



The Transition Journeys 2024 Transition Conference Workshop Descriptions and Presenter Bios

Session One - 10:30am - 11:45am

Navigating College & the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative

This workshop will provide a basic overview of how to navigate college life for autistic individuals. It will go over how to select majors, how to create the routine required to complete college, and how to access college resources like tutoring centers. Financial aid will be discussed, as well as ways students can pay for their courses, including FAFSA and side jobs. All topics will contain personal examples of both in-person and online college experiences.

Andrew Arboe is an autistic self-advocate with over five years of professional experience helping autistic individuals be empowered in their lives by sharing his experiences in public speaking and freelance work with organizations. Andrew was the keynote speaker for Autism Connection's 32nd Annual Autism Conference in Springfield, MA. Andrew is also on various boards, including AANE's Speaker Bureau and HAAPE's Autism Expert Board.

Mary Price is the MAICEI Director for the Department of Higher Education. In this role, Mary oversees the fourteen MAICEI (Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative) programs at many public colleges and universities throughout the state. Mary has guided the MAICEI Coordinators throughout the state in helping support the students during the pandemic and consulted with public community colleges and universities on the proper procedures in submitting grant proposals. She has worked with campuses regarding the proper steps needed to take to lead a MAICEI Program, as well as leading monthly meetings where campus updates are shared. Mary is currently working with state and government agencies to roll out a strategic plan based on the bill that was signed by Governor Baker. The new bill now opens doors to public colleges and universities throughout Massachusetts, giving students with intellectual disabilities, autism, and development disabilities the opportunity to enroll in college classes and participate in campus activities alongside their non-disabled peers.

Navigating Transitions to Adult Healthcare

This workshop will focus on navigating the challenges of the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare for young adults with autism or intellectual and development disabilities and their families. Learn from panel members about how to get started and the best practices for successful transition, including ensuring a warm handoff from the pediatric care team. Panelists will share resources available and cover how to develop a strong partnership with an adult healthcare team. They will offer tips on the best questions to ask and how to help prepare your transitioning young adult, considering their individual needs for support. Bring your questions for this expert panel.

Sarah T. Campbell is the Senior Research Coordinator for the Harvard Medical School Adult Autism Health Resources (AAHR) Working Group. An experienced writer and editor, Sarah is also an advocate for families with developmental disorders and a parent of an autistic adult. She is the AAHR patient



experience and advocacy expert and serves the project in several capacities ranging from recruiting Patient Advisory Board members and reviewing content for the clinician course (Clinical Care for Autistic Adults) to developing the content and design of the AAHR website. Sarah previously worked as an Associate in Analytical Studies and Planning in the Office of the President at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and as a contributor to Harvard Health Publishing before joining the staff in 2020.

Dorothea Iannuzzi, PhD, MSW, BCBA is a clinical social worker with over 30 years of clinical experience in healthcare and behavioral health. She received her MSW in 1990 and PhD in 2017 from Simmons University. She is a board-certified behavior analyst and works on integrating her clinical and ABA training in her work with individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders. Her primary clinical interest is working with young adults with neurodevelopmental conditions with co-occurring psychiatric concerns and their families across the lifespan. She has published several manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals in the areas of healthcare transition, medical education, and ED utilization by individuals living on the autism spectrum.

Sarah Spence, MD is the Assistant in the Department of Neurology and Co-Director of the Autism Spectrum Center at Boston Children's Hospital (BCH) and an Assistant Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School. Sarah's clinical and research activities have been focused on children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and related disorders. She was recruited to BCH in 2010 and has led a multi-disciplinary effort to form the Autism Spectrum Center. At Boston Children's, she is combining her interests and expertise in clinical care, clinical research, and teaching with a primary focus on improving the lives of children with autism spectrum disorders and their families. She has lectured extensively nationally and internationally on ASD. She has also worked on the DSM-5 Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Workgroup and worked with various foundations and professional groups including Cure Autism Now, Autism Speaks, AGRE, the Autism Treatment Network, the Dup 15q Alliance, and the Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance. Transition from pediatric to adult healthcare is an area of focus for Sarah and her work with the statewide Massachusetts Initiative to Improve Healthcare Transitions for Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities has helped identify needed additional supports for successful healthcare transition and ways to avoid negative experiences of the process itself.

