



## **A Universal Cross-Team Approach: How to enhance inclusion and quality of life through the implementation of foundational strategies for all people with disabilities**

**2023 Alliance Summit**

**Brian Dean, MA, CRC- Colorado Office of Employment First (COEF), JFK Partners**

**Vanessa Lehman - Colorado Office of Employment First (COEF), JFK Partners**



# Colorado Office of Employment First (COEF)

## Our Vision

A culture of inclusive, meaningful, and competitive employment for all people.

## Our Mission

Elevating equitable employment in Colorado for all people with disabilities through collaboration, systems innovation, and training excellence.



### Collaboration

Promoting work as part of a financially secure, healthy, and fulfilled life.



### Systems Innovation

Convening to improve policies, remove barriers, bust myths, and promote technology.



### Training Excellence

Elevating evidence-based strategies through training and learning communities.





# Session objectives

- Identify & discuss strategies and concepts related to social roles, integration, and inclusion
- Connection of concepts across models for employment services and quality of life
- How to implement across roles and care-coordination





# Inclusion, integration, & social roles

# Inclusion & Integration

- Disability inclusion- ensuring that people with disabilities have the same opportunities and access to participate in aspects of life
- Disability inclusion involves understanding the relationship between the way people function and how they participate in society
  - Social life roles & activities
    - Student, worker, friend, community member, patient, partner, or parent

# Social Role Valorization

- Originating in Scandinavia in the 1960s, “making available to all people with disabilities the patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life or society.” ([www.socialrrolevalornization.com](http://www.socialrrolevalornization.com))
- People are more likely to experience the “good things in life” (Wolfensberger, Thomas, & Caruso, 1996), if they hold valued social roles than if they do not (Osburn, 2006)
- According to Osburn (2006), below are examples of the “good things”
  - Dignity, respect, acceptance, sense of belonging/being, education, development of skills, opportunities to participate- in society and work, self-support, and living



# Social Determinants of Health

## Social determinants of health (SDOH)

- Conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age
- Affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes, & risk



Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.  
Retrieved [date graphic was accessed], from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>

# Enhancing Social Roles

- Enhancing social roles through the concept of social role valorization
  - Transition from a perception of devalued to valued
    - 1) Enhancement of social image in the eyes of others (perception)
    - 2) Enhancement of competencies (knowledge)
- Four sectors:
  - Individual; family ; neighborhood, community, and services received; larger societal and service systems as a whole



# Case Study

## Meet Debbie

- Debbie's story of how inclusion and social integration increased her health and well-being
  - <https://www.mosaicinfo.org/blog/mosaic-at-home/helping-people-thrive-mosaic-at-home/>



---

# Connecting the social aspects to employment models

# Why Employment

---

- When integrated in a workplace, people with disabilities can experience authentic interpersonal interactions with co-workers, customers, supervisors etc.
- People with disabilities are visible in the workplace to the public, which allows society to see the value and capabilities of all individuals
  - Opposite of the social exclusion when institutionalization was widely used
- Work is viewed as recovery, people want to work, typical role in society (IPS Works)

