

## September 2024 APS TARC Podcast Transcript

### Disability Inclusion in APS

#### Introduction

**Andrew Capehart:** Welcome to the Adult Protective Services Technical Assistance Resource Center podcast. We come to you with the goal of sharing promising practices and innovations from the APS field, and to highlight what is achievable with new ideas and partnerships to help you envision what may be replicated in your program. Let's join our host, Jennifer Spoeri APS TARC subject matter expert, and guests in conversation.

#### Discussion

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Welcome to the APS TARC Podcast. Today, we're going to be speaking with Patty Quatieri of the Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission's peer support program and Leigh Anne McKingsley, senior director, disability and justice initiatives for the Arc. Thank you both for being here today to discuss the intersection of adult protective services and disability. First, let's start by learning more about each of your backgrounds. Patty, can you tell us about your work and how you came to work at the DPPC?

**Patty Quatieri:** Sure. So I started with the budget with I went to the state house for DPPC and help them for doing budget is Disabled Person Protection Commission. When I started in 2017 I mentioned we should have peer support programs from peer-to-peer programs for people that, such as assault or violence. And that, and then, when I did peer-to-peers, we called ourselves peer, peer support leaders to help other survivors who been assaulted, or any other things they'd like to talk about. So when I did my teaching with a peer, I made sure they believed, make sure they, make sure they say in that that's why I did the passion of this kind of work.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Well thanks. That's a great introduction, and I'm sure we'll hear more throughout this podcast. So Leanne, how about your experience and how you landed in this field?

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** Well, I guess what happened was the field found me actually. So I was I got my degrees in social work and public administration originally, and as a survivor of violence myself, sexual violence, I knew that I wanted to do something to help figure out my own stuff, but also help other people at the same time. And so I ended up working at the Arc of the United States after the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990 and started educating law enforcement, attorneys, and people with intellectual developmental disabilities about accommodations in criminal justice area, and this included victims. And so about 10 years ago, we had the opportunity to start the Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability, and that's what I direct. And what we are continually trying to do is think about how to have peers involved in every level of everything that we do, and ensuring that whatever we work on, whether it's creating materials, training, whatever it is, that people with disabilities are centered in that work and able to bring their lived experience like Patty was saying how critically important that is. And so, of course, that applies to APS as

well, so we're very excited. Patty and I have been working together and with Jennifer, with you two on these issues for a while. We're just very excited to bring some of that to the discussion today.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Great. Well, thank you both for being here now. Now let me be the one to be the bearer of bad news here. The statistics regarding the abuse of people with disabilities are startling. So we're going to shed some light on these numbers from the National Crime Victims Survey. The two significant ones we're going to bring up, we could go on for hours with these statistics, unfortunately, but the two significant ones are the rate of serious violent crime, meaning rate for sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, was more than three times the rate for persons with disabilities, without disabilities, excuse me. So that's three times people with disabilities are more likely to be assaulted or raped or, you know, aggravated assault. The National Crime Victims Survey data also reports that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience sexual assault seven times more than people without disabilities. So these are really hair-raising statistics here. So that's why we're here, right? The three of us on this call. So Patty, would you be so kind as to share your story and how you became involved in this movement.

**Patty Quatieri:** Thank you. So in 1985 I was assaulted, sexually assaulted by someone he knew at the time, victim of sexual assault, violence. Adult protective services, APS, the survivors did not receive proper treatment in resources, just a therapy, a self-defense class, and sexual education. Due to the absence of critical service, Patty endured severe depression, loneliness, and low self-will. For many years, I faced a difficult journey towards healing. In 1993 Patty planning began receiving service marking the start of her true healing process. Despite the limit the service favorable to the survivor, Patty continue fight and advocate for change. In 2017, Patty partnered with of disabled person protection in Massachusetts to found a statewide service model at breaking down barriers to interpret service. Forces of violence there cooperating effort lead to the establish of a post within APS field in support survivors. And thank you very much.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Thank you for sharing your story, Patty. It's got to be really hard to relive that, even though it was so long ago. It's still something that's very raw, I'm sure. So I appreciate it. So in addition to the peer support network that you currently work in, what else is currently be done in the, being done in the field to increase awareness and reporting? I think Leigh Anne probably has some, some things to share on this front.

