

Matthew Wappett

Welcome to the *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal* author insights Podcast. I'm Dr. Matthew Wappett, the DDNJ editor in chief and the Executive Director of the Utah State University Institute for Disability Research Policy and Practice, Utah's UCEDD program, and it's my privilege to host this podcast. In fact, this podcast is one of the favorite things that I get to do, because it gives me a chance to talk to so many different researchers and professionals who are out in the field making a difference. In fact, many of the people who we have on this podcast are literally changing the world in their own quiet way. And that's exciting for me.

This podcast, as many of you know, is part of our ongoing commitment at the *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal* to increase the accessibility of the content in the journal for a wider readership. Not everyone has time to sit down and read an entire article these days, let alone an entire issue. More and more people are choosing to get their information through podcasts and audiobooks. In fact, I've read more audiobooks this past year, than I have read physical books--which I think maybe a first for me. Again, this audio format is becoming more and more prevalent. The launch of this podcast means that you can access the journal's contents while you're on the go, and you can share it more readily across social media platforms and other online media. We recognize that it's important to present our information in the journal through a wide range of media and outlets in the hope that it will help provide alternative access and different ways of getting this information out there. With that said, the effectiveness and the reach of this podcast is dependent on you. Please be sure to subscribe to our podcast feed on Apple Podcast, Spotify, Stitcher, Overcast, Pod Bean, or wherever you get your podcast. There are many platforms today. Please leave us a rating and a review and share this podcast with your friends and colleagues. Your ratings, reviews, and shares help us share the important work that is being done in this field today.

You can learn more about the *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal* at the DDMJ website, which is <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/ddnj>. You can download podcast transcripts in English and Spanish and learn more about our guests at the IDRPP website, which is <https://idrpp.usu.edu>. Just look for *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal* there on the homepage.

This podcast is usually an interview with authors from the latest issue of the journal, but this episode is a little different. Over the past year, we've been working with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities' Multicultural Council to develop a special issue of the journal focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We've been privileged to work with Jacy Farkas and Dr. Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg, who are serving as guest editors for this upcoming special issue. We thought it would be interesting to learn a little bit more about their background and how they've been approaching this important work. We like to acknowledge that authors, and in today's episodes, the editors, are more than just a name on the page. We want to help you get to know the people behind the publication. We want to help you gain a better understanding of the many diverse voices who were working in the field today, and we want to provide some insights into what motivates the authors and editors, where they get their ideas from, and why they do what they do.

Today's episode, as I mentioned, will be with Jacy and Lydia. Jacy Farkas is the Assistant Director of the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities at the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she helps oversee multiple efforts related to person-centered practices, transition, and information dissemination. Jacy has been a long-time leader within the AUCD Multicultural Council and has a reputation as an incredible collaborator and advocate. She also serves as a leadership institute mentor for the National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University, and she has contributed to multiple projects and publications related to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the disability world. Jacy is currently in the process of completing her doctoral degree in Family Studies and Human

Development at the University of Arizona and she also holds a Master's in Information Resources and Library Science and a bachelor's in Classical Studies. Dr. Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg is our other guest today. Dr. Ocasio Stoutenburg has a long history in the DD network, and she's worked with DD Councils, with Parent-to-Parent health information Centers, and UCEDDs. She has also served in the leadership of AUCD's Multicultural Council with Jacy, and she was formerly a program manager for the Step-Up Assistive Technology Program at the University of Miami UCEDD. She is a qualitative researcher, she's a parent of a child with a disability, and she is a community advocate for children with disabilities and their families. She received her PhD in Special Education from the University of Miami and holds master's degrees in both biology and bioethics. She is also the co-author of two books on caregiver advocacy across cultures, languages, disabilities, and other social identities. We will provide a link to Dr. Ocasio Stoutenburg books on family advocacy in the show notes for this episode. This episode is a wide-ranging conversation with Jacy and Lydia, and it really provides some important insight into why diversity, equity, and inclusion are so important today. As with other episodes, this episode also includes some fun behind-the-scenes insights and innovative ideas that also can be used to improve the work that you are doing in your respective teams and organizations. So, without further ado, let's jump into this fun and informative conversation with Lydia and Jacy. So why don't I start with you, Lydia, if that's okay. Can you tell us a little bit about your background, within the use of network and DD-related programs?

