

2025 OPRA Annual Conference Speaker & Session Information						
Day, Time & Track	Session # & Title	Session Description	Speaker First Name	Speaker Last Name	Job Title	Organization
Thurs., 10/23 9:15am - 10:00am Keynote Address	Keynote Session Embrace the Challenge: Finding Purpose, Power, and Partnership	<p>From a young age, Zach Anner understood the power of humor to connect, educate, and inspire. In this engaging and uplifting talk, Zach shares his journey of turning perceived limitations into powerful tools for connection and growth. With stories ranging from making Oprah laugh during a life-changing opportunity to being literally carried up a mountain by friends, Zach explores what it means to embrace challenges, find purpose, and build meaningful, empowering relationships. His message is clear: success isn’t about overcoming adversity alone—it’s about recognizing the strength in collaboration and the joy in celebrating who we are. With wit, heart, and honesty, Zach inspires audiences to rethink how they define success, resilience, and community.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand how embracing personal challenges can lead to greater authenticity, purpose, and growth in both personal and professional life.2. Recognize the power of humor and storytelling as tools for connection, education, and empowerment.3. Explore the value of interdependence and how strong relationships contribute to mutual success and resilience.4. Learn strategies to shift from a mindset of “overcoming” to one of leveraging unique experiences and perspectives as strengths.	Zach	Anner	Professional Speaker	Zach Anner
Thurs., 10/23 10:15am - 11:15am	Giv. Sponsored Session 1 How Leveraging Data is Transforming Industries, Innovation, and Everyday Life	<p>We live in a world where data is generated every second—from our phones, businesses, cars, even our coffee makers. But raw data alone isn’t enough. It’s the insight we draw from it and how we act on that insight that’s driving profound change across the globe. We’ll explore how data is reshaping our future—and why those who harness it effectively will lead the way.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn to identify common sources of data in everyday life and explain the scale and scope of modern data generation.2. Learn to explain the difference between raw data and actionable insights, and why the latter is essential for informed decision-making.3. Learn real-world examples of how data-driven insights are transforming industries, societies, and global trends.4. Learn to understand why the ability to effectively interpret and act on data is a key driver of innovation and leadership in the modern world.	Danny	Laneri	VP Business Development	Giv.
			Alec	Fowler	Senior Director of Business Development	Giv.
Thurs., 10/23 10:15am - 11:15am	Gladegy Sponsored Session 2 Stop the Spin: Coaching to Transform Turnover into Tenure	<p>Turnover does not have to be the norm in IDD organizations. Imagine if your staff felt supported, valued, and equipped to grow in their roles. Coaching can make that vision a reality. When organizations invest in coaching, they create stronger teams, higher engagement, and a culture that keeps great employees from walking out the door. This interactive session will walk you through the four steps to building a sustainable in-house coaching program that stops the spin of disruptive turnover. We will also look at real cases that show how professional coaching can be applied in practice. You will leave with practical tools you can put into action right away, as well as a clear roadmap for embedding coaching into your organization in a way that strengthens both your people and your mission.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify the key factors contributing to turnover in IDD organizations and how coaching can effectively address them.2. Understand the four essential steps to building a sustainable in-house coaching program.3. Analyze real-world case studies demonstrating the impact of professional coaching in IDD settings.4. Develop a personalized action plan for implementing coaching practices within their own organizations.	Stacy	Sufka	MPA, MAC, MBAn, LSSBB, ODCP	Gladegy Consulting, LLC

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Day, Time & Track	Session # & Title	Session Description	Speaker First Name	Speaker Last Name	Job Title	Organization
Thurs., 10/23 10:15am - 11:15am	THS Remote Support Services Sponsored Session 3 Future-Proofing In-Home Care: Leveraging Technology to Overcome Workforce Shortages	<p>The IDD community continues to face persistent staffing challenges, driven by upcoming cuts to Medicaid, declining birth rates, and an increasing number of workforce retirees. As budget cuts & the labor pool shrinks year after year, industries across the board have been compelled to adapt by leveraging technology to maintain productivity, enhance efficiency, and sustain growth. Remote Staffing has been a viable solution in the IDD field for over a decade. HPC providers have the opportunity to integrate this service into their staffing models at any time, with no direct cost to the provider. This session will provide HPC providers with a comprehensive understanding of Remote Support Staffing, including its operational framework, the provider’s role in implementation, associated costs, and the potential for strategic growth.