

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (HDI) UNIVERSITY LECTURE SERIES 2025-2026

We welcome inquiries from faculty for lectures from the topics included here, to bring greater understanding of disabilities across our campus. Each session is one hour, unless indicated otherwise. Sessions can be delivered face-to-face, via Zoom, or via recorded Zoom. Topics include Foundational Lectures on Disability, Employment and Community Living, Children with Disabilities and Their Families, Advocacy, Health, Assistive Technology and Universal Design, and State Policy Regarding Persons with Disabilities. Contact rachel.womack@uky.edu to reserve a speaker.

FOUNDATIONAL LECTURES**1. History of Disability Legislation in America**

This lecture will provide a chronological overview of the 100-year history of disability legislation in America that led to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and beyond. From forced sterilization to the independent living movement, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the ADA and the most recent Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), learn about the people who were the catalyst of systematic change for people with disabilities and the disability rights movement. We will explore case law that continues to shape the reach of the ADA even today.

Jason Jones

2. Disability Resources in Kentucky

This lecture provides an overview of the Kentucky Disability Resource Manual and online searchable Kentucky Disability Guide regarding services and supports available to people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. We provide information about how people with disabilities and family members can save money and still receive needed services, including information about STABLE Kentucky (<https://www.stablekentucky.com/>) and Life Plan of Kentucky, Inc. (<https://lifeplanofky.org/>). ***Walt Bower, Johnny Collett, Carolyn Wheeler***

3. Disability in Kentucky

This lecture includes a snapshot of disability statistics for Kentucky, an overview of legislation and services about education, employment and independent living for people with disabilities.

Johnny Collett and Carolyn Wheeler

4. Getting Comfortable with Disability

Are you afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing when interacting with a person with a disability? Do you avoid those interactions because of that fear? Are you missing out on a huge part of the population that could be customers, employees, resources ... friends? Explore the attitudinal barriers faced by people with disabilities in all aspects of life. Hear real life stories that offer examples for each barrier. Join in discussion around etiquette and myths around a variety of disabilities. ***Jason Jones, Christina Espinosa***

5. Transitions to Higher Education and Employment (1 or 2 hours)

Transition to postsecondary life represents a critical passage for youth with disabilities. Moving from a system of educational services as an entitlement to adult services based on eligibility can be difficult to navigate as students with disabilities pursue success in higher education and the workplace. Kentucky provides an array of supports and resources focused on facilitating successful transition and improving postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. ***Johnny Collett***

EMPLOYMENT & COMMUNITY LIVING**6. The Principles of Universal Design and Independent Living**

Foundational to the basic rights of people with disabilities in society, regardless of their level of disability, is an understanding of and commitment to the principles of universal design and independent living. A fully accessible environment is the foundation for independent living. Discussion will focus on resources and Centers for Independent Living. ***Johnny Collett, Jason Jones, Christina Espinosa***

7. Stay at Work/Return to Work (SAW/RTW)

Millions of workers in the United States leave the workforce each year after experiencing an injury or an illness. This can result in detrimental outcomes to displaced employees, employers, and the economy. Stay at Work/Return to Work (SAW/ RTW) strategies provide customized intervention and support to help workers stay connected to the workforce and reduce their need for long-term Federal disability benefits. This lecture will provide an overview of national SAW/ RTW policy and efforts here in KY. ***Kathy Sheppard Jones***

8. Medicaid Waiver Redesign and Its Impact on Employment First

This lecture provides a brief description of Medicaid waivers and the role they can play in helping people with significant disabilities move toward independence. Topics include: What is a waiver? Why did waivers become popular? Average cost of community services vs. facility services; Kentucky's waiver menu; Supported Employment vs. Day Training; Design Challenges; Rate Structure Challenges; and Kentucky's Employment First policy. ***Jeff White***

9. What is Next: Looking Toward Adulthood and Beyond for Persons with Disabilities

This lecture is designed to help learners understand the relationship between the benefits a person receives and their ultimate ability to live as independently as possible, with particular attention paid to the transition from child to adult status. We will work through the three subgroups within the transition age population: Students 14 to 17 years of age, students who are close to their 18th birthday, and students over age 18. As we do this, we will pay close attention to the important topics for each group to move toward independence and maintain eligibility, as well as prepare for future challenges. *Jeff White*