Maura Sullivan is the Deputy Executive Director for The Arc of Massachusetts. She was recently appointed to this role after a decade leading Government Affairs for The Arc. She is also the Director of Operation House Call, a nationally recognized training program and partnership between The Arc and all major Massachusetts Medical Schools. Maura's advocacy work includes passing priority legislation for the autism and IDD community, such as Nicky's Law, Police Training in Autism, and Operation House Call. Her work at the State House focuses on increasing funding for the DDS budget, the workforce, and MassHealth. Maura participates in state and national advisory boards for transition age youth with autism and IDD. She is a former LEND Fellow with a Master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University. Maura is also the mother of three, and she has two transition age sons with autism and intellectual disability.

Personal Advocacy: The Rubber Hits the Road

Turning 22 for many students requires access to new services or supportive approaches. For caregivers, it means the loss of predictable school structure and some level of community inclusion, which often is part of the school experience. The impact of the COVID pandemic has made the transition even more difficult. This workshop will review key steps in transition, advocacy strategies to achieve objectives, and key players or entities to ensure a positive



outcome. It will cover common assumptions about the process and services, potential barriers, confirming agreements, and the importance of allies at public and private agencies.

Leo Sarkissian has served as the Executive Director of The Arc of Massachusetts for over three decades. His work has focused on advocacy, legislation, program development, and education regarding policy and services. He is a licensed independent social worker with a graduate degree in the field. Leo's past experience includes overseeing a multi-service chapter of The Arc and working with individuals and families.

Supported Decision-Making: Making It Work!

Have you heard about Supported Decision-Making? Are you interested in learning more? Join us to learn about what Supported Decision-Making is and how it can be used to help people make their own decisions as an alternative to guardianship. Self-advocate Jonathan Gardner will talk about what it is like making decisions with supporters using examples from his life. From choosing supporters to making complicated decisions, you will leave this workshop with a better understanding of how Supported Decision-Making works in the real world. Jonathan and Anna are also involved in the state policy work on this issue and will provide an update and answer questions.

Jonathan Gardner is a 21-year-old decision-maker, self-advocate, and cancer survivor who happens to have autism. He is the Co-Chair of the Massachusetts Supported Decision Making Coalition, a Flutie Fellow for the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, an Ambassador for Operation House Call through The Arc of Massachusetts, and a board member for Massachusetts Advocates for Children.

Anna Krieger is the Executive Director of Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC). As a disability justice lawyer, leader, and policy advocate, Anna has dedicated her career to building innovative legal and policy initiatives at the intersection of disability and race, empowering people with disabilities to live self-determined lives.

Transition to Adulthood: What I Wish I Knew

This panel presentation will feature young adults who have been through postsecondary transition. They will share their experiences, offer their suggestions, and take questions, offering insight on transition from young adults with lived experience.

Matty Tricca is an emerging public speaker who hopes this will be the first of many talks he shares with audiences around the country. A recent high school graduate, Matty has found a great career as a sterile processing technician and it began with one super pre-ETS connection. Three words that can be used to describe Matty are joyful, resilient, and optimistic. There have been challenges along the course of Matty's journey, but as he often says, "Success isn't succeeding - it's knowing you will succeed!"

Additional panel members to be confirmed.



Transitioning into Independence

Caregivers, parents, and professionals working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) will learn to develop personalized support plans for children transitioning into adulthood. This workshop emphasizes the use of person-centered thinking practices to enhance participants' understanding when charting the life course. Additionally, the workshop focuses on providing insights into the essential process of selecting Individualized Education Program (IEP) objectives for transition-age students. Participants will explore effective strategies and best practices to empower these students, facilitating their journey toward independence and ensuring a successful transition to post-school life.

Traci Beane is the Director of Transition Services at Shore Educational Collaborative. Traci works with staff, students, families, and outside agencies to support students with transitioning to adult life. The focus of Person-Centered Planning engages students with disabilities in planning for their future. Creating meaningful opportunities for students to connect with their passions and interests drives the work. Traci is interested in working with community partners to create more meaningful opportunities for students with disabilities.

Ryan Hand M.Ed, BCBA, LABA is the Program Manager at Crossroads Continuum Commons, a Community-Based Day Program. Ryan has over 15 years of experience working with children and adults with disabilities. Prior to her current role, she supervised transition age students in clinical and educational programming.