Lydia Ocasio-Stoutenburg

I come to the UCEDD and the DD network as a parent of a child with a disability. I'm a mother of five, my youngest happens to have Down syndrome. So, I've been very much involved in advocacy. And I think if you years ago, just looking for some programs to support me in knowing more about him and also kind of promoting that kind of activity led me to use that where I got involved in a leadership development program for advocacy and the communities. That was really instrumental, it kind of gave me what I needed, what I was looking for in terms of connecting to other people who were invested in bettering and improving the lives of people with disabilities and their families. But it also led me to explore other opportunities as well. So, again, developing my leadership within my center, and also going on to become the chair of the MCC, I'm involved in the AUCD board. Again, those have allowed me to connect with other people, whether it be communities of practice, in our board development, and just really discussing so many things that are important to our communities out there. Again, it's important to bring that family perspective and the parent perspective, but also learning from self-advocates and other leaders and individuals who have been invested in this process as well.

Matthew Wappett

Great. What about you, Jacy How did you get into the UCEDD network and DD-related programs.

Jacy Farkas

Honestly, it was kind of happenstance--it was not part of my original plan. I've been with a network now for more than 15 years. Our Center was just started, and I was looking for a job that would help with benefits and pay tuition. I'll be honest, that's how I came to. I was looking for a part time job, and while I was working on my master's, I wasn't working on anything specific to disability at all. I started out as an office assistant, and now 15 years later, I'm the Training Director and our Assistant Director at our Center. It opened my eyes to a lot of things that I hadn't really thought about before, even though I had extended family members and friends that might have disabilities. I never looked at it as a social justice issue until I started working alongside and learning from people with disabilities and their families. I really kind of got pulled in by information accessibility and person-centered practices and it just changed my career path. A big part of that was understanding how my own social identities and my

own family and what people go through and some of the biases and systematic structures that can be really harmful for folks and their access to a better life. That, aligning with and understanding what that looks like for people with disabilities, particularly those who are at the intersection with other marginalized identities, is what really pulled me into this work and why I've stayed and went back to school and everything in this field. I really felt like I did a whole round about long fanfare.

Matthew Wappett

I think it's interesting. I asked this question a lot, how do people get involved, and there's really are two ways that people get into it. Number one is either a very close personal family connection that's pulled them into the work, or people stumble into it, really the use of networking. Nobody really sees the UCEDD network as a career path. I think more and more that's changing. But I do think it's either very intentional, or it's kind of like, oh, it was a job that was available, and I've created a career out of that. It's just interesting to hear that you're both coming at it from different sides. And you both have made remarkable contributions. One of the things that you both been involved with, and one of the special things about this new upcoming special issue of the Developmental Disabilities Network Journal, is the diversity, equity, and inclusion framework and that is being edited guest edited by both of you who are involved with the Multicultural Council at AUCD. Share with us a little bit about the history and the aims of the multicultural council at AUCD.

Jacy Farkas

So, you know, I've been a member with the council probably for over 10 years at this point. It started out originally, even before it became a council, it was a workgroup or committee, and their main focus was to look at just within our network, the racial and ethnic diversity, and who was present, are we representing the folks we're working with, and to not only increase that diversity, but to be really creating pathways for leadership and for the concerns of folks within the network. That has, over time, really evolved into not just within the folks who work for the network, but who were serving, the concerns of culturally diverse and underrepresented groups in all activities across our centers, the network. Are we representing who we're serving in our states and to really thinking about cultural and linguistic competence in how we provide services and engage with authentically engage with communities? You know, and what's the word I'm looking for? I'm like blanking on it. But I don't know, Lydia, do you want to jump in to talk about where we kind of been the last couple of years and where we are now?

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

Yeah, I think that that's really been heightened, and this is where I came into the network, even though I was sort of on the periphery of the MCC and AUCD years prior, but I sort of came in after 2020. And 2020 is when our concerns have been heightened, because of our social experiences and systemic barriers, systemic racism, systemic ableism that people are experiencing. It's not that those issues and concerns are new, but our attention has been directed toward it. So, it generated a different responsiveness--even within the network, and even within the MCC. Thinking about what can we do now to be more responsive to our communities out there? Unfortunately, my background is in special education, but I would say this is parallel because even in special education, you can see all equity with regards to education being really difficult and reproducing the same hierarchies and stratifications that we're trying to avoid. I think, unfortunately, that's what unintentionally happens in leadership, even with leadership and diversity. You would think, okay, we're being equitable, right? Our aims are very clear. We're promoting better outcomes, better lives for people with disabilities and their families, but unfortunately, we are seeing so many inequities. And now our attention has really been purposeful and intentional on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who are experiencing increased

