

# Developmental Disabilities Network Journal

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Issue*

Article 1


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## Acknowledgments And A Note From the Editor

Matt Wappett  
*Utah State University*

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## Acknowledgments And A Note From the Editor

Cover Page Footnote

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# Developmental Disabilities Network Journal

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**Journal Subject Area:** The DDNJ publishes high-quality research and evaluation about the multiple systems that serve individuals with disabilities and their families. Central to these systems is the "Developmental Disabilities Network," a group of federally designated programs in each U.S. state and territory, that provide advocacy, training, research, and service focused on the unique needs of people with disabilities and their families. This journal specifically highlights programs, practices, and policies that encourage the full inclusion of people with disabilities in communities and all aspects of public life.

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**Cover Design:** The DDNJ cover and logo were designed by Kelly Smith and Mary Ellen Heiner from the Institute for Research, Policy & Practice at Utah State University.

## Acknowledgments and a Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear DDNJ Readers:

We are so grateful for your patience as we have worked to pull this groundbreaking issue of *DDNJ* together! This was originally supposed to come out around November, but the process of pulling this issue together was much more time-consuming than we anticipated...but we are now so excited to share the results of our collective efforts! This special issue focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) will hopefully spur thought, discussion, and a renewed focus on creating truly inclusive supports and programs.

Every issue of DDNJ is a collaborative effort, but these special topical issues require the time and effort of many more individuals to make them successful. We are grateful for the AUCD Multicultural Council (MCC) and their unwavering support of this project. We proposed this special issue to the MCC over a year ago and it has been a privilege to work with the various scholars, researchers, students, and advocates who belong to the council. The MCC helped us recruit authors and reviewers for this special issue, and we hope that the various perspectives shared in this special issue highlight the ongoing importance of the work of the MCC.

We are especially grateful for our two guest editors for this special issue: Lydia Ocasio-Stoutenburg (Penn State) and Jacy Farkas (University of Arizona). When we originally proposed this special issue to the AUCD MCC, both Jacy and Lydia were quick to step up and volunteer to help serve as guest editors. Jacy and Lydia have been great collaborators and they have been central to helping us pull this issue together. We have learned so much working with Jacy and Lydia, and their guidance and insights have informed every facet of this special issue. Both Jacy and Lydia have taught us a lot about authenticity and commitment to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. They have helped us recruit authors and reviewers who speak with the authority of lived experience, and who reflect the voices, perspectives, and needs of the various groups represented in this special issue. This project has been a labor of love for all of us, but Jacy and Lydia truly are the heart and soul of this special issue. They have put in countless hours of extra work to make this happen. If you find any value in the research and perspectives shared in this issue, please reach out and let Lydia and Jacy know!

I would also like to thank the two self-advocates who contributed to this issue of *DDNJ*. It has been a privilege for me to work with Jessica Salmond from Baltimore, Maryland, and Shari Cooper from Dayton, Ohio. Both authors reached out during the abstract submission process and wanted to share their story and perspective, and I had the opportunity to work with both of them as they crafted their contribution. I am grateful for their trust and patience. As we started to put the final pieces of this issue together, we felt strongly that leading with the voices of these two women was important for setting the context of this special issue. I encourage you to read Jessica and Shari's articles before you jump into any of the other articles because I believe they truly highlight the importance of this work.

We would also like to thank the various reviewers who helped us review and provide feedback on the articles submitted for this issue. The reviewers really are the backbone of the work that we do, and a peer-reviewed journal is only as good as its “peers.” We are grateful for the reviewers who volunteered to help us including Ashley J. Salmon, Bora Lee, Bryce Fifield, Caroline Roberts, Christine Vining, Eduardo Ortiz, Esperanza Reyes, Jacy Farkas, Kate Thompson, Lydia Ocasio-Stoutenburg, Mark Fisher, Megan Best, and Syd Staggs.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the editorial team here at the Utah State University Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice for their hard work and dedication. During the planning for this issue, we had some turnover in our editorial staff, so this effort has spanned a couple of Managing Editors. We would like to thank Dr. Bryce Fifield for his help in conceptualizing and laying the groundwork for this issue, and then we would like to thank Dr. Alex Schiwal for taking over and seeing this project through to completion. Both Bryce and Alex have been instrumental in ensuring all the invisible editorial details are taken care of, and this special issue would not have come to fruition without their dedicated efforts.

As always, please reach out if you have suggestions or considerations that would help make this journal more accessible and useful for you. Also, please contact us if you would be interested in serving as a reviewer or sitting on our editorial board. We are always seeking new perspectives and insights to guide the continued development of the *DDNJ*.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and commitment to this journal. We appreciate you.

Matthew T. Wappett, Ph.D.  
*DDNJ* Editor-in-Chief