

Employment & Inclusion Conference 2026:

The Power of Expectations

March 24, 2026

11:30 AM

Breakout Session B-1

Not If, but How:

What Changes When We Assume Everyone Can Work

For too long, employment conversations have centered on determining if someone can work—often through tools and processes that quietly leave room for a “no.” This breakout session builds on the keynote’s exploration of rising expectations and asks a different, more productive question: If we assume everyone can work, how do we build the conditions that make work possible?

Grounded in Customized Employment, this session focuses on how shifting the question from if to how changes everything—from how we get to know people, to how we think about experience, support, and opportunity across the lifespan. Participants will explore how work exposure and contribution can be cultivated early and continuously, at home, in school, and in the community, rather than deferred until adulthood.

Using Discovery as a foundational lens, the session invites participants to rethink employment not as a single outcome, but as a process of learning, relationship-building, and opportunity creation. Emphasis will be placed on practical ways to recognize strengths, interests, and contributions, and to translate them into real work roles that make sense for both individuals and communities.

This session is designed for participants who are ready to move beyond possibility—and start practicing how.

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how shifting from “if” to “how” changes employment conversations, decisions, and outcomes.
2. Use Discovery as a lens for understanding people’s interests, contributions, and support needs across settings and stages of life.



Beth Keeton,
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Beth Keeton is a nationally recognized leader in disability employment whose work has shaped both practice and systems in Customized Employment for nearly three decades. She has played a leading role in advancing evidence-based practice, including championing the creation of the Customized Employment Fidelity Scales. Beth’s current work focuses on supporting states to strengthen employment systems using the GHA-developed Customized Employment Blueprint alongside fidelity measures. She is the co-author of *Making Self-Employment Work for People with Disabilities*.



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