marginalization, and as Jacy mentioned, intersectionality. So, talking about racial equity with IDD, Black and Brown folks who with IDD and what they're experiencing. There is a call for greater purposefulness and intentionality and exploring these--not as tangential issues, but as something that's really important and integral to our work, and how can we really be responsive no matter where we are, whether we're working in centers that are urban or rural, in our tribal communities, no matter where we are? How can we be more intentional in addressing those concerns and modifying our work to be more inclusive and equitable?

Matthew Wappett

Well, listening to both of you talk, I think you've answered the next question, which is really what role does the Multicultural Council play in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in the UCEDD network? Do you have anything to add to that, though, I think you kind of touched on it.

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

I probably did because I was talking a lot. I would say we struggle with this as a council. We never wanted it to be "Okay, this is the MCC thing"--talking about EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion), or cultural linguistic competence--that's the MCC thing. That's something we've really pushed on because it should be the aims of the entire network--and we want it to be--we want it to be integrated throughout our centers, so that everybody is thinking about equity, everyone's thinking about diversity, everyone's thinking about inclusion. One of the challenges we saw there is that there are so many different definitions of it. Unfortunately, we tend to be silent, and sort of talking in our own different categories, and really not talking across ourselves and learning from each other. I think that's why it's been so important to include lived experience and everything that we do. As I mentioned, just being more purposeful and intentional and making sure this isn't the MCC issue and MCC aims but that it really is integrated throughout our network.

Jacy Farkas

I feel like part of our role is fostering that collaboration across the different councils, centers, SIGs, all of that. How can we be supportive in fostering some of these collaborations, as well as amplifying some of the work folks are doing throughout the Center that can highlight the efforts that people have been doing well, and even some of the struggles, so everyone can learn from that and be able to take that back to their own center and incorporate into their own work.

Matthew Wappett

I totally feel that although the intent hasn't been for the MCC to own this work, I do feel that over the past few years it has become more and more central to the mission of AUCD. I think a big part of that is due to the fact that the MCC has grown and has really fostered a lot of these conversations that we need to have. I've been in the network a long time--since 2002--I am getting old! I remember when Aaron Bishop came in and we started having these conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion. It seems to have just grown from there and especially with AUCD launching the strategic work plan and sort of the aims and the goals and the things that we should be striving for as centers. I feel like a lot of that has really been bolstered and supported by the work of the MCC, which has been really just incredible. It's been one of the most effective sort of rollouts I've seen in lots of organizations. Because it has gone from a small side group SIG almost to being very much a conversation that we have across the entire network. So anyway, you both have brought this up kind of tangentially in your other responses. Why is it so important that disability-related programs be more mindful of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Jacy Farkas

All of us live multifaceted lives and cultural identities. To think that disability is completely separate from any of that is...if we're really trying to meet people where there are and be person centered, you HAVE to be mindful of all of those things--whether it as Lydia was mentioning earlier about that intersectional perspective. If we're only looking at disability and not in relation to all the other facets of that individual, of that family, of that community, how can we really achieve equity or inclusion if you're not paying attention to any of that.

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

To follow up on that, I think we're all consumers of our media and what we're taking in, and just understanding where we are, in terms of how we're, we're situated in time and history and context. And certainly, we run the risk of really overstating how much progress we've made, if we're not really keeping cognizant of how we need to keep moving toward equity. And instead of saying it's a place or it's a location, it's an action, right, it's something we need to keep the momentum toward. We can certainly celebrate our victories. I mean, we've been really victorious in terms of legislation. I think we can celebrate those accomplishments. We certainly have a lot of diverse leaders--much more than there were before. But I think we need to keep the momentum going. I talked about this some years ago, as being part of an advocacy group. The leader was talking about for the parents and self-advocates to go and speak to local law enforcement so that the law enforcement officers would understand people with disabilities. One of the questions I had, which really stuck with me, I was just really digesting that really in the aftermath of Trayvon Martin, and Eric Garner, and Philando Castile, and it was really sitting with me. And I thought about, you know, where's the understanding of the actions and the responsiveness that we need to have as people of color? And it really struck me that it wasn't part of the conversation within the disability conversation. So again, speaking of how we need to not be so siloed but be having intentional conversations, cross cultural conversations, intentional around issues of social justice. It's not just some folks problem, it's all of our problems it affects all of our communities.