Antonio Martinez, M.Ed. is a social worker in Chelsea. Originally from Texas, Antonio was inspired to pursue his career advocating for persons with disabilities after serving as a juvenile drug court officer and in program development for the Local Intellectual Developmental Disability Authority for persons with IDD. Now in Massachusetts, Antonio continues to build a diverse background in learning how to support the IDD community further.



Session Two - 1:00 - 1:45pm

An Overview of the Department of Developmental Services' Transition Supports and Services

Members of the Department of Developmental Services will provide an overview of the transition supports and services. Presenters will review important aspects of transition that youth and their families need to know for a successful launch into the next phase of their lives.

Brian Reilly is a Service Coordinator Supervisor at the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Brian has been advocating and supporting families and individuals with disabilities for 15 years. Brian served as Program Director of Amego Day Program, supported staff training and development with HMEA, and gained classroom experience at NECC. Brian joined DDS in 2017, where he served transition aged individuals for six years and is now currently a supervisor for the Worcester Area Office.

An Overview of MRC Services and New Initiatives to Support Families in Transition

At the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), we strive to embody and commit to a culture of access, inclusion, diversity and belonging. We put the individuals and families we serve at the heart of everything we do. This workshop aims to provide an overview of MRC's services and programs and share information about new initiatives to support individuals and families in transition. Our main objective is to empower families with the information they need to create a plan for success and achieve their desired outcomes.

Manel Desvallons is the Family Partnership Coordinator in the Office of Learning and Community Engagement at the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). He considers himself a true ally of the disability community who is committed to working and collaborating with others to break down barriers, promoting inclusion and access, and empowering individuals with disabilities & their families.

Introduction to Government Benefits and Special Needs Trusts

Michelle B. LaPointe graduated from Boston University and Northeastern University School of Law. She was admitted to the Massachusetts bar and joined the firm of Wade Horowitz in December 2004. In January 2011, she was named partner of Wade Horowitz LaPointe LLC. Before attending law school, Michelle worked on several local, state, and federal political campaigns, served on the board of the LGBT Political Alliance of Massachusetts, and worked at the Massachusetts chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. Michelle is a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and speaks regularly on issues surrounding long term care planning with a focus on special needs trusts. Michelle was named a Rising Star in Boston Magazine's annual SuperLawyers issue in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. She serves on the Board of Directors of Central Boston Elder Services, a nonprofit agency providing services to help seniors throughout Boston remain in their homes. In 2019, Michelle was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Massachusetts Commission on LGBT Aging.

Joan McGrath is the Executive Director of PLAN. Joan has more than 25 years of experience in professional accounting and finance and has been with PLAN since 2009. Prior to assuming the role of Executive Director, Joan was Director of Finance and Administration for PLAN. She has been an auditor with a "big four" public accounting firm, where she focused on high growth, emerging business clients.



She also led her own private consulting practice, where she worked with nonprofits, service organizations, and venture capital startups. Joan earned her Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Boston University's Questrom School of Business.

Kathy Vitello is the Director of Operations at PLAN and has been with PLAN since 2013. Prior to assuming the role of Director of Operations in February 2020, Kathy was Director of Beneficiary Services from 2018-2020 and has been a PLAN Service Coordinator since 2013. Kathy earned her Bachelor's degree in Applied Mental Health from UMASS, Amherst and her Associate's degree in Mental Health from Northern Essex Community College. Kathy is certified in Suicide Prevention in Older Adults, Mental Health and Aging from Institute for Geriatric Social Work, BU, and Thanatology (scientific study of death and dying).

Socialize and Thrive: Friendship Matters

Friendship has been proven to have many benefits that promote health and well-being. In the phase of transition, the importance of friendship and socialization amplifies. Building new connections is already challenging, and for young adults with disabilities, there is often an added layer to navigating friendships. In this workshop, learn about how to find different social opportunities for individuals with disabilities and the value of adult friendships from advocate Laura Green with her best friend and self-advocate, Jordan Caira.

Jordan Caira is a powerful self-advocate. She has worked at AMC Theaters for nine years and is a gifted artist and performer. She also enjoys fitness and is a longtime participant at Inclusive Fitness. She has presented at the National Down Syndrome Conference twice on inclusive friendships. Jordan believes people of all abilities deserve meaningful friendships and loves to show others how friendships and social opportunities have positively impacted her life.