# What is Employment First

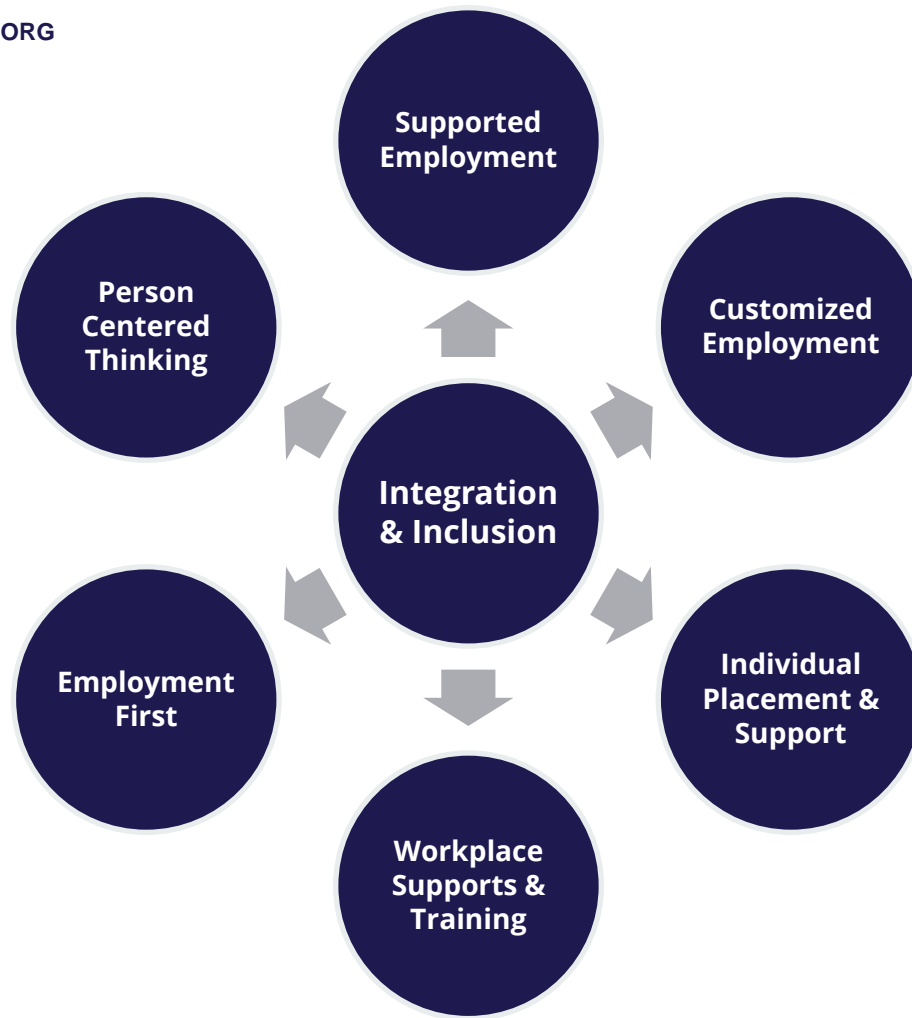
- A belief and **value** that all individuals regardless of level of disability are capable of full inclusion and working in competitive integrated employment (CIE)
- It is the **first and preferred outcome**, regardless of the level of disability, in businesses found in the community, with regular compensation, equal advancement, and equal interaction with non-disabled co-workers
- It is critical to **create expectations** that all people can work if they want
- Systems change and **culture shift** to alleviate fears associated with working and educating employers on how to support a more diverse workforce

# Person-Centered Thinking

- Is about finding what is important to someone and balancing it with what is also important for them in their life (The learning community for person centered practices)
- It is also about "helping people get better lives...not just better paper" (The learning community for person centered practices )
- Guided by values and practice principles that acknowledge people, not service providers, are the experts regarding their lives and needs
- A practitioner thinks about the individuals needs versus the needs of the system (Jones, nd)

# Employment Service Models

- **Supported Employment-** empowering individuals with disabilities to make choices regarding potential jobs and their career paths through person-centered career planning that includes identifying individual skills, interests, and employment preferences
- **Customized Employment-** a qualitative ‘no-fail’ process that presumes all individuals can work
- **Individual Placement and Support-** Helps people living with behavioral health conditions work in the community at jobs of their choosing
- **Workplace Supports and Training-** systematic instruction of planning and implementing individualized instruction for learning
  - “Try another way”- Everyone can learn but we have to figure out how to teach (Gold, n.d.)