Matthew Wappett

I totally agree. What are some of the big challenges that disability- related programs face when they're seeking to address DEI? We've talked about it's something that really affects all of us. There are some key reasons as to why-- we're still struggling, I think, to do this well, especially within service-related programs, and things like that. From your perspective, what are some big challenges that we face in the disability world when it comes to addressing DEI?

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

I think there are multi-level challenges. I think there are systemic challenges. I think there are organizational challenges, and I think their interpersonal challenges, systemic challenges, meaning, what are our ways of knowing-- how do we value ways of knowing. If it tends to focus on conventional ways or traditional ways of research, rather than really having people with disabilities and people with intersectional identities being a part of the research team? I think it really compromises our ways of knowing and our ways of understanding. At an organizational level, sometimes we check boxes without really being inclusive, without really saying is this equitable in the ways that it should be. Is the participation of our communities in ways that are meaningful to them and not just for the purposes of our research or our funders, but even acknowledging that we do have funding responsibilities. I think even on the personal level, it's a challenge to say, "I need to do better. I hold some biases; I hold some assumptions that are negative about this population." I don't want to admit that, because then makes

me look bad, or that makes me look like I'm a poor leader. But I think you can't grow if you're not reflecting and acknowledging where you need to create space for others, where you need to come into community with people and give them an opportunity to lead or step down and acknowledged those power differential and say, "You know, what, I need to have the community step forward, and we step back." I think those are some of the barriers and challenges when we talk about DEI, in addition to not really having a really good idea of or definition of it, and we've been working on that. But I think just those multi-level challenges are still some of the barriers that exist.

Jacy Farkas

Well, and to piggyback on what Lydia shared. I feel like, because DEI has become such a buzz, where it's used everywhere now. There are committees everywhere, and whether or not that may actually include disability, if it's not a disability organization, is one issue. So that kind of further silos some of that. But even within some of the funding structures, there's a focus on that, but then, the aims or the expectations don't really allow or make space for the time it really takes to authentically engage communities. Or, understanding of how, or just...a big piece of it is the time but I think even then the allocation of funds of who gets it and, and the expectation to try to share that with others and the communities you're working with, and whether it's the funder or your university being the big barrier to that--to make it really difficult to compensate people for their time and efforts in in a meaningful and equitable way, can be huge barriers. I'm just thinking of some of the examples in our own organization that we've run up against, when we're wanting to partner with either tribal communities who are sovereign nations, and the time it takes and the processes that are involved with building not only the relationship, but then all of the IRB or contract level types of things that need to happen is not always accounted for in the timing for things or just the complexities of that. Even when I think that a lot of our centers have really great intention and want to do it, there are barriers from the larger institutions, and even funders that can really make that difficult to do it the way we really should and working with communities and individuals.

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

Just building on what you said, Jacy, I mean, you said it perfectly. Who's going to take the weight? Who's going to bear the responsibility? Is it the responsibility of the person of color? Is it a shared responsibility? Whose responsibility for knowing? Who decides what is evidence-based practice or something that we should learn about? Who makes those decisions? And then what happens after you get that information? What are you going to do with it? I think there's so many challenges in implementation, but also giving someone the authority to do that. And the knowledge, it's a competency, and I think establishing it as a competency, and not just a fun thing to do or check off or something we say that we did, but really giving it the power and the credibility. I think that's important, too.

Matthew Wappett

You both brought up that notion of the time that it takes to do this work, especially where a power differential...It takes a long time to build relationships of trust in general, but to do that when there's an existing power differential, and you're working with marginalized groups or groups that have historically not had a voice, it takes even longer than developing regular relationships, and it's an investment. Especially recently, I felt like, there's an expectation, okay, you're just gonna write in DEI work, and you're gonna do it and not acknowledging that this sometimes, especially with certain populations here in the rural West where I work, but I'm sure in other parts of the country too, that can take years to build those relationships, to actually effectively address and include folks who have historically been excluded from a lot of the programs that we do. I appreciate what you've said. Those are just incredible

insights. I'm really excited about this upcoming special issue of the *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal* focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. I'm just thrilled to have both of you as guest editors and for your efforts in helping us pull this together. What are your hopes and aims for this upcoming special issue focused on DEI?