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** Yeah. Um, so I wanted to mention one of the things that we do at the National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability is provide what's called Pathways to Justice. It's a one-day training that brings together community members to really focus on the issue of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who become involved in the criminal justice system. And it, in the training, those who agree to participate, they must bring together what's called a disability response team, which is basically a multidisciplinary team to help with actually putting on the training, but also come up with an action plan that they can use to address the larger systemic issues that keep people stuck or keep people from being able to access the justice system as a victim, or keep people cycling through the criminal justice system. So that allows us to work with people with disabilities who are part of that team to really bring their lived experience

to thinking about solutions in communities. We have to address the immediate issues, but we have to think bigger about what's happening so that that victim advocate can't do their job, that APS worker isn't able to because of the system, because of the problems in the system. So we're trying to really think, how can we use these teams of people that know what they're doing and they have expertise, but they're not talking to each other? How can we do that so that we can come up with better solutions? So I'm really excited just how we're doing that now with APS too, but between different agencies and organizations like the Arc and DPPC.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yep, thank you. You're reading my mind, because it's like we're meeting in the middle now, because APS has traditionally had multidisciplinary teams, and we're currently really expanding our, our vision of these to invite, you know, organizations like the Arc or protection and advocacy agencies and DD councils so, and even the National Adult Protective Services Association has a disability advisory group that is really working on bridging that gap between adult protective services and working with people with disabilities, so it's an exciting time, and we're here to celebrate. So.

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** Yeah.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Let's get back to Patty. I have a question for you: What are the advantages of having peers support survivors of abuse?

**Patty Quatieri:** Yes, support network is more help peer-to-peer, help the survivor. I am experienced to teach, then you talk about coping skills, making me to grounding rules. Sometimes we teach them, playing games with them, and we do like we don't have to ask them about their story if they don't tell me the story. We do things lately a healthy relationship be sure they be safe. Sometimes I do a safety plan if they want one, and we do a lot of things, and it's nice to have peer-to-peer support leaders to help them out.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** That makes complete sense, because when you say peer, you have the lived experience, so they're looking, saying, This isn't just some sorry for the social workers out there, but this isn't just some social worker or nurse or doctor coming in. This is somebody who's been through it and can understand what I'm feeling. So that's incredible.

**Patty Quatieri:** Until they don't feel alone.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah, exactly. I love that.

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** I would say too, just to add to that, what Patty's saying is, there's something about working through this stuff and being with people that aren't necessarily sometimes like a therapist, like you're saying Jennifer or I would say, like, pay to be there.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Right.

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** However, we will talk about that it's important to pay peers as well. So, you know, we'll talk about that more later. But the just that genuine connection Patty that you've been doing all these

years and teaching others how to be peers, that I think I've heard more change come from that than anywhere else. And I've been at the Arc for 28 years doing this work, and where I have seen change happen is in those peer-to-peer connections, and when people with lived experience are leading the work, that's when you can make the change happen, right Patty?

**Patty Quatieri:** Oh yes, oh yes.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** I love it. So Patty, I keep on going to Patty like, hey, I want to pick your brain more. What are some key points for adult protective services professionals to keep in mind when they're working with people with disabilities?

**Patty Quatieri:** Working with people with disability, you have to realize they went through something, assault or any kind of abuse. So you have to be sure you use the plain language, being patient. Take your time and just believe them, what they tell you. Anything you know, can I take a break or I need to quiet space, but they seem sometimes, they like quiet.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah. Now, those are important things that should be at the top of our mind, but it's a good reminder just to be patient, listen, and believe the person that's survived this horrible event, so. Leigh Anne, anything to add about that?