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to learn:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Certification Process – Steps required to obtain certification for offering this service. 2. Service Authorization – Guidelines for authorizing and implementing the service. 3. Assessment Needs & Implementation – Evaluating service needs and effectively integrating remote staffing into residential settings. 4. Available Equipment – Overview of technology and tools used to support remote staffing. 5. Billing & Revenue Potential – Understanding the billing process and financial opportunities. 6. Business Growth Opportunities – Strategies for leveraging remote staffing to expand services. 7. Regulatory Compliance – Key rules and requirements for offering remote staffing services. 	David	Ilg	Director of Business Development	THS Remote Support Services
Thurs., 10/23 11:30am - 12:30pm Leadership Track	Breakout Session 1 Designing for Sustainability: Acuity-Based Rates, Selective Contracting, and the Future of HCBS	<p>As Ohio and other states consider reforms to their HCBS systems, providers must understand the policy tools that could shape the future of service delivery. This session, led by experts from Health Management Associates (HMA), will explore two key levers—acuity-based rates and selective contracting—and what they mean for providers.</p> <p>We'll examine how these tools can be used to promote predictability and sustainability, how they impact network capacity and provider choice, and what trade-offs they present. Most importantly, we’ll discuss what providers should be paying attention to as these models are designed: what questions to ask, what data to gather, and what advocacy opportunities exist to ensure these tools are implemented in ways that strengthen—not limit—access, equity, and quality. Whether you’re new to these concepts or looking to sharpen your strategy, this session will provide a valuable foundation for understanding and influencing how the HCBS system evolves.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gain a foundational understanding of acuity-based rates and selective contracting, including what they are intended to accomplish and how they impact provider networks and payment structures. 2. Explore practical considerations for providers as these tools are implemented, including sustainability, equity, and access. 3. Identify ways to influence design and implementation through data, strategic partnerships, and proactive policy engagement. 	Lilia	Teninty	Principal	Burns & Associates
Thurs., 10/23 11:30am - 12:30pm HR Track	Breakout Session 2 Giving Feedback With Confidence: Learn the Feedback Formula That Works	<p>Giving feedback is one of a leader’s most important responsibilities—but for many, it’s also one of the most uncomfortable. In I/DD services, where supervisors are constantly coaching performance and developing staff, vague or sugar-coated feedback often leads to repeated mistakes, resentment, or missed growth opportunities. The old “feedback sandwich” doesn’t work. This session introduces a more effective alternative: the S.E.A. model—State, Explain, Ask. Participants will learn a clear, repeatable structure for giving feedback that is respectful, direct, and actually leads to behavior change. We’ll explore common feedback pitfalls, practice with real scenarios, and give leaders language they can use right away to build trust, clarity, and accountability. Strong feedback skills help supervisors reduce friction, improve outcomes, and focus more of their energy on strategy rather than micromanagement.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize why traditional feedback methods (like the "feedback sandwich") often fall short. 2. Use the S.E.A. model to give clear, actionable, and respectful feedback. 3. Deliver both corrective and reinforcing feedback with confidence. 4. Improve team performance and morale through consistent, effective communication. 	Andrea	Applegate	President	Applegate Talent Strategies, LLC

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Thurs., 10/23 11:30am - 12:30pm ICF Track	Breakout Session 3 Strong Enough to Withstand the Storm: Training DSPs who Have to Do It All	<p>DSPs are called on to serve more and more complex individuals every year. When faced with challenging behaviors, they often wonder: is it trauma? Is it autism? Is it mental health? Is it “just a behavior?” To set up DSPs to succeed, we need to help them synthesize skills from multiple disciplines, so they can help the people they serve stay safe and thrive – while they are at the same time passing meds, cooking meals, promoting independence, and following policies & procedures. Training approaches that combine practical skills from the trauma, autism, and I/DD toolboxes (synthesized together for the realities of modern workforce pressures) can equip DSPs to avoid power struggles, and empower them to meet people's needs when emotions are running high.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss training models that are most likely to provide quick impact in high-turnover settings. 2. Reframe problematic behaviors from a perspective of safety, connection, control, and unmet needs. 3. Describe several different strategies to meet the communication, sensory, and emotional regulation needs of the people they support. 	Bradley	Wyner	Director of Education	Milestones Autism Resources