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

One of the things for me that I love about this particular issue is just the range of different types of manuscripts and publications that I've just been reviewing so far. I mean, it really goes in line with what we're saying. It's just amplifying Voices and different ways of knowing and learning from one another. I think we've stayed true to that. We keep staying true to that, that it's not one type of publication or article report, but there are lived experiences included there. Some are very, very detailed--some are invoking some of that personal narrative and family stories. I mean, I think it's just powerful. I'm excited for what it can contribute to the literature on ways of knowing and arrays are really looking at DEI--not just as you know, a buzzword or framework, but really seeing it into practice. What does that look like across the nation, amongst different communities and centers?

Matthew Wappett

You both touched on this a little bit, but these are questions that we ask all our guests, because I do think it's interesting to get to the root of why working in disabilities is not an easy field. It's not a logical career choice for many folks. What motivates you to do this work? Why do you do what you do? Jacy?

Jacy Farkas

I touched on this earlier, but for me, like I said, it wasn't part of my original plan--my career plan. But it really is, to me, about equity and social justice. What role can I play even though it may be small, in moving that needle? For me, I really work closely around youth to adult transition, and wanting to make sure that the intersectional piece to that is really considered--whether that's disability and race and ethnicity, different social status, especially youth in foster care who have disabilities and what that looks like and ensuring that folks have access to live the lives they want basically. What part in that can I do is why I've stayed in this work. I've learned so much from other people. I continue to learn, and I get excited about working closely with people in the community and helping to--I feel like we've been saying this word a lot--but amplify their voices--really trying to.... I struggle sometimes doing this type of stuff, because I don't like to be necessarily in the front the word speaking in the limelight. I struggle with that. Not necessarily identifying as someone with a lived experience of disability. My own personal work is trying to really hand that over and give that to other folks and lifting their voices and being there as a support so to help communities make the change that they want and the needs that they want addressed.

Matthew Wappett

What you said I think is so incredibly powerful. It's antithetical to what most people are looking at in a career. In a career you're looking to elevate your Self. Yet what you said is all about trying to figure out how do you elevate and amplify other voices while you step back. That's so different than the way that many people approach their professional life. I respect you; I really genuinely respect your approach and the way that you articulated that. Thank you.

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

Echoing that, much respect to Jacy for what she just said. I mean, that's really talking about intentionality, you know, disrupting the status quo and saying, you know, "Let me let me fall back and amplify the voices of people who've been marginalized so much, in research and practice and policy." I think that she hit the nail on the head. Regardless of how any of us come into this, or what role we play, I think we all have an opportunity to make a change, and also be transformed in the process. For some of us, it may be a personal lived experience for it may be working in the background to make sure that community voices are included. Regardless, we all have a role that we play. But you know, as the saying goes, you know, to what each is given much as expected, right, so much is expected of us with what we're given. So, we have to think about our role and the gifts that we're giving how we're going to use them...what we're willing to use them for. I remember when my son was born, my mother-in-law said to me, "You know, God knows who to give this child to." I thought about that for a minute as well. What does she mean by that? You know, again, the older wisdom, but thinking about that is like, Why? Why are you the mother of this child? Why are you a sibling, a family member? Why do you work here? Even if you're brought here for a job, why are you here? To explore your positionality...what does that call you to do? I think each of us has a calling, how we choose to respond is our choice. But I think we all have something to contribute here.

Matthew Wappett

Thank you. Thank you both. I want to end right there. But I think that's a really powerful way to end. But I do want to ask this last question, because it is something that we try to do is bring things back to the practical. And again, it's a chance for people to share the different ways that they are really, again, addressing that intentionality trying to intentionally make their work more inclusive and accessible. We'll start with you, Lydia. What's one thing that you've been doing to make your work more inclusive and accessible?

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

I think one thing I've been doing is...I tend to, to write a lot, I'm a writer by nature, I'm not necessarily researcher by nature, I like to write poetry, I like to write prose. I like to write short stories, that's always been my thing. When I came into research world, it's like, okay, you got to stop writing like that, Lydia, you know, stop writing so creatively and stop being so poetic. I had to learn the rigor, the structure. I think I've been bringing back a lot of myself and setting myself free in that sense. I think a lot of people have responded to that well--it is just that freedom of writing and letting it be more accessible, more digestible, more real. I think people can relate to that much better. It builds community because people feel like they're part of the journey with you. And it's not just so that you're in the ivory tower removed. For me that that's something I want to be more purposeful about. So again, from my research to my writing, to working with communities, and not just reading about them, has really been central to me.

