



BridgeForward

Day 1: Thursday, July 24

10:00-10:15 am Welcome to the Bridge Forward Conference

Start the day with a warm welcome from our hosts, a quick tech orientation, and an overview of accessibility features to help you engage with ease.

Speaker: Kristen Loomis Greenidge

10:15-10:30 am Setting the Tone

A welcome from the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council including an overview of the Conference and how important these issues are for all stakeholders.

Speakers: Brandi Motts (Facilitator), Julie Clark, Katrina Davis

10:30-10:45 am Overview of Research

Enhancing Services for Washingtonians with Co-occurring IDD and Behavioral Health Needs: What We Learned from Research

The National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities will provide an overview of a research project funded by the Washington State Council on Developmental Disabilities conducted in 2024, the Intersection of Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health Research.

Speaker: Monica Mesa-Alvarez

Resource: [Intersection of Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health Research Final Report | WADDC](#)

10:45-11:45am Keynote

WA Leadership Panel: What's Happening Across the State?

This keynote panel brings together statewide leaders working to support people with both developmental and behavioral health disabilities. Speakers include Bea Rector (DSHS and Health Care Authority), Upkar Mangat (Behavioral Health and Habilitation Administration), Noah Seidel (Disability Rights Washington and DD Ombuds), and Courtney Williams (Washington State Independent Living Council). Panelists will share how their agencies are addressing the needs of this population and reflect on ways to improve coordination and support across systems. The discussion will also focus on how communities can contribute to lasting, meaningful change.

Speakers: Brandi Motts (Facilitator), Upkar Mangat, Bea Rector, Courtney Williams, Noah Seidel

11:55 am – 12:45 pm Breakout Sessions #1

Our Lived Experience: Ideas on Advocacy

In this powerful breakout session, leaders with lived experience will share their personal perspectives on navigating developmental and behavioral health services in Washington State. Facilitated by DD Council member Alex Koval, the panel includes Tracy Turner, Katie Nash (DD Council 1st Vice Chair), Josie Schindler, Vickie Horschell, and Leigh Walters (Developmental Disabilities Ombuds). Panelists will discuss what has helped them access services, what supports are still needed, and what they want decision-makers to understand. This session centers the voices of those who are most impacted by our systems and offers real-world insight into how improvements could be made.

Speakers: Alex Koval (Facilitator), Vickie Horschel, Katie Nash, Josie Schindler, Tracy Turner, Leigh Walters

Disrupting the Digital Divide: Technology First Systems Change

Technology is here to stay, but for many people with developmental disabilities and behavioral health support needs, access remains out of reach. In this session, discover how states across the country are embracing Technology First as a bold systems change movement. Learn how this innovative approach is bridging the digital divide and putting those most often left behind at the forefront of inclusive technology access.

Speaker: Kaley Day

Think Lab: Building Support and Stakeholder Assessment

During each breakout session, attendees have the option to take part in a Think Lab. These sessions will be interactive and will provide practical tools and strategies for attendees. There will be a short presentation but mainly attendees will be interacting with others, learning and networking together, and engaging in small and large group discussions. This Think Lab will focus on identifying who needs to be involved in changing the future of behavioral health and developmental disability support in Washington and how to engage with them.

Speaker: Caitlin Bailey (Facilitator)

1:15-2:15 pm Keynote

National Advocacy: How Systems Need to Change to Support People with Complex Needs & Their Families

Anita Cameron is a nationally known disability activist. She views things from a culturally competent, disability justice framework and fights for the rights of people to be in charge of their own lives. Join this lively session as Anita shares powerful stories from 40+ years of activism—and a vision for building more inclusive, equitable systems together.

Speaker: Anita Cameron

2:25-3:15 pm Breakout Sessions #2

The Ecosystem of Sexuality & Social Services

This session examines how social service systems often react to a sexual incident involving a vulnerable person in a manner which ultimately leads to violations of a person's rights. The presenter will discuss the importance of building structural partnerships across disciplines and utilizing available tools for developing rights-based responses and increasing safety for everyone.

Speaker: Shanya Luther

Kids Mental Health Washington: Linking Arms across Systems to Support the Mental Health of WA Kids and Families

In this session, we'll explore Kids' Mental Health WA (KMHW), an innovative statewide model for addressing Washington's youth mental health crisis. Gina Cabiddu and Meghan Hopkins will showcase how multidisciplinary teams, shared resources, and care coordination are transforming outcomes for children with complex needs. The presentation highlights KMHW's expansion and community-centered approach, emphasizing youth and family voices, cross-system collaboration, and policy reform. Attendees will connect with regional hubs and be invited to help shape the future of this innovative initiative.