Thurs., 10/23 11:30am - 12:30pm Behavioral Health Track	Breakout Session 4 Bridging the Gap: Partnering Effectively with Mental and Behavioral Health Providers	<p>When individuals experience both mental health and developmental disabilities, it takes strong cross-system collaboration to ensure they get the support they need. But all too often, I/DD providers find themselves left out of planning conversations or unsure how to engage meaningfully with mental or behavioral health teams. This session will explore how I/DD providers can build strong partnerships with mental health professionals — even when the systems feel siloed. Presenters will share strategies for effective teaming, offering input when you're not formally invited, and communicating in ways that are clear, respectful, and helpful. Whether you're navigating a hospitalization, supporting someone in therapy, or trying to align plans across systems, this session will offer practical tools to build trust and work together toward better outcomes.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify common barriers to collaboration between I/DD and MH/BH systems — and strategies to overcome them. 2. Share relevant, person-centered information in ways that are helpful and welcomed by MH/BH providers. 3. Use proactive communication and teaming strategies to support integrated care and shared planning. 	Nathan	Henniger	Vice President of Programs	I Am Boundless
		Co-Speaker:	Lauri	Livingston-Roberts	Senior Director and Transformational Human Services Leader	I Am Boundless
Thurs., 10/23 1:30pm - 2:30pm Leadership Track	Breakout Session 5 Provider-Driven Innovation: New Models for Financing and Managing HCBS	<p>As states explore new approaches to managing long-term services and supports, provider-driven and provider-led models are emerging as powerful alternatives to traditional managed care. In this session, Shane Spotts of Deon Health and Mary Pat Ambrosino of Community Support Care Partners of Illinois (CSCP) will introduce a bold, provider-centered model being piloted in Illinois. Deon Health is a newly developed insurance entity designed to partner with states and providers to manage HCBS financing and oversight—without relying on commercial managed care organizations.</p> <p>Participants will gain insight into how this model is structured, what makes it different, and how it aims to align payment, performance, and person-centered outcomes. The conversation will also explore lessons learned, key policy considerations, and what providers should be thinking about as similar models are discussed—or proposed—in other states, including Ohio. This is a must-attend session for anyone interested in the future of Medicaid LTSS financing, especially in the context of managed care, risk-bearing entities, and system transformation.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn about Deon Health and CSCP’s partnership model as an innovative, provider-led alternative to commercial managed care for Medicaid HCBS. 2. Understand the policy and operational implications of creating provider-driven insurance and management entities, including opportunities and challenges. 3. Explore how providers can shape the future of HCBS financing and delivery by engaging in the design and governance of risk-bearing or care coordination models. 	Mary Pat	Ambrosino	Director of Policy, Advocacy and Advancement	CTF Illinois/DEON
		Co-Speaker:	Shane	Spotts	Founder & CEO	DEON Health

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Thurs., 10/23 1:30pm - 2:30pm HR Track	Breakout Session 6 Unshakeable: Inner Strength and Mental Agility for Leaders	<p>Leadership today often comes with a quiet cost ranging from long hours, high expectations, and the pressure to hold everything together, which can leave even the strongest leaders feeling isolated, overwhelmed, or burned out. This session offers a space to step back, reflect, and reconnect with yourself, your purpose, and your resilience. We’ll explore how the very traits that drive your success, dedication, responsibility, high standards, can sometimes become barriers to well-being and effectiveness. Blending John Maxwell’s leadership principles with practical tools from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Internal Family Systems (IFS), this session guides you through recognizing unhelpful internal narratives, resetting your emotional footing, and building a resilience plan that fits your leadership style.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize the hidden toll leadership can take and name the beliefs that fuel burnout. 2. Strengthen self-awareness through practical, reflective tools drawn from psychotherapy and leadership models. 3. Build a personalized resilience plan rooted in clarity, boundaries, and purpose. 	Shyam	Suchak	Chief Operations Officer, PHR, LPC, NCC	Anne Grady Services
