

The Mountain State Conference on Disabilities

Bridging the Gap

Sept. 18-19, 2025 - Waterfront Place Hotel, Morgantown, WV



CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

1. Share Best Practices to Enhance Care, Communication, and Self-Determination

Present effective, evidence-based strategies and services that improve the quality of life for people with disabilities across all ages.

2. Center and Elevate Lived Experience

Highlight the perspectives of individuals with disabilities, their families, and caregivers to inform and inspire inclusive, person-centered approaches.

3. Foster Collaboration Across Diverse Stakeholders

Create opportunities for self-advocates, families, professionals, educators, policy makers, and researchers to connect, share knowledge, and strengthen support systems.

4. Support Empowerment and Advocacy

Equip individuals with disabilities, families, and caregivers with tools and information to promote autonomy, informed decision-making, and effective self-advocacy.

5. Drive Systems Change Through Education and Policy Dialogue

Explore policies, systemic barriers, and innovative practices that advance equity, inclusion, and long-term support for the disability community.

Target Audience: Individuals with disabilities, their families/caregivers, providers, faculty, medical students, residents

The West Virginia University School of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The WVU Office of CME designates this (insert format here) for a maximum of TBD AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Physical Therapy: As a CAPTE-accredited Physical Therapist education program, courses sponsored by WVU PT are approved for continuing education credit in West Virginia. Views expressed by the presenter(s) are not intended to reflect those of the WV Board of Physical Therapy. Disclosure: All those in a position to control content of this program have indicated that they have no relevant interests to disclose. For questions or additional information regarding this program, please contact Amy Burt at (304) 293-4692.

The West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities is a Social Work Certified Continuing Education provider through the West Virginia Board of Social Work. WVU/CED is an institution, agency or organization that has applied to and received approval by the Board to provide programs of continuing social work education under its own auspices, and who maintains these privileges by completing the recertification application process every two years. We are assigned a specific, unique number that applies to our agency/organization's name only.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025



KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

JORDYN ZIMMERMAN, EdD

9:00 am – 10:00 am, Ballroom (Salons D & E)

Through storytelling and visuals, this 60-minute live keynote will discuss Jordyn Zimmerman's lived experience as a nonspeaking autistic learner, educator, and advocate. She will discuss how beliefs contribute to low expectations, challenges with accessing effective communication, supporting others in community, and the necessity of accessible technology.

Jordyn Zimmerman is a passionate educator and disability advocate. After being diagnosed as autistic at a young age, she did not receive access to augmentative communication until the age of 18. That arduous journey fuels her beliefs around leveraging tools and supports to drive change. She now thrives on boldly showing up and redefining what is possible in learning spaces and throughout the broader community — and has personal experience challenging the status quo, which is featured in the 2021 documentary, *This Is Not About Me*.

Framing disabilities: Models and perspective

Cassandra Miller, Ed.D., MS, CCC-SLP
Program Director, MCH/LEND, WVU Center
for Excellence in Disabilities

10:15 am – 11:15 am, Salons A, B & C

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) in underserved populations

Cortland Nesley, Program Manager, WV
Traumatic Brain Injury Services,
WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities

10:15 am – 11:15 am, Wharf A & B

Lessons from COVID-19 can prepare us to support our children in future crises

Rebecca “Lanai” Jennings-Knotts, Ph.D.,
Associate professor & program director
Marshall University School Psychology
Program

Sandra S Stroebe, Ph.D., Professor,
Marshall University School Psychology
Program

10:15 – 11:15 am, Salons F & G

Navigating the employment landscape: Best practices for hiring and supporting autistic adults

Rebecca Hansen, Ed.D, Executive Director,
Reaching Spectrum Heights, LLC

Bianca Hynes, M.A., Mental Health
Counseling, Reaching Spectrum Heights, LLC

**10:30 am – 11:30 am,
Ballroom (Salons D & E)**

Ethical advocacy in social work: Championing the rights of individuals with disabilities

Roger Shawn Allen, DSW, MSW, LCSW,
Associate Professor of Social Work
Concord University, Department of Social
Work and Sociology

11:15 am – 12:15 pm, Salons A, B & C

Speech and applied behavior analysis (ABA)

Angela Wood, BCBA, Executive Director,
Augusta Levy Learning Center

Tracy Wood, CCC-SLP, Contract Speech and
Language Pathologist, West Virginia Birth to
Three