Laura Green is a Case Manager in the Individual Supports Program at the Kennedy-Donovan Center and the Program Specialist at the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress. She has presented twice at the National Down Syndrome Conference on inclusive friendships. Laura has also worked as a Life Skills Trainer for three other non-profits. Laura is a devoted disability advocate with a strong passion for independent living and inclusive friendships.

What Is Assistive Technology and How Can All Individuals Benefit from a Comprehensive Needs Assessment?

Every day, we all use a wide variety of technologies to help us with organization, communication, safety, and more. Every individual can benefit from some form of Assistive Technology, whether a low-tech device that allows them to put on their shoes independently, or a high-tech communication device that allows them to speak using an eye-gaze program. The goal of AT is to increase functional abilities and support every individual in being as independent as possible across all life domains. The Northeast Arc's Assistive Technology Program is funded through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and provides evaluations by licensed Occupational Therapists and Speech-Language Pathologists. Clinicians recommend devices and programs that will increase client independence and safety and provide ongoing training and support to ensure that both the individual and their support system are comfortable and confident using their technology. Come join the Northeast Arc's Assistive Technology department to learn more about this exciting program, the variety of supports available, and see some product demos!



Session Three - 2:15pm - 3:30pm

Building Capacity and Opportunity for Self-Determination

This workshop focuses on how to cultivate self-determination skills among transition-age youth with disabilities. Participants will learn accessible definitions of self-determination and explore theoretical approaches aimed at supporting professionals, including parents, educators, healthcare workers, and other providers working with transition-age youth. Real-life case studies of adolescents with disabilities will be utilized to delve into the concept of self-determination. The workshop encourages audience engagement through discussions, brainstorming, and an exploration of pertinent questions. By the end of the workshop, participants will feel confident in their understanding of self-determination and equipped with strategies to support self-determination skills among transition-age youth with disabilities.

Kimberly Greenberg, OTD, OTR/L is the Manager of Program Development at Skills for Life, an organization which provides home-based occupational therapy services to neurodivergent adolescents and young adults. Kimberly holds a Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from Boston University and a Bachelor's degree in Biology and Spanish from Amherst College. With professional experience in schools, hospitals, and home/community settings, Kimberly is passionate about aiding teens and young adults in developing self-advocacy skills to achieve their goals.

Pathways to Friendship: Building Bridges to a Good Full Life in the Community

Pathways to Friendship will share stories of connecting people through valued roles in the community and explore the benefits of inclusive friendships. Presenters will share examples of what to do when efforts are misled down separate paths away from community, which even when well-intended, can be terrible barriers to building relationships. Making connections is exactly what we need to plan for when we are enriching a transition into a good life in the community. This workshop will include self-advocacy and family examples that emphasize the opportunity for people to build relationships within their communities, naturally wherever they live, learn, work, and play.

Katie Driscoll is the current Director of Widening the Circle, Pathways to Friendship, which is a collaborative project between The Arc of Massachusetts and the Department of Developmental Services that advances inclusion by building opportunities for personal relationships and community connections in lives of people with disabilities in Massachusetts. Katie provides consultation, education, and leadership, working with people who receive services, their families, and staff, as well as citizens, to collaborate in enriching community life for all. Katie also currently serves as Community Director at BAMSI.

Lillian Tigano is a senior at Dartmouth High School. Lillian is an empowered self-advocate who has tenaciously led others to see her vision of a good life, creating paths towards being a valued and contributing member of her community post-graduation. Lillian is an athlete, an accomplished equestrian, and a member of the National Honor Society. Lillian works with children at BCL. Lillian has a strong sense of family and is a true friend to many.



Special Needs Financial Planning: How to Plan for Transition

Special needs financial planning often requires planning for two generations. Many children with a disability will need supports for their entire lives, including long after their parents have passed. Our approach reaches beyond the limited boundaries of wills and trusts to provide you with a road map to address your own family's unique needs. Planning for two generations centers upon our Special Needs Planning Timeline™. The timeline highlights the various planning pressure points where parents should be aware of changes relating to their child's benefits and legal and financial issues. The primary focus is to help parents avoid common mistakes and pitfalls in their own planning. We will also discuss the ABLE account and its potential role in planning for your child.