Speakers: Meghan Hopkins, Gina Cabiddu

Think Lab: Strategic Planning for the Washington System

During each breakout session, attendees have the option to take part in a Think Lab. These sessions will be interactive and will provide practical tools and strategies for attendees. There will be a short presentation but mainly attendees will be interacting with others, learning and networking together, and engaging in small and large group discussions. This Think Lab will focus on identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) related to changing the future of behavioral health and developmental disability support in Washington.

Speaker: Caitlin Bailey (Facilitator)



BridgeForward

Day 2: Friday, July 25

10:00-10:15am Welcome to the Bridge Forward Conference

A quick refresher on the day's agenda and accessibility tools to help you feel supported and ready to participate.

Speaker: Kristen Loomis Greenidge

10:15-10:30am Setting the Tone – Day Two

A short discussion of the impact of Day One -- and what Day Two of the conference brings!

Speakers: Emily Rogers (Facilitator), Ivanova Smith, Sandi Gruberg

10:30-10:45 am Overview of Research

Enhancing Services for Washingtonians with Co-occurring IDD and Behavioral Health Needs - What We Learned from Research

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Speakers: Monica Mesa-Alvarez

Resource: [Intersection of Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health Research Final Report | WADDC](#)

10:45-11:45am Keynote

National Leadership Panel: What Are Organizations Doing Nationally?

Hear from national leaders working across systems to improve outcomes for people with I/DD and behavioral health needs. Learn what's working—and where we go from here.

Speakers: Kristen Loomis Greenidge (Facilitator), Jeanne Farr, Stacy Nonnemacher, Rebecca Wolfkiel, Wendy Morris

11:55am – 12:45pm Breakout Sessions #3

Trauma Informed Care as a Road Map to Better Support

This session explores how trauma-informed care can serve as a powerful framework for improving services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and behavioral health support needs. Participants will gain practical strategies to recognize the impact of trauma and apply trauma-informed principles to create safer, more effective, more responsive, and person-centered systems of care.

Speakers: Amanda Rich

Competency to Stand Trial and Community Supports

This session will discuss how people with developmental disabilities, including those who also have behavioral health needs, move through the criminal legal system. We will focus on the Trueblood Class action lawsuit, available supports and services, as well as the progress and barriers that have been made in the years since the case.

Speakers: Deanna Aldridge, Chris Carney, Fallon Zollars

Think Lab: Looking Beyond Washington

During each breakout session, attendees have the option to take part in a Think Lab. These sessions will be interactive and will provide practical tools and strategies for attendees. There will be a short presentation but mainly attendees will be interacting with others, learning and networking together, and engaging in small and large group discussions. This Think Lab will focus on the best practices, innovations, and opportunities that exist across the country and consider how they can be incorporated into changing the future of behavioral health and developmental disability support in Washington.

Speaker: Caitlin Bailey (Facilitator)

1:15-2:15pm Keynote

Mental Health, IDD Advocacy, & What's Possible: A Self-Advocate & DD Council Perspective

As an autistic person with behavioral health needs, I have experienced what happens when systems don't communicate or coordinate with each other. But I have also seen what's possible when they do. In this keynote, I'll share my personal journey navigating developmental disability and behavioral health systems. I'll talk about the crises I've personally experienced and what has helped me. I will talk about what it felt like to be left out, and what being at the table (now) means to me. I will share about what self-determination really means, and how my team and colleagues at the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities (KCDD) is leading national and state transformational and policy change. My hope is that this session inspires you to see how each of us can help bridge forward.

Speakers: Whit Downing, Allyson McCain, Lola Kernell, Sara Hart Weir

2:25-3:15pm Breakout Session #4

Bold Connections and Innovations: A Community Care Model that advances support for people with IDD and mental health needs.

NextGen Synergy operates similar to a traditional community care hub, uniting people, systems, and innovative solutions to transform support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and co-occurring mental health conditions. Join us to explore how bold collaboration, technology-driven strategies, and knowledge-sharing networks are reducing fragmentation, strengthening local capacity, and empowering people to thrive in their communities. Discover practical ways this scalable model can help Washington and beyond bridge gaps and build sustainable, person-centered systems of care.

Speakers: Monica McCall and Nick Burton

State Plan Residential Services & Adult Family Home Specialty Pilot

In this breakout session, Paula Costa, Specialty State Plan Residential Services Program Manager with Developmental Disabilities Community Services (DDCS), will share information about State Plan Residential Services and updates on the Specialty Adult Family Home (AFH) Pilot. This pilot is designed to better support adults with developmental disabilities and behavioral health needs by offering enhanced training and targeted supports to AFH providers. With 100 people now participating, the program marks a

significant step in expanding quality community-based care across Washington. Paula will also discuss lessons learned so far and what's next for the future of the pilot.

Speaker: Paula Costa

Think Lab: What's Possible? Starting a Vision

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Speaker: Caitlin Bailey (Facilitator)