Thurs., 10/23 1:30pm - 2:30pm ICF Track	Breakout Session 7 ICF Reimbursement Update & Benchmarking Trends	<p>Based on recent legislation surrounding House Bill 96 (HB96), we will discuss the ICF rate calculations for FY26 and implications for FY27 rates. Due to HB96 budget language, it will be crucial for providers to develop thoughtful strategies around spending that impacts the Direct Care Ceilings with the removal of the Professional Workforce Development add-on for FY27 rates. Additionally, we will walk through examples of the capital fair rental value calculations and provide scenarios to demonstrate opportunities for providers. We will also share various statewide and peer group benchmarks based on the 2024 cost reports.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the ICF rate calculation methodology and impact for FY26 & FY27 rates based on language included in House Bill 96. 2. Understand components of the ICF rate calculation including impact of ceilings, case-mix, inflation factors and efficiency opportunities. 3. Understand spending strategies to consider as it relates to FY27 rates and the rate setting process. 4. Become well-versed in benchmarking trends occurring at the state and peer group level. 	TJ	Ely	Senior Manager	Plante Moran, PLLC
		Co-Speaker:	Denise	Leonard	CPA, Partner	Plante Moran, PLLC
Thurs., 10/23 1:30pm - 2:30pm Behavioral Health Track	Breakout Session 8 Comprehensive Assessment for Complex Needs: Reducing Placement Disruptions through Meaningful Planning	<p>For individuals with co-occurring mental/behavioral health needs and developmental disabilities, the right placement is only the beginning. This session will explore how a robust, person-centered assessment process can reduce placement disruptions, improve outcomes, and ensure long-term success. Presenters will walk participants through the “assessment lifecycle” used by their organization — from referral and intake decision-making to comprehensive post-admission assessments that drive individualized planning and service delivery. Attendees will learn practical strategies for embedding assessment data into ISPs, including environmental, behavioral, trauma-informed, preference-based, and skills-based assessments. Resources, tools, and real-world examples will be shared to help teams translate assessment into action.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe a referral and placement decision-making process rooted in comprehensive assessment. 2. Identify essential assessment domains that inform individualized planning for people with co-occurring MI/DD. 3. Apply strategies to make assessment data meaningful by connecting it to goals, supports, and outcomes that matter to the individual. 	Ashleigh	Putney	Director of Supported Living	Lifeworks Autism Services
		Co-Speaker:	Allison	Hamrick	Clinical Director	Lifeworks Autism Services
		Co-Speaker:	Teresa	Kobelt	Chief Innovation Officer	Ohio Provider Resource Association

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Thurs., 10/23 2:45pm - 3:45pm Leadership Track	Breakout Session 9 The Walk Away Warrior Thriving While Surviving	<p>“The Walk Away Warrior” is an inspirational story of strength and resilience from life experiences of Julia Hage. For decades, her life was centered around prioritizing the happiness, safety, comfort, and well-being of others over herself. With her nervous system in overdrive, keeping her safe from manipulators and abusers, she stopped to assess. She faced a pivotal moment recognizing she was thriving in aspects of her life, while surviving in others, as she could not be a strong leader or public servant if she herself was lost. Prioritizing her well-being, she began to regain self-worth and power, becoming a Walk Away Warrior from situations that did not cultivate her wholehearted self. This session will guide the listener through a journey of exploration to gain deeper connection to their own discernment, moving toward a more purposeful, powerful way of living and leading, in turn becoming a Walk Away Warrior.</p> <p>Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a deeper understanding of unavoidable and chosen change, including addressing fear, grief, potential failure, enthusiasm, anxiety, and all the waves of emotion that come with internal and environmental change. 2. Harness the power of these emotions to support a stronger self-connection to empower change and live a more wholehearted life, in turn being a better support for those in your life and a stronger leader with deeper empathy and discernment. 3. Recognize change you can control, vs. change that is out of your control. Walking through steps of how to release control when the weight of the burden does not belong to you. 4. Have an assessment of self for what aspects of life to pour into that feed your best self, in contrast of what areas drain you that you should remove yourself from – in turn becoming a Walk Away Warrior, regaining your power and shifting the focusing to thriving. 	Julia	Hage	CEO & President, TheHageCo., LLC & Director of Mission Advancement Anne Grady Services	TheHageCo., LLC