10. Unscrambling Myths: The Truth about Work, Wages, and Waivers for Persons with Disabilities

This lecture addresses the true impact of wages on benefits and patient liability. This presentation includes a comparison between benefit streams, an analysis of pass-through and how it can benefit recipients, a discussion of programs that help pay medical expenses, an analysis of substantial gainful activity and SSDI work incentives, real life examples of the impact of wages on SSI, a discussion of SSI work incentives, an examination of resource management strategies, examples of the management of patient liability, and a discussion of reporting requirements. *Jeff White*

11. The Impact of Employment on Social Security Disability Benefits – How Working and Benefits Work Together

Did you know a person over the age of 18 could earn \$1200/month (gross) and still maintain eligibility for a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) cash payment? Did you know a person eligible for SSI and Medicaid can earn over \$30,000/year and still be eligible for Medicaid? This presentation provides information on what Social Security says when a person who receives SSI or SSDI goes to work. Resources are provided which can be used by the person receiving the benefit, family members, employment services providers and employers, as well as information about how people can save without jeopardizing eligibility for other publicly funded benefits. *Carolyn Wheeler*

12. Creating A Safe and Secure Future - Supporting People with Disabilities and Their Allies to Plan for the Future

Since over 70% of North Americans die without a will, it is no surprise that people with disabilities and their family members, supporters, and legal representatives have not made plans for what happens when one of these key people in the person's life dies. This can create a crisis and often negative life experiences for the person with a disability. This lecture proposes four questions that need to be addressed as well as resources for people to use to act on this important topic. *Carolyn Wheeler*

13. Financial Planning Tools for People with Disabilities Who Receive Social Security Disability Benefits and Their Family Members

Most people who receive Social Security Disability Benefits are under the misconception they cannot save for the future. This is not TRUE!! STABLE Kentucky is Kentucky's ABLE (Achieving A Better Life Experience) program which allows a person whose disability occurred before the

age of 26, their family member and friends to save up to \$15,000/year without jeopardizing the person's Supplemental Security Income eligibility or Medicaid eligibility. Supplemental and Special Needs Trusts allow for more funds to be saved and used for supplemental needs. This lecture will provide an overview of these tools as well as provide resource information.

Carolyn Wheeler

14. Supported Decision Making

Supported decision making is a way to describe how we all make decisions. It means that people turn to trusted friends, family members, and professionals to help them make decisions, both large and small. Supported decision making can be used as an alternative to legal guardianship but can also be used in any person's life. ***Laura Butler, Camille Collins-Dean***

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

15. Early Childhood: Learn the Signs. Act Early

This lecture provides an overview of the Center for Disease Control's "Learn the Signs. Act Early" campaign, which addresses the early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so that children and families can access the services and support they need. ***Christine Hausman***

16. Parenting a Child with a Disability

This lecture focuses on the experiences of parenting a child with Down Syndrome from the moment of diagnosis to the first day on the job as an adult. We identify important milestones including, but not limited to, rebuilding dreams after diagnosis, developmental milestones through early intervention, preparing for school, cultivating healthy sibling relationships, promoting community and school inclusion, and preparing for employment. ***Jason Jones***

ADVOCACY

17. Self-Advocacy Panel

Disability self-advocates will provide an overview of self-advocacy, including the history of self-advocate movements created by people with intellectual disabilities. The presenters will discuss past and current uses of the term "self-advocate" and will describe a variety of activities that can fall under the umbrella term. The presenters will discuss their experience with forming and leading a self-advocacy group for autistic adults and youth and will offer suggestions for others interested in joining or forming a group. ***Bev Harp, Autistics United KY (AUK) and Kentuckiana Autistic Spectrum Alliance (KASA) Members***

18. Community Engagement

This lecture will share opportunities to collaborate with community partners, and will include discussion related to identifying community stakeholders, successful relationship building within the community, staff necessary to carry out the mission of the organization, and lessons learned from developing community partnerships with agencies that are serving children and adults with disabilities and their families. ***Walt Bower***

19. Allyship

Anyone can be an ally to people with disabilities; the fundamental tools required are thoughtful listening and a willingness to step back and let disabled people lead. This training is designed for professionals, family members, direct support workers, and anyone else who would like to learn how to better support people with disabilities. The presenters will discuss the meaning of allyship and its importance to people with disabilities and will offer a wide range of interactive scenarios for evaluating efforts and improving allyship skills. **Bev Harp, Tony Lobianco**