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** Yeah, I was going to say that everything Patty just mentioned is what we call accommodations. You know, within disability law and within our society, most people have heard of the ADA. They think of someone like the wheelchair sign when you're parking at the store, but it goes way beyond that, and that the ADA really is, when it is implemented correctly, does change lives, and everything Patty just said, believing the person, listening, maybe taking extra time to listen. That's an accommodation.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah.

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** And that can mean the difference between something going forward in court or not, and that's just the truth. And too often, and we do have some data on this, people aren't believed. People with disabilities, they're not heard, and that's why we have the law. And it's not just a nice thing to do. It is a mandate that we provide these accommodations. So I would just say, as much as possible, think about finding out what accommodations that you can provide as a person who works with people with disabilities. There are some checklists out there you can look at to see if your agency is kind of in the guidelines to provide all those. So there are resources out there. You don't have to be perfect, but working towards, you know, really being more inclusive of people with disabilities, that's the key.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** It certainly is. And I just think about APS programs, and, you know, recent funding from the federal government, this is a good time to be looking at what you need in your program to make those accommodations available. So ...

**Patty Quatieri:** Yes.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** All right, so where do we go from here? It's just, you know, little, little achievements here and there, but we, where do we go from here regarding adult protective services and the abuse of people with disabilities? Patty, you want to summarize everything? You've given us a wealth of information here.

**Patty Quatieri:** Yeah, I think they make sure you have to realize that with the barriers, everything, because the barriers are more harder than usual. Some people and survivors do not have transportation. Provide, yeah, sometimes they have to make you have to make be. Communication is the big thing too, because you can't be sure you have survivor had things to speak with, sign language or communication devices and people you have to have, be sure you go out if you have a right center who do not have a ramp for people in a wheelchair. So you might ask the barriers, all the barriers you need to help the survivor and make it applicable for them and make it easier for them. Leigh Anne, you have it again. You want to share?

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** Yeah, thanks, Patty. I love that you brought up, just the transportation issues, all of the barriers that victims can face, that have disabilities, and one of the things that you raised earlier, just about bringing peers to the forefront of the movement. You know, one of the things I was thinking about was that, not only do we want to see a peer-driven model in the disability field, but in the aging space as well. This whole notion of peers leading efforts, that's happening in criminal justice reform, that's happening in other areas in society, as we have woken up to the fact that there's a lot of wisdom in all of our lived experience. And so when we think about the barriers, you know, bringing people who have experienced this like you have, you know, to help us understand, how do we address those barriers? Just to think really broadly about that, how together we can support that kind of movement?

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah, thank you, Leanne. It brings to mind a case I had when I was working APS where the gentleman had been financially exploited, and he brought it up, saying, I want to help you all do outreach so this doesn't happen to somebody else. And we would go out to the, you know, different organizations in the city. And he had what, what we call street cred, you know, because ...

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** Yeah.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** He knew, and he was, he was strong enough to share his lived experience to hopefully prevent this from happening to others. So this has been a great conversation. I could go on and on with you all but Patty, anything you'd like to say to close?

**Patty Quatieri:** Yeah, and nothing about us without us means that be inclusive.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Be inclusive, absolutely inclusive.

**Patty Quatieri:** Like you have if you have a board, include them, because they have voices, and they know what they you know what they thinking, and they know what they talk about. They've been there before.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Absolutely. I love that. Nothing about us without us, and I want to thank you both, Patty and Leigh Anne, for joining me today, and I'm sure our listeners are going to glean a lot of great information from

this and, and begin to really address those barriers and help APS programs support people with disabilities in a stronger way. So have a good afternoon, everyone.

**Patty Quatieri:** Thank you.

**Leigh Anne McKingsley:** Thank you.

## Closing

**Andrew Capehart:** Thanks so much for listening. The APS TARC is a project of the Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services at the Administration for Community Living Administration on Aging Department of Health and Human Services, and is administered by WRMA, Incorporated a TriMetrix Company in partnership with the National Adult Protective Services Association. Contractors' findings, conclusions, and points of view do not necessarily represent the official policy of the Federal Government. To give us feedback on this podcast or reach out to us, please visit our website at [apstarc.acl.gov](http://apstarc.acl.gov).