Thurs., 10/23 2:45pm - 3:45pm HR Track	Breakout Session 10 Immigration and Employment Law Update	<p>In this session, attendees will hear from our legal partners at Vorys for an insightful session on what employers need to know about the changing environment of immigration law enforcement under the Trump administration. As many provider agencies employ staff with work authorization issued by the US Customs and Immigration Services, tracking the rapidly changing immigration legal landscape is crucial for lawfully continuing to employ these employees. In this session, Bob will build off of his April 2025 presentation to the OPRA HR Committee. While the session is listed in the HR track, the information should be helpful to agency administrators and other employees with staff oversight responsibilities.</p> <p>Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn a basic overview of immigration laws as they pertain to a noncitizens’ ability to maintain employment 2. Learn updates on work authorization based on temporary protected status (TPS) designations, humanitarian parole, and applications for asylum (and associated court cases) 3. Learn current issues relating to travel bans and visa issuance 4. Learn I-9 and E-Verify requirements, including E-Verify Status Change Reports 5. Learn possible immigration changes on the horizon 	Bob	Harris	Partner	Vorys, Sater, Seymour, and Pease, LLP
Thurs., 10/23 2:45pm - 3:45pm ICF Track	Breakout Session 11 How to Have Difficult Discussions and Productive Disagreements	<p>Conflict resolution and management is an essential skill of any leader. For an organization to grow and thrive, diverse opinions and thoughts must be welcomed and encouraged. These diverse opinions and thoughts will often result in conflict. Will this conflict propel your organization forward or bring it down?</p> <p>Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn tactics and methods that promote and support healthy and productive conflict. 2. Learn the DESC method (Describe, Express, Specify and Consequences) to hold someone accountable in under three minutes. 3. Learn how to be aware of your body language, tone and overall presence so you may cultivate “Cowboy Energy”. 4. Learn how to create effective communication expectations where your staff feels safe to say what is on their minds in a respectful manner, while recognizing that difficult discussions are an essential part of any healthy organization. 	Tom	Speaks	Partner and Co-Founder	The Impact Group

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Thurs., 10/23 2:45pm - 3:45pm Behavioral Health Track	Breakout Session 12 Crisis Intervention and De-escalation Strategies for People with Co-occurring MI/DD	Supporting individuals with co-occurring mental illness and developmental disabilities means being prepared for moments of crisis — and knowing how to prevent them. This session will focus on evidence-informed crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies designed to reduce risk, preserve dignity, and build long-term emotional safety. Presenters will share core principles and proactive techniques that help staff recognize early signs of escalation, respond with empathy and consistency, and reduce the likelihood of future crises. With an emphasis on relational safety, communication, and trauma-informed practice, this session will equip teams with practical tools to support people in moments of distress and recovery. Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Recognize early signs of emotional or behavioral escalation in individuals with co-occurring MI/DD. 2. Apply core strategies for safely de-escalating crisis situations while preserving dignity and safety. 3. Use trauma-informed, person-centered techniques to reduce future crises and build trust over time.	Jo	Smith	Director of Community Services	Lifeworks Autism Services
		Co-Speaker:	Victoria	Broxholm	MS, BCBA, COBA, Coordinator of ABA Services	Lifeworks Autism Services
		Co-Speaker:	Ashleigh	Watson	Asst Director of Supported Living	Lifeworks Autism Services
Thurs., 10/23 4:00pm - 5:00pm Legislative Update	Legislative Session Legislative & State Budget Updates	Ohio's current political climate can often feel overwhelming. In this session, Pete, Christine, and Anthony attempt to make sense of all the political noise. From understanding the discourse around property tax and budget vetoes, the upcoming Governor and Senate leadership race, and the impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on the state budget, we will go over all the hottest topics on Capital Square. Learning Objectives: 1. How fallout over Governor DeWine's budget vetoes are dominating discussions at the Statehouse 2. How the Governor and Senate leadership races are shaping up 3. How federal legislation is impacting the state budget and how the state is and isn't responding and what it could mean for providers	Anthony	Aquillo	Lobbyist	The Success Group
		Co-Speaker:	Peter	Moore	President & CEO	Ohio Provider Resource Association
		Co-Speaker:	Christine	Touvelle	Director of Advocacy	Ohio Provider Resource Association