20. Unconferencing: An Innovative Way to Support Conversations About Disability

Since 2012, HDI has been instrumental in bringing participant-driven meetings, called unconferences, to Kentucky residents with disabilities, their family members, and support workers. The unconference format is inherently democratic, providing a space where disabled voices are respected as experts on disability. Learn more about unconferences and how they work, including examples of recent HDI-sponsored unconferences. **Bev Harp, Laura Butler**

21. Autistic Self-Advocacy in Kentucky

Did you know that Kentucky has two self-advocacy groups by and for autistic people? Autistics United Kentucky (AUK) and Kentuckiana Autistic Spectrum Alliance (KASA) engage in advocacy, social justice efforts, and community events, promoting the rights of all autistic people. We also have a lot of fun! Learn about some of our past, present, and future projects. **Bev Harp, AUK and KASA members**

HEALTH**22. Health & Wellness**

Individuals with disabilities are 3 times more likely to experience heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. Kentucky is one of the highest ranked states with a disability rate of 35%. This lecture provides an overview of the health disparities experienced by people with disabilities, along with providing insight on strategies for improving health through education, empowerment, and cultural competency. **Lindsey Mullis, Morgan Turner**

23. Rural Rehabilitation and Access to Health Care

Challenges in rural health care include lack of physical access to facilities, lack of special equipment, and lack of healthcare provider knowledge in working with individuals with complex health needs. Because of these factors, many individuals travel long distances for their healthcare or wait until problems that may have been easily treated worsen and they seek treatment in local Emergency Departments. These and other healthcare disparities not only influence a person's quality of life, but also lead to an increased healthcare cost. This lecture will provide an overview of these healthcare disparities, with a particular focus on rural healthcare, and will include discussion of potential solutions, including results of rural healthcare accessibility surveys in Kentucky. **Christina Espinosa, Jason Jones**

24. Health Care Access Dialogue

Informative interview regarding cancer care for persons with disabilities, developed in collaboration with Human Development Institute and Markey Cancer Center staff. The nature of disparities in medical care for adults with disabilities is introduced. Information includes lived experience from adults with disabilities, such as helpful attitudes from medical staff, positive approaches to medical care, patient transfer, and access to medical facilities. The information presented applies to many interactions between medical staff and persons with disabilities. This session can be presented live, or viewed via recording at

<https://www.wellness4ky.org/project-cheer-partners-with-markey-cancer-center-to-create-disability-awareness-webinar/> **Morgan Turner, Jason Jones, Lindsey Mullis**

25. Universal Design in Health

Universal Design encompasses principles and strategies that help all individuals have an equal opportunity to succeed, which is a strategy that allows full access to all persons for programs and services. Learn why it is important to include universal design in health promotion and programming, and gain insight in how to include strategies that will assist in reaching the widest possible range of participants. The presentation provides examples of incorporating universal design in health promotion including messaging, print materials, and program activities. **Lindsey Mullis, Morgan Turner, Austin Nugent**

26. Adaptive Wellness Resources and Activities

Recreation refreshes, revitalizes, and improves a person's quality of life. Learn about Kentucky's Recreation Resource Guide and other resources around our state such as state parks, adaptive recreation programming, sports clubs and teams as well as inclusive activities that can be done anywhere. **Lindsey Mullis, Morgan Turner**

27. Sexuality & Disability

Sexual health and healthy relationships for individuals with disabilities are often overlooked and undervalued. This presentation provides insight and resources on these topics for educators, health providers, and caregivers. Participants will learn more about the importance of safe and healthy relationships, including sexual health, for people with disabilities. This presentation can be focused on intellectual and developmental disability or physical disability. **Lindsey Mullis, Jason Jones**

28. Physical Activity Measures

Physical activity is beneficial for everyone, but it is especially important for individuals with disabilities, who experience obesity and high blood pressure at significantly higher rates than the general population. This lecture will focus on the importance of inclusion of individuals with disabilities in physical activity and discuss considerations for assessment measures of physical activity and fitness levels. Adaptive equipment and alternative methods for measuring activity will be included. **Lindsey Mullis, Morgan Turner, Jon Drummond**

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

29. Assistive Technology

This session will explain assistive technology (AT) terminology and practice. We'll discuss categories of AT, and how it can be applied to promote greater independence across the life span. We'll examine AT's usefulness for independent living, employment, community participation, and education. ***Christina Espinosa, Jason Jones***