11:30 am – 12:30 pm, Wharf A & B

TBI lived experience panel

Jennifer Buzzard & Roger Mitter

11:30 am – 12:30 pm, Salons F & G

TBI caregiver panel

Belinda Shawver & Louise Lansberry

**1:45 pm – 2:45 pm,
Ballroom (Salons D & E)**

The ins and outs of behavioral health client rights

Tammy M. Ketchem, Community Advocate;

Nancy Fry, Behavioral Health Advocate, Legal
Aid of WV

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm, Salons A, B & C

Supported decision making and other alternatives to guardianship

Katie Arbaugh, Program Operations

Coordinator, WV Developmental Disabilities
Council

1:45 pm – 3:45 pm, Wharf A & B

LUNCH

Navigating disability policy and systems in West Virginia

Lesley Cottrell, PhD, Director, WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities

Susan Given, Executive Director, Disability Rights WV

Tina Wiseman, Executive Director, WV Developmental Disabilities Council

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm, Ballroom (Salons D & E)

This panel will introduce participants to the disability network across West Virginia—who the key organizations are, what they do, when and where services are available, and how they connect with individuals and families. Following this overview, the session will highlight key disability policy issues and funding changes in the United States that directly impact West Virginians. Panelists will share insights, and participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss how these shifts affect their communities.

Using behavioral skills training to teach de-escalation routines to young children

Nicole Shepherd, EdD, BCBA, Behavior

Specialist and Alternative Education

Coordinator **Erika Wick**, Registered Behavior

Technician; **Brianna Hutchison**, Registered

Behavior Technician; **Ashley Whitlatch**,

Registered Behavior Technician Ohio County

Schools

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm, Salons F & G

Arts-based practices for increased health and well-being

Gretchen Durst, MFA, LEND Fellow

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm,

Ballroom (Salons D & E)

EPSDT advocacy: Helping children obtain early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment services

Nick Ward, JD, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Salons A, B & C

Healing in the wild: Ecotherapy for brain healing

Adrienne Epley-Brown, LPC, ALPS;

Shannon Waliser MSW, MPA, LICSW

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Salons F & G

WVABLE savings: empowering individuals with disabilities to live more independently

Roxanne Clay, WVABLE Director, WV State
Treasurers Office

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Wharf A & B

Beyond the diagnosis: Navigating TBI through a social work lens

Angela Morales, LSW, CBIS; **Cortney Pride**, LSW;

Delena Arthur, MSW, LGSW, CBIS;

Sharlene Liberto, LSW, WV Traumatic Brain Injury Services, WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities

4:15 pm – 5:15 pm, Salons A, B & C

Planting SEEDS: Supporting mental health outside of therapy

Matthew Zakreski, PsyD, Co-Founder and Chief Psychologist The Neurology Collective

4:15 pm – 6:15 pm, Salons F & G

EVENING OF CONNECTIONS RECEPTION

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Poster session

5:30 pm-6:30 pm

Sensory kit activity (while supplies last)

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Ballroom (Salons D & E)

An Evening of Connections invites attendees to engage in meaningful conversations, explore innovative ideas, and build relationships with peers, professionals, and advocates across the disability and healthcare communities.

This dynamic networking session will showcase a wide range of thought-provoking topics through interactive poster presentations and discussions. From caregiver entrepreneurship and inclusive childcare practices to sensory-friendly therapeutic innovations and the psychosocial impact of peer-based Jiu-Jitsu programs, there will be something new and intriguing to explore. Attendees can explore the lived experiences of caregivers, delve into issues such as executive function and screen time, the impact of environment on ABA therapy, disability awareness in first responder education, and more.

As part of the evening, participants are also encouraged to engage in the Sensory Kit Activity, designed to help individuals manage sensory triggers and feel calm in stressful situations. The items and resources in this kit help with self-regulation, so individuals can feel more comfortable. IMPACT WV is committed to ensuring all individuals have access to tools that promote a safe, supportive and accommodating space.