Fri., 10/24 9:00am - 10:00am Day & Employment Services Track	Breakout Session 13 Empowered Expression: Reimagining Support Through Innovation and Art	Goodwill Work & Community Services has been dedicated to supporting adults with high behavioral and mental health needs for over 33 years. This session will explore the journey from 14C Subminimum wage to the present day, highlighting how structured risk-taking can enhance autonomy and self-esteem while ensuring safety. We will delve into the latest AI-driven tools that the program utilizes to teach individuals in innovative ways. Additionally, we will discuss how partnerships with other non-profits have opened up opportunities in the arts through singing, songwriting, drama, improv, and storytelling, fostering community engagement and self-expression. The session will also cover the creation of staff-directed learning pods that adapt to changes in the vocational habilitation and adult day system, providing person-centered experiences. Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Learn how the program transitioned from 14C work to mobile work crews and staff-directed learning pods. 2. Discover the benefits of using AI tools and other technology to teach individuals with high behavioral and mental health needs. 3. Understand how partnerships with other non-profits promote arts and community engagement.	Tiffany	Martin	Director Goodwill Columbus Work & Community Services	Goodwill Columbus

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Fri., 10/24 9:00am - 10:00am Healthcare Track	Breakout Session 14 The Autistic Brain and Pain	<p>Every time we are in pain, various parts of our brains light up as a nuero-biological response. These responses can be seen on different types of medical imaging, such as MRIs. However, for autistic people, the brain's response to pain often looks different than nuerotypcal brains. In this session, Dr. Michelle Failla, who has a PhD in neuroscience, will walk attendees through how pain shows up differently in brains using MRI scans . Dr. Failla will help attendees understand how these differences have real world implications for autistic people, their experience with pain, and how caregivers can better help autistic manage their pain.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:] By the end of this session, participants will learn:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How a neurotypical brain responds to pain and how this response is different for autistic people How these difference can lead to different outward displays of pain in autistic people How clinicians and caregivers can use this information to better understand with an autistic client is in pain and can better develop a pain management intervention 	Dr. Michelle	Failla, PhD	Assistant Professor	The Ohio State University’s College of Nursing
Fri., 10/24 9:00am - 10:00am Residential Waiver Track	Breakout Session 15 So You Think You Can HR? What Every Non-HR Leader Needs to Know	<p>HR is often seen as a behind-the-scenes function, but it plays a vital role in shaping organizational culture, retention, and employee success. This fast-paced and engaging session is designed for managers, supervisors, and team leads who work with HR teams but may not fully understand the scope and strategy behind the function. We will walk participants through the full employee lifecycle using a visual model that covers every stage from "Attract Me" to "Wish Me Farewell." Along the way, we will demystify what HR really does, why it matters, and how managers can effectively partner across each stage. This session will also introduce the concept of the T-Shaped HR Professional, showing how individuals can build both depth in a specialty area and breadth across strategic functions. Participants will walk away with practical tools, a fresh perspective, and renewed confidence in supporting HR-related responsibilities within their roles.</p> <p>Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Define the key stages of the employee lifecycle and describe shared responsibilities between managers and HR. Explain the concept of the T-Shaped HR Professional and how it applies to both current and aspiring HR leaders. Strengthen collaboration with HR by understanding how and when to engage for best results. 	Stacy	Sufka	MPA, MAC, MBAn, LSSBB, ODCP	Gladegy Consulting, LLC
Fri., 10/24 9:00am - 10:00am Marketing & Development Track	Breakout Session 16 Grantin’ Ain’t Bland: Creative Funding for EPIC Impact	<p>Grant writing doesn’t have to be overwhelming, isolating, or dull. In this energizing session, Shawn Valentine of Sup Gurl will break down the grant process into accessible, actionable steps — with a creative twist. Attendees will learn how to structure strong proposals, find hidden sources of funding, and tell their organization’s story in a way that grabs funder attention. With a focus on fun, collaboration, and bold thinking, this session will inspire attendees to reimagine fundraising as a team sport — one that reflects the heart of the work we already do. Participants will leave with confidence, strategy, and a digital toolkit full of real-world templates and tools. Whether you’re new to grant writing or looking to refresh your skills, this session will help you get the dollars you need to do EPIC things.</p> <p>Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the core components of a strong grant proposal, including narrative, budget, and evaluation. Locate and evaluate at least three non-traditional funding sources that align with their mission. Apply storytelling strategies to strengthen grant narratives and build emotional resonance with funders. Assess their organization’s readiness to pursue funding opportunities, including staff capacity and sustainability planning. 	Shawn	Valentine	Executive Director	Sup Gurl