Matthew Wappett

We should note that you do have a couple of really incredible books on family advocacy out there that are worth checking out. We introduced your books to some folks here in Utah this past year. We've gotten a lot of really positive feedback on your perspective and the way that you've approached these issues through your writing. Thank you for that. You have done some incredible writing and some incredible work. Jacy What is one thing you've been doing to make your work more inclusive and accessible?

Jacy Farkas

I have really been intentional in how I'm forming my teams and including from--like for different projects, in terms of not only the staff but even trainees who are brought in and those with lived experiences and making sure everyone is getting paid for all of their contribution has been a big piece. I really tried to bring that to all of my projects and work and that diverse perspectives are not only welcomed, but really centered in my projects. Whether you're a trainee, you're a community member, who's a family member, or a staff member, and especially someone with lived experience with disability, like everyone at the table is contributing to the full possible extent, and valued is what I tried to make happen in all of my projects. I try to model that for everyone on my team and others at our center. I am making sure to bring it up when another project is coming for anyone else..."Oh, have you considered this"? I would say as a whole, I feel like our center has been doing a really good job of being intentional of how we're including folks with lived experience in the staff, as well as from the community in our projects at different levels. I think one of the other things, too, is really trying to branch out from the usual suspects, and what's kind of the disability space and going out to other groups and reaching out to other folks that may not always think about disability from various communities. But you know, how can we work together? We value their perspectives and want to bring them in and ask for us to join them. That's kind of been something that I think has been really great. Because if we're going back to what we talked about earlier, that it's all of us, right? If you are going to work with certain communities, it's talking to other advocacy groups or organizations that don't necessarily think about disability and joining together. I think that's been another intentional piece to my work in our centers work.

Matthew Wappett

Yeah, that's so important. I think we've learned with disability; they're not going to always come find us. It's imperative on us as disability advocates and professionals and self-advocates and family members to go out and just say, "Look, we're here too." I think that those are all the questions that I had any last thoughts, anything you wanted to say that we didn't get to?

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

I just wanted to highlight what Jacy just said about making sure that we are speaking...I don't want to always use a table example across the table...but across our communities across our families. That we're acknowledging that there are existing power differentials that have really been historically entrenched. Sometimes we keep repeating that unintentionally with who we include in our research, or who we invite to be speakers in our presentations. But also, making sure that we include voices that not necessarily will be included in other platforms, and lifting them up. And I think that's important too. As she mentioned, making sure that everyone is a partner and our valued partner and gets paid and compensated for their contributions. Even with the best of intentions, sometimes we still go back to the silos, we start to compartmentalize and instead of really the benefit of collaboration and working together, because we all learn interdependent. I think that's what we need to remember.

Matthew Wappett

Absolutely. Well, I want to thank you both for just taking time to have this conversation. I think this has been probably the best interview we've had. An Alex has been on all of them. But I mean, this has been just incredible. I appreciate your candor, and the way that you've addressed these issues. It has been a real privilege to work with both of you through this process. Thank you both for what you're doing and what you're going to continue to do and for collaborating with us on this on this effort. Thank you

Lydia Ocasio Stoutenburg

Thank you, Matt.

Jacy Farkas

Thank you, Matt.

Matthew Wappett

That's it for our conversation today. I'd like to thank DDNJ managing editor and author insight Podcast Producer, Alex Schiwal, for her hard work to get this podcast out. Alex has recently taken on the role of managing editor and we're excited to have her more integrally involved with DDNJ. We'd also like to thank the USU Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice for their financial and in-kind support for this podcast and the journal. The journal also receives support from the Utah State University Libraries and Digital Commons, and we are grateful for their ongoing efforts. As I mentioned earlier, please be sure to subscribe to our podcast on Apple Podcast, Spotify, Stitcher, Overcast Pod Bean, or wherever you get your podcasts. Please leave us a rating and a review and please share this podcast with your friends and colleagues. Your ratings, reviews, and shares help us get this important information out. You can learn more about DDNJ at the DDNJ website which is <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/ddnj>. Again, thanks so much for all you do. Keep up the good work. You're making a difference. We want you to know that what you do matters. Cheers