

Everyday Lives

2026
Virtual
Conference

Breaking Barriers and Building Futures

May 6-16, 2026

Conference Program



Contents

Conference Program	1
Overview	3
2026 Everyday Lives Schedule at-a-Glance	3
What to expect	4
Accessibility Accommodations	4
Conference Tracks	5
Conference Agenda	6
Dual Diagnosis Pre-Conference	6
Understanding the Vagus Nerve May 6, 2026	6
Technology and Mental Health May 7, 2026	6
The Everyday Lives Conference	7
Accessibility in the Digital Age <i>May 12, 2026</i>	7
Person-Centered Approaches <i>May 13, 2026</i>	7
Everyday Lives for Everyone <i>May 14, 2026</i>	8
Post-Conference Workshop for Individuals and Families <i>May 16, 2026</i>	8

Overview

The biannual Everyday Lives Conference, hosted by the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), invites individuals with a disability and/or autism (ID/A), family members, caregivers, and support professionals to engage in presentations and panels focused on sharing information that empowers the everyday lives of individuals with disabilities throughout Pennsylvania.

The 2026 Everyday Lives Conference (EDL) will be held virtually throughout the first two weeks of May 2026. The conference theme for 2026 is “*Breaking Barriers and Building Futures*”.

2026 Everyday Lives Schedule

at-a-Glance



 for all audiences

 for individuals with ID/A, self-advocates, and families

 for professionals

What to expect

The virtual conference will be hosted through the online platform **Whova**. The conference program is broken into three sections:

- **The Dual Diagnosis Pre-Conference**
Theme: The Brain and Body Connection: Understanding the Vagus Nerve
May 6 – May 7, 2026
- **The Main Everyday Lives Conference**
Theme: Breaking Barriers and Building Futures
May 12 – May 14, 2026
- **The Post-Conference Workshop for Individuals and Families**
Theme: Finding Your Power
May 16, 2026

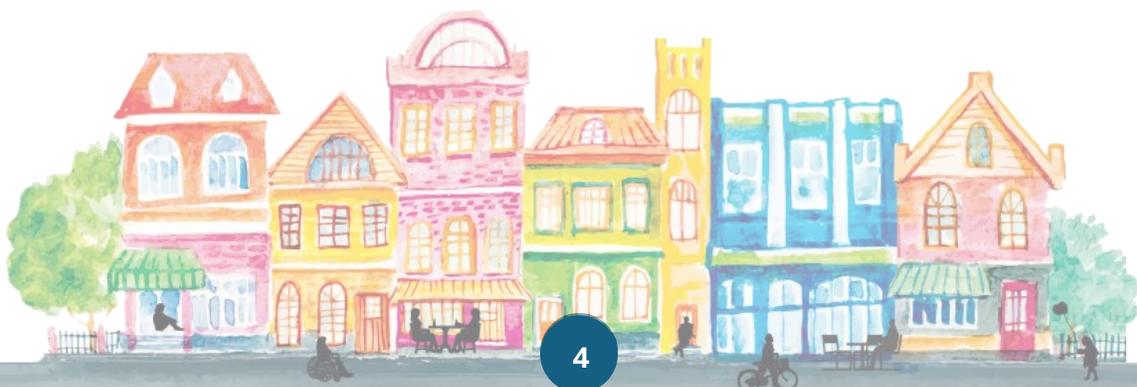
Each section (excluding the post-conference) will include presentations for all ODP stakeholders, but some sessions may cater more to one audience than another. Regardless, we invite *all* audiences to attend *every* session. Content will be accessible and relevant to all.

While we encourage attendees to attend as much of the conference as possible, ODP understands that schedules may only permit someone to attend select sessions. That's okay! We welcome you to join when you're able. Session recordings will be available in the Whova app for conference attendees to view for up to three months after.

Separate certificates of attendance will be issued for the Dual Diagnosis Pre-Conference and The Everyday Lives Conference.

Accessibility Accommodations

All conference sessions will have American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and closed captioning. If you need language translation or any other ADA accommodation, please include them in your registration form.



Conference Tracks

Each conference section will feature daily tracks that highlight a topic related to the section theme. Tracks include:

- **The Dual Diagnosis Pre-Conference**
 - **May 6 - Understanding the Vagus Nerve**
A program to introduce professionals to Polyvagal Theory and its applications to therapies.
 - **May 7 - Technology and Mental Health**
A program for individuals and families to explore the intersection of technology, independence and mental health.