Alexandria Nadworny, CFP(R), CTFA, Wealth Advisor is Vice President at Special Needs Financial Planning, a specialty practice of Sequoia Financial Group. Making the world a better place for her brother James has always been a part of Alex and her family's everyday life. She knows the outsize impact that small gestures can have in creating a full life for a person with a disability. Her experience as James' sister, along with her expertise in financial planning, credentials, and experience, all come into play when she is planning with families. As a future guardian of James, who has Down syndrome, Alex has a deep understanding of all roles and responsibilities that may need to be filled one day. In recognition of her financial planning expertise, Alex is a 2023 Investment News 40 under 40 recipient, an honor designating her as a future leader in the financial services industry. She is committed to educational outreach and is a highly experienced speaker, presenting special needs financial planning workshops to families, organizations, and professionals nationally.

The Adult Service System: Why Your Advocacy Is Needed Now!

This workshop will focus on why legislative advocacy is crucial for the adult service system. As young adults turn 22 and leave the "entitlement" of school services, supports for adult services are not guaranteed. The workforce crisis has resulted in limited access to services. Funding for the workforce and for programs comes from the state budget and advocacy is necessary! Learn the best ways to share your story and how to engage in advocacy efforts in just minutes through The Arc's tools and resources.

Senator Robyn Kennedy was elected in the 2022 general election to the first Worcester senate district. Sen. Kennedy chairs the Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities. Sen. Kennedy has had several roles in state government in the past, including Deputy Assistant Secretary for Children, Youth and Families. Among other legislation, she has filed a workforce bill to advance the pay of staff working in human services. She previously served as Chief Operating Officer of the YWCA of Central Massachusetts.

Maura Sullivan is the Deputy Executive Director for The Arc of Massachusetts. She was recently appointed to this role after a decade leading Government Affairs for The Arc. She is also the Director of Operation House Call, a nationally recognized training program and partnership between The Arc and all major Massachusetts Medical Schools. Maura's advocacy work includes passing priority legislation for the autism and IDD community, such as Nicky's Law, Police Training in Autism, and Operation House Call. Her work at the State House focuses on increasing funding for the DDS budget, the workforce, and MassHealth. Maura participates in state and national advisory boards for transition age youth with autism and IDD. She is a former LEND Fellow with a Master's degree in public



administration from Suffolk University. Maura is also the mother of three, and she has two transition age sons with autism and intellectual disability.

The New IEP and How to Make the IEP Visions a Reality

The new IEP format gives organizations the opportunity to revive the concept of a student vision led IEP. This workshop will review a process used to turn carefully crafted vision statements into qualitative data and align those visions with quantitative data from current performance measures. The results are IEP goals and objectives built from student and family visions, creating a more functional and individualized plan with buy-in from important stakeholders from the onset. This process allows families' and students' ideas to drive the IEP and to be an active member of the team during the meeting.

Rebecca Davis is the Director of Transition Projects at the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Rebecca is the mother of two transition-aged teens. She joined the Federation after moving to Massachusetts for better medical and educational supports for her younger daughter. Her work with nonprofits over the last decade has been a labor of love, beginning with co-founding Visually Impaired Preschool Services in Indiana. To better support her daughter and other children with disabilities, she obtained advocacy training through Partners in Policymaking. Rebecca has been an invited presenter at local and national conferences and a vocal advocate for families of children with vision loss and multiple disabilities. More recently, she worked with transition-aged youth at the Perkins School for the Blind. Rebecca is passionate about offering support and encouragement to families and youth with disabilities as they navigate the transition from high school to adult life.

Annie Willis MS, BCBA is the Chief Education Officer at The Guild for Human Services. Her career started at a residential school, and she has worked in multiple settings as a teacher, behavior consultant, and administrator. Annie has extensive experience administering IEPs and directing programs while collaborating with families and students. She values integrated and inclusive settings of systems and support. She earned her Bachelor's degree from UMass Amherst and her Master's in Applied Behavior Analysis from Northeastern University.

Thinking about Housing

This workshop is "Housing 101" for parents. This presentation introduces families to the range of public funds available to pay for housing and supportive services, including for those without DDS supports. Some examples are given of how these can be combined with private funds to create housing.

Catherine Boyle is a commissioner of the Winchester Housing Authority, a member of the Winchester Housing Partnership Board, and has completed over 60 hours of housing counseling training through HUD-approved intermediaries. A former Foreign Service Officer, Catherine is a graduate of Dartmouth College. She holds a certificate of graduate studies from UMASS Boston in adapting curriculum and a certificate in ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Centers) Options Counseling from the Center for Aging and Disability Education and Research at Boston University's School of Social Work.