

2024 Endless Possibilities Conference

Session Descriptions

(updated 7/8/24)

Keynote “The Influence and Effect of SMALL’s Engagements”

Presenters: Troney Small & Dr. Ricardo Anderson

Troney will engage participants in a personal expressive talk about his family’s journey. The connections with families, parents, and children allow relationships to thrive in ways to create a pathway that is eased for children to reach their full potential. When there is an understanding and respect of each family’s dynamics, beliefs, values, and priorities, individuals show a genuine effort to work together to achieve the goals for the family. Troney will discuss the impact of “Adultification” and raise awareness about how our community can strengthen partnership with families for student success for all.

Family Partnering and Community Engagement Action Planning

Presenters: Troney Small and Dr. Ricardo Anderson

This session will talk about how relationship-based practices promote engagement with all families. When we connect with a family we form a relationship on behalf of their child. These practices, or strategies, are intended to guide what we say and do with families. Participants will share experiences and have critical discussion about community awareness, relationship practices and family partnerships that are inter-connected to create a Family Engagement Partnership Action Plan for all families.

Welcome to College: Accessible and Inclusive

Presenter: Kay Eibl

Join this interactive session to learn more about how to transition well into college! We will talk about the differences between accommodations and supports in high school and college, best practices for getting ready for college while in high school, and which skills are especially helpful to have in college. We will also explore the changes that students, parents, and educators can expect to see as students with disabilities transition into college. While highlighting the resources, supports, and processes at Waukesha County Technical College, general information about seeking accommodations in college will also be provided.

OUTCOMES:

- Recognize the process of seeking accommodations in a post-secondary setting
- Understand the differences between accommodations in high school and college
- Describe some of the critical life skills that are helpful in college

Powerful Partnerships: Collaborative IEPs and Parent-School Collaboration

Panelists: Parent Advocate, School Administrator, and Teacher or Service Provider.

Learn about the benefits of collaborative Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities. During this discussion, we will explore how involving parents and other stakeholders in the IEP process can lead to better outcomes for students with disabilities. We will discuss challenges that may arise when trying to collaborate effectively between parents and schools, including communication

barriers, conflicting priorities, and power dynamics. Our panelists will also share personal recommendations for building strong relationships between parents and teachers, involving parents in decision-making processes, and utilizing technology to facilitate communication and collaboration. We will also discuss strategies for overcoming challenges with IEP teamwork from professional and family perspectives.

Keeping Individuals with Disabilities in Charge of their Lives: Supported Decision-Making and Early Choice-Making

Presenters: Fil Clissa and Molly Murphy

Supported Decision-making is a set of strategies that help people with disabilities have more control over their life and future. It is also a legal alternative to Guardianship. Building a strong foundation for choice-making early on in a student's life will ensure they have the skills to make supported decisions, and benefit from or participate in a self-determined life.

OUTCOMES:

- Understanding Supported Decision-Making, the process and strategies and why it's important
- Strategies for teaching early choice-making skills
- Supporting individuals to live full lives: Living a more Self-Determined life

Lessons Learned Along a ReMARKLEable Journey

Presenters: Hunter and Tim Markle

Come get some insight into navigating into adulthood. Hunter will talk about what worked, what didn't work and what could have been done better. Tim will talk about the bridges they built over the last 26 years and the missteps they have made. Transition to adulthood may happen around 18, but preparing for it begins early in life. What lessons can you pick up and what lessons can you share with us?

OUTCOMES:

- Identify the changing roles of parents/guardians as a child grows up.
- List ideas to help make transition into adulthood more likely to be successful.
- Determine the foundation to best help their child/student to succeed.

Understanding "Sensory"

Presenter: Katie Berg

Whether you are a family member, an educator, or a community professional, we can all strive to better understand what factors maybe affecting our student/child. The word sensory is used in many different contexts within life and we use it to mean many different things within an educational context. In this session, participants will learn to be speaking the same language around the sensory systems, for example your visual system or less known system like your vestibular system. We will talk about how these systems along with the other 6 systems influence our brain. We will explore how environments can influence sensory input and look at how we might utilize our favorite sensory tools in more effective ways. These tools can be helpful for families and educators alike. We will learn to shift our focus from simply "sensory" to a deeper understanding of "regulation" and what that means in regards to our sensory systems.

OUTCOMES:

- Participants will examine tools and strategies commonly used and learn how to make an informed decision on their use by all providers
- Participants will leave with evidence-based information about universal strategies to support outcomes for students with sensory processing differences
- Participants will be introduced to the sensory systems and how they influence our brain and body (helping to norm the language used when referencing "sensory")

Empowering Students: Teaching Kids about their Brain

Presenter: Katie Berg

Join us to learn the importance of teaching students about how their brain works! Participants will benefit from information about the emotional part of our brain, the social part of our brain, and how those two parts can affect academic access, engagement, and progress. You will leave with increased skills to create both classroom and life lessons to help students understand their brains.

OUTCOMES:

- Participants will learn the importance of teaching students about how their brain works
- Participants will leave with strategies and resources to create their own lessons on how to support students in learning about their brain
- Participants will learn some components to how we access learning

The Power of Presence: A Mindful Approach for Community Self-Care and Well-Being

Presenter: Ambrose Wilson Brown

An enlightening session that delves into the transformative power of mindfulness in enhancing community well-being and collective self-care. This breakout is specifically tailored for educators, caregivers, and anyone who dedicates themselves to serving others, often at the expense of their own well-being. Participants will enjoy a moment to ground, relax, and care for themselves after a full day of learning while exploring how incorporating mindfulness into self-care routines can create a positive ripple effect throughout the community. Through engaging interactive activities and thought-provoking discussions, attendees will discover practical mindfulness strategies that reduce stress, boost communal health, and elevate overall quality of life. This session is designed to equip you with the tools to nurture a mindful and supportive community environment. Don't miss this opportunity to learn how mindfulness can rejuvenate both you and those around you, fostering a more balanced and thriving community.

Respecting, Honoring, and Valuing Families from All Walks of Life

Presenters: Cheri Sylla and Xia Yang

In this session, participants will explore how one must look inward and work to develop cultural humility, a key component to building trusting relationships with families. We will spend time learning

about the Hmong history in Wisconsin and how social contexts impact and influence family and community engagement in schools. You do not want to miss this session!

OUTCOMES:

- Explore how their identity markers may effect one's biases about families and communities.
- Learn about the Hmong experience in our schools and communities.
- Learn how developing cultural humility allows one to put yourself in another's shoes.