- **The Main Everyday Lives Conference**
 - **May 12 - Accessibility in the Digital Age**
A clear-eyed look at how technology affects our everyday lives and how we may harness it for good.
 - **May 13 - Person-Centered Approaches**
Presentations highlighting the importance of person-centered planning throughout every step of the journey – from systems changes to individual support plans.
 - **May 14 - Everyday Lives for Everyone**
Discussions of advocacy, resilience, and building networks of natural supports in your community.

- **The Post-Conference Workshop for Individuals and Families**
 - **May 16**
An opportunity for individuals and family members to discuss EDL presentation materials and form connections.



Conference Agenda

Dual Diagnosis Pre-Conference

The Brain and Body Connection: Understanding the Vagus Nerve

Understanding the Vagus Nerve

May 6, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM



- **Trauma-Informed Behavior Support Through a Polyvagal Lens**

Presented by Ellen A. Black, LCSW and Lynn Haller, MSW, LCSW

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM



- **Vagal Nerve Stimulation Therapies**

Presented by Rebecca Knowles, Unyte

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM



- **Healing with the Brain in Mind – An Introduction to the Neurosequential Model**

Presented by Michelle Maikoetter, MA, NCC, LPC-S, NCC

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM



- **Trauma Informed Therapies**

Presented by Hela Baer, LCSW, E-RYT

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Technology and Mental Health

May 7, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM



- **Online-based Therapeutic Intervention**

Presented by Dr. Keely Hirsch

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM



- **Internet, Social Media, and Communication**

Presented by Erin Sass, Provider Educator, Acentra

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM



- **Promoting Independence Through Technology Panel**

Facilitated by Shea Tanis, Ph.D., FAAIDD

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM



- **Mental Health Support for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability**

Self Advocates United As 1

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM



Hela Baer is an Integrative Therapist specializing in trauma-informed mindbody practices

The Everyday Lives Conference

Breaking Barriers and Building Futures

Accessibility in the Digital Age

May 12, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM



- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) In Our Everyday Lives**

Presented by Robin Christopherson, MBE

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM



- **Mindful Content Consumption: Cyberspace Resiliency**

Presented by Imani Barbarin

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM



- **Building a Cyber Strong America**

Presented by Derek Mueller, Cyber Security Advisor

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM



- **Artificial Intelligence: Risks, Benefits, and Recommendations for People with Disabilities**

Presented by Amy Nieves, AGSD, MHR Public Affairs Specialist, U.S. Access Board

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Person-Centered Approaches

May 13, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

- **Introductory Remarks from the Deputy Secretary**

Kristin Ahrens, ODP Deputy Secretary



- **The Road Less Taken is Under Construction: Building the Highway from Goals to Outcomes**

Presented by Bob Sattler, Partner, Support Development Associates

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM



- **Panel - Communication Tips for Speaking with your Support Team**

Facilitated by Tim Greusel, Director, Quality Enhancement Support Team

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM



- **Provider Innovation Series**

Presented by Arc Human Services and SPIN, Inc.

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM



- **Using Data to Improve Individual Outcomes**

Presented by Scott Bachik, CEO, The BI Collaborative

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM



*Digital Accessibility Expert
Robin Christopherson*



*Bob Sattler has over 40 years of
experience in building person
centered community supports*

Everyday Lives for Everyone

May 14, 2026, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM



- **Panel - From Lived Experience to Collective Leadership: Building Everyday Lives for Everyone**

Facilitated by Dr. Josie Badger DHCE, CRC

9:00 AM – 10:30 AM



- **Mindful Content Creation: Harnessing the Conversation for Good**

Presented by Imani Barbarin

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM



- **Maintaining Medicaid: Keeping your Waiver Through Changes in Policy**

Presented by Laura Cipriani, ODP Medical Assistance Eligibility Workgroup Chair

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM



- **Collaboration, Coalition, and Community: Advocating for Everyday Lives Together**

Presented by Pastor Sally Jo Snyder, Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Post-Conference Workshop for Individuals and Families

May 16, 2026, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM



- **What is your 'Why'?**

Discussions about your purpose and passion

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM



- **Finding your Power**

Exploring your individual power

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM



- **Stronger Together**

How to speak and act with one voice

11:00 AM – 12 PM

Stay up to date with Everyday Lives Conference updates, including schedule changes and speaker biographies, at

www.EverydayLives.org



Dr. Josie Badger is a legal advocate who educates future generations about lobbying for disability equity



Imani Barbarin is a communications expert who leverages social media to build communities united through messaging



Sally Jo Snyder is a United Methodist pastor who has spent most her career advocating for disability and healthcare equity by mobilizing communities