she joined the team at Texas Children's Hospital. During her tenure at Texas Children's Hospital, she held many positions, including managing Project Search. Aracely journey from San Diego State University to her pivotal roles at the Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Children's Hospital is a testament to her unwavering commitment to improving the lives of individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Jennifer Jordan, M.O.M.

Jennifer Jordan is a mom of two teenagers, one with a disability and the other who is neurodivergent. As a special education teacher, Jennifer has taught students in life skills and resource programs. Additionally, she serves as a volunteer special education advocate helping families navigate the IEP planning process. Jennifer believes that all people deserve to live a meaningful life - one they define. In her spare time, she can be found reading and crafting.

Dr. Mindy Lingo, THINK College

Dr. Mindy Lingo is a training developer at THINK College's Inclusive Higher Education Network Project. With 20+ years of experience, she co-founded and directed an inclusive postsecondary program at the University of Oklahoma and served as Assistant Director of Postsecondary Education at the Zarrow Institute. Mindy's expertise as an educator, board-certified behavior analyst, and special education teacher in Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas has empowered countless individuals with disabilities. Through her work with Think College, she remains deeply committed to fostering inclusive education and expanding access to higher learning opportunities.



To Access Session Presentation Handouts:

Scan the QR code or visit the link <http://bit.ly/43Mg6kx> to access session handouts.

Please note: Some presenters do not make handouts available.

Michelle Lunday, M.O.M.

Michelle Lunday is wife to James and mom to 10-year-old Luke. She is a 2018 graduate of Texas Partners in Policymaking. Michelle is an advocate for Luke in all areas of his life, and she has a special passion for helping families understand Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and the process. In her spare time, she enjoys travel, musicals, and baking.

Jeff Miller, Disability Rights Texas

Jeff Miller has held various policy related positions at Disability Rights Texas starting in 2006, including work in the areas of health care access, community integration, and special education. He is currently a Sr. Policy Specialist. In addition to extensive professional experience, Jeff is able to share his personal experiences as a father of a son with disabilities. Jeff received his law degree from the University of Louisville School of Law and holds a B.A. in Speech Communication from the University of Houston.

Kellie Nix, UNT ENGAGE

Kellie Nix is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate that is a passionate advocate for people with disabilities in academics and gainful employment. She has experience in early intervention with children with Autism, working with adults with varying disabilities in a continuing education facility, and working with students that are neurodivergent. She is the Associate Director of the UNT ENGAGE and has been there since December 2021. ENGAGE stands for Embracing Neurodivergent Groups in Academics and Gainful Employment and works with students that are neurodivergent in academic, vocational, social, and personal goals while navigating college life.

Cindi Paschall, M.O.M. and Disability Rights Advocate

Cindi Paschall is a parent passionately involved in advancing the human rights of persons with disabilities. She has dedicated the past 27 years to advocacy, applying her personal experience and knowledge in helping others. Over the years Cindi has worked and also volunteered for various organizations dedicated to helping persons with disabilities live their desired lifestyle. She currently serves as a volunteer for The Arc of DFW Area and is a Regional Partner for the Navigate Life Texas website project. Cindi is also a 1997 Texas Partners in Policymaking graduate.



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**Aetna Better Health[®]
of Texas**

**We have a wonderful group of exhibitors today!
Please stop by and visit them, they welcome your questions.**

Aetna Better Health of Texas
Be An Angel DFW
Cook Children's Health Plan
Disability Rights Texas
Earth's Angels Pediatric Day Center
Green Oaks Education and Support, Inc.
People Planning Together Training
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in partnership with
Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
The Arc of DFW Area
The Self-Determination Group



**We look forward to seeing you in
November as we continue
celebrating our 10th Year!**

Attendees, exhibitors, presenters, and sponsors, please join us November 9th, 2024.
There is something for everyone!



The November 9th **A Look Ahead Conference** registration is open. Scan the QR code or use the link <https://bit.ly/NOV24ALA> to reserve your spot today!

Sponsors and Exhibitors, expand your presence within the DFW Community.
For more information about sponsorship packages and exhibitor space,
please contact Michelle at alookahead@thearcofdfw.org.



Wi-Fi connections are available in all rooms.
The Wi-Fi password is JohnWesley.