



“Using Asset-Based Community Development to Support Children Involved in Mental Health and Child Welfare Systems”

Summary of a webinar from January 22, 2024

Introduction

This webinar is about Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD focuses on strengths. ABCD finds and supports existing:

1. Community resources
2. Skills
3. Services

Speakers in this webinar talk about how to use ABCD to support kids involved in mental health and child welfare systems. Panelists share tips on using ABCD.

Panel of Experts

Robert serves on the Board of the ABCD Institute at DePaul University. He shared key ideas of ABCD. It is normal to look at the needs of a community. He said that we should also look at the strengths. Robert described 3 areas of assets:

1. **Individuals:** each person’s gifts and talents
2. **Associations:** where people take their gifts and talents in the community
3. **Local Institutions:** can support communities with their resources.

Robert shared that people must involve and engage youth. People should value youth.

De’Amon is a team member of the ABCD Institute. He said institutions can find and support strengths in the community. De’Amon also described that it is important to ask good questions. One question to understand assets is “what do you do that you can teach somebody else how to do?” De’Amon shared about the importance of storytelling and connections. Finally, he said people should celebrate strengths in public ways.

Patti is the founder and CEO of Neighbours Inc. They are an institution supporting people with intellectual disabilities. They help people find their people, their place, and their purpose. Patti shares how they help people find their gifts. They walk with people to explore their neighborhood. They make connections too. They honor the gifts of everyone, including their staff. They try new things. They celebrate failure as long as they also learn. They invest resources. They also share stories.

Aquil is the program supervisor of Street Safe Bridgeport and the Youth Diversion Team (YDT). The YDT is an alternative to the juvenile justice system. The YDT uses an ABCD approach by focusing on the strengths of the youth. They create connections to the community to help the youth be an asset. They support all needs of the youth.



NCAPPS

National Center on Advancing
Person-Centered Practices and Systems

The speakers on this webinar were:



De'Amon Harges is a faculty member of the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute, Creator of The Learning Tree, and layperson at Broadway UMC, Indianapolis, IN. De'Amon's role is to listen and discover gifts, passions, and dreams in communities and find ways to utilize them to build community, economy, and mutual “delight.” DeAmon describes his role as a Social Banker, utilizing intangible currencies that are cultivated by human assets and relationships to build abundant community.



Robert Francis is currently a Social Justice Consultant providing assistance to nonprofit organizations criminal justice policy reform, community development and coalition building. He is an Adjunct Professor at Fairfield University where he teaches Ethics to undergraduates, and he facilitates a nonprofit seminar for for-profit leaders transitioning to the nonprofit field at the University of Connecticut School of Public Policy. He is a board member of the Asset Based Community Development Institute at DePaul University.



Aquil Crooks was born and raised in Bridgeport, CT. He has a bachelor's degree in sociology from Southern Connecticut State University. Aquil has a passion for helping his community. He is a youth & family advocate. He has been employed with the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) since 2014 in different capacities, he has worked as an outreach worker & mentor for the StreetSafe Bridgeport Program. In 2022, he was promoted to Program Supervisor. Aquil's goal is to leave his community better than he found it. Aquil's pride and joy is his two-month-old son Grey.



Patti Scott is the Founder and CEO of Neighbours Inc, a NJ based organization supporting people with Intellectual Disabilities to live a life rich in relationship, love, contribution, community and purpose; to experience the sense of place in their own homes in the communities where they choose to live; and the power that comes with responsibility for control of their own supports (with as much help as needed). Patti offers education, facilitation, and consulting internationally, supporting other organizations and governments to provide individualized supports and re-energize their work in communities.

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