



# Opening the Door: Importance of Great Person-Centered Conversations on Employment

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Summary of a webinar from October 19, 2022

## Introduction

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

It is a time to celebrate workers with disabilities. This webinar is on why it is important to talk about person-centered employment. A person-centered conversation is when a person and their loved ones lead the conversation. As part of this, they make their own decisions.

Employment is valuable in people's lives because:

1. It is a path to opportunities
2. It connects people
3. It allows people to be part of their community
4. It allows people to earn money

## Panelist Stories

Lisa talked about her son Brandon's employment journey.

Brandon had 2 jobs before he found a job he liked. It took a long time. Brandon and his team worked together and found a job he liked working in a movie theater.

Corrinne was part of Brandon's team. She helped match Brandon's strengths and interests to find his job. Brandon's experience taught Corrinne,

"Everyone has passion and interests. Let's think outside the box and take those interests with a person-centered approach and create employment opportunities."

TeMerra, Lisa, and Bryn work for the state of Utah. Bryn and TeMerra talked about tools they made to help people have great person-centered conversations on employment. TeMerra talked about how person-centered planning tools are for everyone to use. Lisa used person-centered planning tools to make sure her job with the state of Utah fit her idea of a good life.



Speakers on the webinar were:



**Amy Huppi** is the Program Coordinator for the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), within the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Amy has worked in various direct care and management roles and in state government over the last ten years. Her current work focuses on supporting case managers to develop competencies in the employment process and developing resources and opportunities for state employment leaders to learn promising practices in employment supports.



**Bryn Peterson** started over 10 years ago as an employment specialist supporting independent living and job training. Continued opportunities for growth and learning have led to Customized Employment training, multiple Employment First efforts including direct work with the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), a master's degree in Public Administration, and most recently as an Ambassador with Charting the LifeCourse.



**Lisa Wade's** advocacy on disability issues began more than 20 years ago when her youngest child was diagnosed with autism. Since then, she has served on committees and with organizations on many disability issues. For three years she worked at the Utah Parent Center as a Person-Centered Planning Consultant. She recently began working for Utah's developmental disabilities agency on the Employment, Planning, and Inclusion team. She is a Charting the LifeCourse Ambassador.



**TeMerra Blackwater** is an Employment and Community Inclusion Program Specialist for Utah's Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD). Her career began by providing direct support to families and children in mental health services. Currently, she focuses on improving employment and community inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities by partnering with community agencies in project development, strategic planning, training and committee workgroups to implement person-centered practices. She is a Charting the Life Course Ambassador.



**Corrine Frazier** is contracted with the Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities to provide case management services and is the Executive Director for Synergy Case Management. Corrine is committed to assisting special needs participants and their families in Home and Community Medicaid Waiver programs. Corrine has worked in the Social Work field for over 20 years. She holds a degree in Psychology with a minor in Spanish and a Social Worker Service License.