30. Universal Design: Creating Utopia Starts with a Plan

Universal Design is creating spaces, products and policies that are usable by the greatest amount of people, and benefit everyone, which results in a reduced need for modifications and accommodations. Universal design principles can build environments that are accessible to the broadest array of users. Learn about strategies that maximize usability in physical and virtual environments. We'll examine a variety of applications of universal design in the workplace, community, and classroom. ***Christina Espinosa***

31. Disability Awareness & Universal Design: Supporting All Students

This presentation explores barriers faced by people with disabilities in various aspects of life including real life stories. Discussion and activities will consider how Universal Design principles promote accessibility to the broadest array of users, including discussion around etiquette and myths related to a variety of disabilities. Learn about strategies that maximize usability in policy, program, physical and virtual environments. Objectives include understand barriers experienced by individuals with disabilities; list reasons why universal design supports all students; describe the relationship between accessibility and universal design; evaluate a document and make recommendations for how the document can be made more accessible; produce a handout/document free of accessibility errors. ***Lindsey Mullis, Johnny Collett, Christina Espinosa, Jason Jones, Patti Singleton***

32. Design and Development of Problem-Based Online Learning

Online learning has become a mainstay in early care and education professional development. This session is for trainers or faculty interested in developing online training, or for anyone who is training online and would like to make content interactive, engaging, and universally designed. Two stages of development will be discussed, as well as turning problems into online learning solutions. Questions and answers will be addressed in real time with the use of participants' smart phone, tablet, or computer. ***Patti Singleton***

33. HDI Research and Educational Opportunities for UK Students

This lecture will explain the interdisciplinary training aspect of the HDI's Graduate Certificate in Developmental Disabilities, the Undergraduate Certificate in Universal Design, and the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program, as more on-campus students become involved with HDI projects. The lecture will discuss research opportunities available for students to engage with HDI projects, practicum opportunities available for students, and HDI's family mentor program as a valuable training opportunity for students to learn first-hand from the family's perspective. ***Johnny Collett, Walt Bower, Rachel Womack***

STATE POLICY REGARDING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

34. Employment First Kentucky

Pursuant to [Kentucky Revised Statutes 151B.211-214](#), “is the General Assembly finds and declares that it is the policy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky that competitive integrated employment shall be considered the first and primary option for persons with disabilities of working age who desire to become employed.” This policy is intended to increase meaningful opportunities for competitive integrated employment for citizens with disabilities seeking employment, regardless of their level of disability. Participants will learn more about employment first policy in Kentucky and the nation, as well as HDI and partner efforts related to supported and customized employment. As Kentucky’s employment first policy includes all persons with disabilities, including students and persons with significant disabilities of working age who desire to become employed, discussion will also include how this policy should inform the development and implementation of program plans and services for both adults and youth with disabilities.

Johnny Collett, Katie Wolf Whaley

35. Inclusivity after Graduate School: Strategies for Career Success for UK Students with Disabilities

This lecture will discuss career opportunities for UK students with disabilities; key provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act that mandate inclusive employment policies and practices; reasonable accommodations as a key ingredient of career success; and will describe a 9-step process to guide students’ journey from graduate school to a meaningful and rewarding career.

Johnny Collett

36. Principles to Advance Ideas for Improvement Within a System

Those who are closest to the work know the most about it. Often, they have great ideas related to improvement. At the same time, these individuals are often not in a position to compel actions they believe can improve processes and results. Some of the best ideas for improvement and innovation may never see the light of day. This is partly because individuals within the system may not be well-equipped to advance those ideas. Let’s face it, advancing ideas for improvement or innovation is hard, no matter who you are. Join this discussion to learn principles that individuals and teams can use to advance ideas for improvement or innovation within their systems. ***Johnny W. Collett***

37. The Olmstead Decision and Why It Matters

On June 22, 1999, the US Supreme Court held in *Olmstead v. L.C.* (Olmstead) that unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities constitutes discrimination in violation of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This session will provide an overview of Olmstead, including Kentucky’s Olmstead Compliance Plan. Participants will learn how Kentucky’s plan reflects the needs of both those providing and receiving community services and how it aims to advance our commitment to choice and access to community-based services, long-term care options, housing, and competitive integrated employment. ***Johnny Collett, Elizabeth Kries***