Whether you're a researcher, service provider, student, self-advocate, or caregiver, *An Evening of Connections* offers a welcoming space to share, learn, and connect beyond the traditional conference setting.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2025**Disability and creative movement: An inclusive arts workshop****Megan Colaiani**, All Abilities Dance**9:00 am – 11:00 am,****Ballroom (Salons D & E)****Uniting pathways: Education, social skills, and behavioral interventions to empower individuals with disabilities****Melanie Gainer**, MS, Preschool Supervisor, Ohio Valley Educational Service Center's Bright Beginnings program**9:00 am – 10:00 am, Salons A, B & C****Finding your voice: Advocacy skills for parents and caregivers****Jenna Wallace**, PsyD; Co-Owner, Unlocked Potential, PLLC, **Claire Baniak**, PsyD;**Ranzi Stacy; Jacie Sencindiver;****Stacey Quinlan**, MS**9:00 am – 11:00 am, Salons F & G****They just WON'T DO IT: How to help your kid get unstuck****Matthew Zakreski** PsyD, Co-Founder and Chief Psychologist, The Neurology Collective**10:00 am – 12:00 pm, Salons A, B & C****Person-centered trauma informed care****Andi Fetzner**, PsyD and **Lori Chellis**, MBA/MPH, **Kathryne Smith**, BA, LSW**Katherine Smith**, Acentra Health**10:15 am – 11:15 am, Wharf A & B****Characteristics and management of adult hearing loss****Kenneth Morse**, Au.D., PhD, Clinical Audiologist, Assistant Professor, Division of Communication Sciences and Disorders, West Virginia University School of Medicine**Leah Morse**, Au.D./CCC-A, Clinical Audiologist, Assistant Professor, West Virginia University**11:15 am – 12:15 pm,**
Ballroom (Salons D & E)**Establishing an IEP and 504 Plan****Dr. Stephanie Ferimer MD**, Assistant Professor, **Dr. Mary Louise Russell MD**, Assistant Professor, Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine.**Courtney Cook**, School Intervention Specialist, WVU Medicine Children's**11:30 am – 12:30 pm, Wharf A & B**

LUNCH

COMING HOME



Before and After Deinstitutionalization in West Virginia

Coming Home documentary screening and discussion

Tina Wiseman, Executive Director, WV Developmental Disabilities Council

**12:30 pm – 2:00 pm, Ballroom
(Salons D & E)**

This workshop includes a discussion about the On the Outside project, WV's institutional history, the deinstitutionalization efforts of Developmental Disabilities Councils, and a screening of the Coming Home documentary. Coming Home is a 35-minute documentary about WV's history of institutions, deinstitutionalization, and the shift towards community-based support for people with disabilities. A post-screening discussion will happen at the end of the session.

The sensitive sensory profile

Alisha Grogan, MOT, OTR/L, Owner and Author, Your Kid's Table.

Charlotte Sue Workman, BS, CCRP, Program Manager, IMPACT WV, WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities

11:15 am – 12:30 pm, Salons F & G

Abilities in action: Inclusive volunteering for all

Jenny Keener, Volunteer Media

Communication Outreach Coordinator, Heart + Hand Outreach Ministries

2:15 pm – 3:15 pm, Salons A, B & C

Parenting styles and temperament

Amy Burt, EdD, MOT, OTR/L, Occupational Therapist, WVU CED

2:15 pm – 3:45 pm, Wharf A & B

The child's contributions to their developmental process

Mindy May, Jayne Singer & Lesley Cottrell, PhD. **Charlotte Sue Workman**, BS, CCRP, Program Manager, IMPACT WV, WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities

2:15 pm – 4:15 pm, Salons F & G

Navigating medical transitions from pediatrics to adulthood

Melina Danko, MS, Principal Investigator, WV Family to Family Health Information Center and Paths for Parents Program, WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities

**3:30 pm – 4:30 pm,
Ballroom (Salons D & E)**

Early Warning Signs in Congenital Diseases: Diagnostic Work-up & Interventions

Dr. Mary Louise Russell MD, Assistant Professor, **Dr. Stephanie Ferimer MD**, Assistant Professor Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine; **Dr. Elizabeth McQuade**, Director and Founder of WVU Medicine Children's Cerebral Palsy Multidisciplinary Clinic, Assistant Professor, Pediatric Neurology & Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm, Salons A, B & C

Cocktail event: Meet the WVU Medicine Children's Panelists:

Ask questions related to presentations/ discussions for further information.

4:30 pm - 7:00 pm