# Implementation



# Area(s)

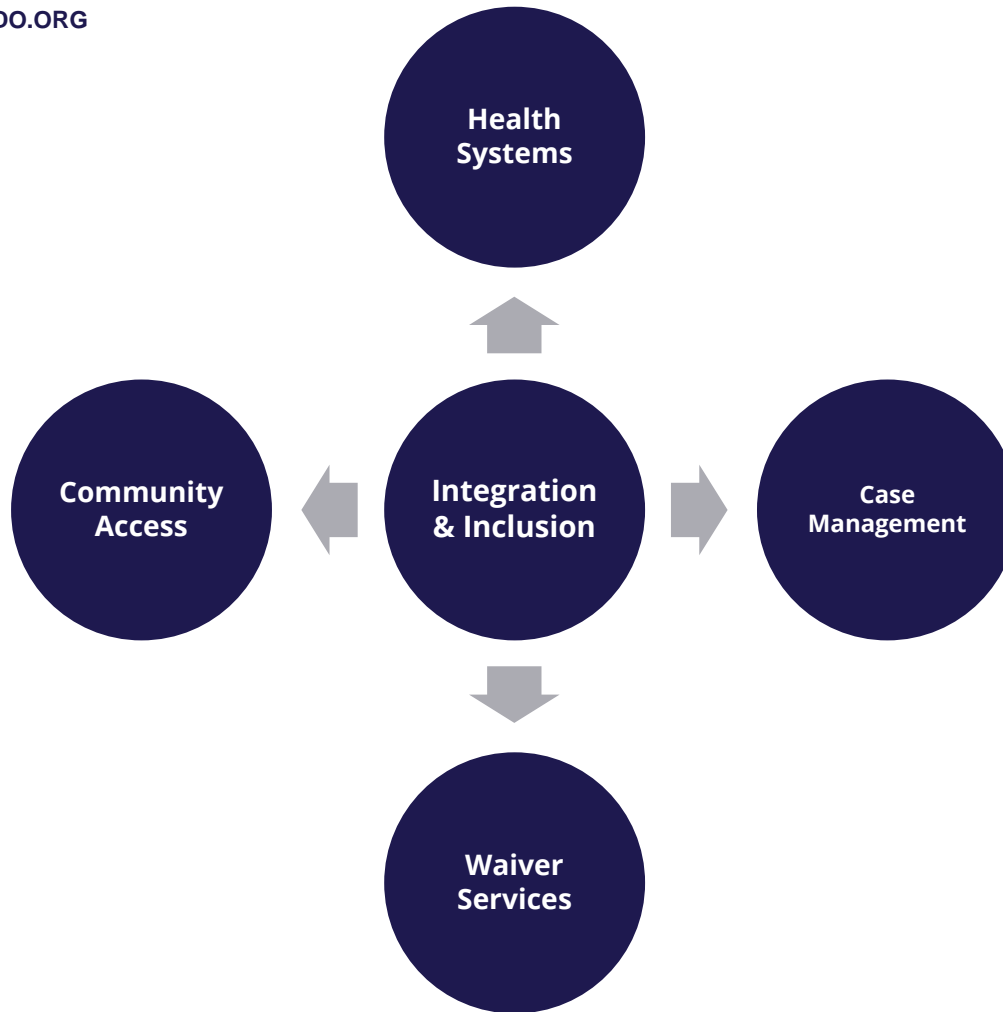
---

- Health Systems
  - Health services and service delivery in the health system such as funding, delivery, and innovation impact social inclusion (Parry, 2022).
  - Health systems play an active role in social inclusion by addressing usage disparities, decreasing discrimination and ostracism, and by increasing universal access (Parry, 2022).
- Case management
- Waiver services
- Community

# Person-Centered Practices: Tips

---

- Partner with the individual and respect their expertise
- Focus on their preferences for jobs and services
- Ask open-ended questions and listen
- Focus on strengths
- Remember that it's a process
- Empowerment in planning for all phases of services
- Encourage to be in meetings with family, service providers, and employers



# Final Thoughts

- Inclusion and integration is more than encouragement and advocacy
  - It is rooted in adequate policies, practices, and pursuing change
- Social roles and integration lead to and provide opportunities for health promotion, prevention, and overall quality of life

**Inclusion &  
Integration**

**Enhanced  
Social Roles**

**Overall  
Quality of Life**



# Takeaways for Implementation

---

- Enhance image (perception) and knowledge (competency) of people with disabilities through social roles
  - Community activities, skills building, options for decision making
- Support and encourage employment through evidenced-informed and evidenced-based models
  - Employment as an option- across all programs
    - Make it an opportunity and reality to explore
- Challenge yourself and others
  - Create and/or maintain high expectations and engage in difficult conversations that support change and thinking differently





# Questions?



# Connect!

Brian Dean, MA, CRC:  
[brian.dean@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:brian.dean@cuanschutz.edu)

Vanessa Lehman:  
[vanessa.lehman@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:vanessa.lehman@cuanschutz.edu)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/COEFtalk>

Instagram: [@coeftalk](https://www.instagram.com/coeftalk)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/colorado-office-of-employment-first>

Subscribe to Communications/Newsletters:  
[www.employmentfirstcolorado.org](http://www.employmentfirstcolorado.org)



# Thank you!

