



Exploring Core Competencies for Information and Assistance (I&A) Professionals in Self-Direction

Summary of a webinar from October 4, 2022

Introduction

This webinar is about how Information and Assistance (I&A) is very important in self-direction. An I&A professional helps someone who is self-directing be successful. Self-direction means “everyone has the right to make meaningful decisions about their life and their future”.

States call I&A professionals by many different names. These are some names states call I&A professionals:

1. Support Brokers
2. Service Coordinators
3. Case Managers

I&A professionals are different than traditional case managers. I&A professionals help people develop problem solving skills. Case managers might take over and solve the problem instead.

Personal Stories

Panelists shared their personal stories.

Molly thinks everyone who needs long-term services should have the option to self-direct. She says states need strong I&A systems to grow self-direction. Molly says that people may not self-direct if they don't have the supports to get started.

Erica self-directs her own care. She was also an I&A professional for 8 years. Erica says an I&A professional “...needs to believe in true person centeredness. That the participant is #1. The participant knows best and is the true expert in their own lives.”

Nate lives in Ohio. He uses a traditional waiver. Nate worked with his case manager to have a more self-directed relationship. Nate likes to directly hire, train, and supervise all the providers he works with. Nate focuses on long term relationships. He likes to bring out his provider's strengths.



Pat was pretty overwhelmed when she got sick. Suddenly Pat needed services. It took her a while to adapt to her new lifestyle, but now she has a wonderful life. Pat's favorite thing about her current I&A professional is that she listens to Pat. She helps translate Pat's needs into service language.

The speakers on this webinar were:



Molly Morris is the Director of Engagement at Applied Self-Direction, where she works with states, participants, and provider organizations to create and enhance self-direction programs. Molly manages relationships with myriad disability advocacy organizations to inform and guide Applied Self-Direction's work. She also leads policy analysis related to the implementation of Electronic Visit Verification in self-directed services.



Erica Andres is a Senior Training Consultant at Applied Self-Direction. Erica has 25 years of experience in the Health and Human Services field. Erica also has Spinal Muscular Atrophy and lives a self-directed life and has directed her own care for over 20 years. Erica also owns a business called Empowering U. Erica is a Support Broker and is dedicated to helping Disabled People self-direct and make the most out of their lives.



Nathan Turner has spent more than 15 years advocating for people living with disabilities in Ohio while navigating an array of Medicaid OR self-directed supports. He is deeply passionate about creating leadership opportunities for underserved communities and shares his lived experiences through membership with several organizations including a project enhancing self-direction in Ohio with Self Advocates Becoming Empowered.



Pat Wright is a teacher who started self-directing in 2007. She assisted with County trainings, organizing the State Council and then became a National Advocate for the National Resource Center for Participant Direction (now Applied Self-Direction). She joined ISPS (International Society for Psychological Treatment of Psychoses), following her son's hospitalization/diagnosis in 2009. She organized a Family Network creating presentations for a yearly conference. She serves two Minnesota state committees: the NCAPPS Self-Direction Learning Collaborative and the Waiver Reimagined Advisory Committee. She believes that disability is a human rights issue.