

HCBS Pre-Conference Intensive: Aging and Disability 101

Aging & Disability 101
**A Chat with “Seasoned” Aging &
Disability Directors**

Abby – Georgia

- What the Older Americans Act Means to Me
 - The OAA is a guide. It should allow for state to state innovation while also establishing the “rules” under which we must operate.
- What I Wish I Knew
 - I have been in my role since April 2016. Before becoming the SUA Director, I had worked for the state for several years. State government wasn’t new to me, but leadership at the SUA Director level was definitely new to me. I wish that I knew how much I had to learn. Our world is constantly evolving and in order to stay relevant, so too must the work of the aging & disability network.
- Tips and Tools of the Trade
 - I start my day better after I have had a workout. Also, find ways to work smarter vs. working harder. Build relationships with other states, ask what they are doing, don’t recreate the wheel if it’s not necessary.

Kari – Minnesota

- What the Older Americans Act Means to Me
 - Everything – no really!
 - Comprehensive, coordinated system of home and community-based services
- What I Wish I Knew
 - With the state for about 20 years in various roles; the last 4 as director
 - Before becoming director, I wish I knew
 - The latitude for priority setting that comes with the position
 - The future!
- Tips and Tools of the Trade
 - It's worth your time to figure out what is actually urgent and time-sensitive – the other things can wait
 - It's okay to take time off when you have a strong team

Nels – Utah

- What the Older Americans Act Means to Me
 - Provides a safety net and strong foundation (and backstop) for state action
 - Ensures attention on an area that can get missed despite best intentions
- What I Wish I Knew
 - Started with the Division on late 2005 and became the director three years later
 - The fractured nature of the Aging Network
 - Lots of players, lots of partners, lots of agencies
 - Lots of skillsets are needed to make the Network go!
- Tips and Tools of the Trade
 - Communication, communication, communication!
 - Be patient, pace yourself, and be realistic