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Fri., 10/24 10:15am - 11:15am Day & Employment Services Track	Breakout Session 17 Person-Centered Pathways: Tools for Supporting Transitions in Every Stage of Life	<p>The OCALI Lifespan Transitions Center provides free resources to support successful transitions across the lifespan for individuals with disabilities. We do this by being agency-neutral, outcome-focused, and person-centered in offering resources, training, and technical assistance to create successful support systems that incorporate community living and employment. In this session, we'll highlight tools, strategies, and frameworks to support youth, families, and adults to live their best lives for their whole lives. In this session we will share free resources, trainings, and materials to support planning and preparation for key transitions across the lifespan, including transitions from early childhood to school, school to adult life, and changes throughout adult life. Attendees will learn how to identify diverse networks of support and strategies to collaborate effectively with multi-agency teams.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify key tools and frameworks that promote lifelong wellbeing and independence for youth, families, and adults. 2. Access free resources, trainings, and materials to support planning and preparation for key transitions across the lifespan. 3. Identify diverse networks of support and strategies to collaborate effectively with multi-agency teams. 	Jenna	Allen	Transition to Adulthood Consultant	OCALI
		Co-Speaker:	Alissa	Otani-Cole	Transition to Adulthood Consultant	OCALI
Fri., 10/24 10:15am - 11:15am Healthcare Track	Breakout Session 18 The Ins and Outs of Waiver Nursing Billing	<p>Has billing for waiver nursing services been elusive for your agency? Did recent changes to the Ohio Department of Medicaid’s Provider Network Module throw off your organization’s process for billing for waiver delegated nursing services and you haven't been able to recover? If you answered yes to either of these questions, then this session is for you! In this session, attendees will hear from the billing experts at 19 Services on how to jump start the nursing waiver billing process.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will learn:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The basics of DODD HCBS waiver delegated nursing billing 2. How EVV impacts waiver delegated nursing 3. How nursing waiver billing differs from regular HCBS service billing 4. How recent changes to PNM have impacted nursing billing 	Kristi	Black	CEO	Nineteen Services, Inc.
Fri., 10/24 10:15am - 11:15am Residential Waiver Track	Breakout Session 19 Electronic Visit Verification and Claims Validation in DODD Waivers	<p>Please join ODM to talk about Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) and the implementation of claims validation requirements. We will discuss how ODM is working with the County Boards and Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) to help providers. Updates will include the overall success of the claims validation implementation, including EVV compliance trends prior to the implementation of claims validation for DODD waivers and how they are changing after the requirement for EVV for claims payment. Common issues and solutions will be shared, as well as an overview of the Sandata support available to help providers navigate their EVV data to ensure maximum claims matching. ODM will provide information on how to escalate issues that are unresolved.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand common claim validation issues and hot to resolve them. 2. Understand how to escalate issues that are unresolved. 3. Learn how to access Sandata support for assistance. 	Brandi	Nicholson	Interagency Policy Section Chief	Ohio Department of Medicaid

2025 OPRA Annual Conference Speaker & Session Information						
Day, Time & Track	Session # & Title	Session Description	Speaker First Name	Speaker Last Name	Job Title	Organization
Fri., 10/24 10:15am - 11:15am Marketing & Development Track	Breakout Session 20 Make an Impact with Your Presentations	Develop content that is relevant, interesting and effective and the delivery of that content in an engaging, professional manner. Dig deeper into managing the Q/A segment of a presentation and how to tailor presentations to the particular audience. Learn practical, actionable techniques. CONTENT • Overall presentation architecture • Key themes, structure and stories • Approach to slide design, size, colors, amount of content, etc. • Read-ahead, handouts and leave-behinds DELIVERY • Starting fast and ending strong • Purposeful body movement • Energy, pausing and emphasis in delivery • Voice modulation and projection • Use of humor • Tips for effective rehearsal and reducing anxiety Manage a questions/answer format strengthened through increased planning and intention. Gain practical techniques to encourage, or control a Q&A segment. • Restating/setting context • Zooming out and enumerating • Bridging to messages • Engaging the audience in the discussion • Contentious questions in a public setting • Controlling response and emotion.				
		Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will learn to: 1. Grab the audience's attention and keep it. 2. Understand the basic architecture of an effective presentation. 3. Use the Q and A to get the audience fully engaged.	Beth	Whelley	Executive Vice President	Fahlgren Mortine