



# Disability & Mental Health *Summit*

Hosted by  
State Representative Dan Miller

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# April 28, 2022

**Beth El Congregation**



## Summit Schedule

8:30 am to 9:00 am	Federal Disability Policy Update with Michael Gamel-McCormick, Disability Policy Director for Senator Bob Casey
9:10 am to 10:10 am	Children's Mental Health from a General Pediatrics Perspective
10:20 am to 11:20 am	Introduction to Supporting Those at Risk of Suicide
BREAK 11:20 am to 12:15 pm	BREAK
12:15 pm to 1:15 pm	#NotAshamed: Mental Wellness and Advocacy for Youth with Disabilities
1:25 pm to 2:25 pm	Constructing Normalcy: A Discussion on Being an Ally and Advocate
2:35 pm to 3:35 pm	Planning for College: An Overview of Inclusive College Programs



## Summit Session Information

**8:30 am – 9:00 am**

### Keynote: Federal Disability Policy Update

**Michael Gamel-McCormick**, *Disability Policy Director for Senator Bob Casey*

Join us for a Federal Disability Policy Update with Michael Gamel-McCormick, who serves as the Disability Policy Director for Senator Bob Casey.

**9:10 am – 10:10 am**

### Children's Mental Health from a General Pediatrics Practice Perspective: Barriers, Observations/Trends, Potential Improvements and More

**Dr. Edwin King**, *AHN Pediatrics Clinic*

Have you ever wondered how to facilitate and enhance mental health care when interacting with a child's primary care physician? This presentation is designed to provide an overview to parents, teachers and other branches of the mental health care team and provide general understanding of children's mental health care as it traverses the medical system. A variety of topics will be discussed: evolution in detection and referral patterns, mental illness masquerading as medical illness, environmental issues causing escalated mental health problems, ways to assist and interact with physicians, detecting and removing barriers to care, learning disabilities overlooked resulting in mood disorder, and more.

**10:20 am – 11:20 am**

### Introduction to Supporting Those at Risk

**Jesse Putkoski**, *Area Director for the Western PA Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention*

When someone in your life attempts suicide or experiences suicidal thoughts, it can be difficult to know how to best support them in their recovery. *Introduction to Supporting Those At Risk* is designed to provide you with information and resources on how to support someone in your life with lived experience, someone's experience with suicidal thoughts and/or a past suicide attempt. Attendees will gain a better understanding of behaviors and experiences related to suicide, learn about the recovery process, and learn about the importance of self-care.

**11:20 am – 12:15 pm**

**Break**

**12:15 pm – 1:15 pm**

**#NotAshamed: Mental Wellness and Advocacy for Youth with Disabilities**

**Joyce Bender, Founder and CEO of Bender Leadership Academy and Bender Consulting Services, Inc.**

Join Joyce Bender, international disability advocate, entrepreneur, and host of the podcast *Disability Matters*, as she discusses the importance of changing the dialogue about mental health for youth with disabilities to one that promotes mental wellness, pride in one's journey, and advocacy skills. This session will explore the need for mental fitness programming for youth with disabilities and help attendees gain insight into some of the stigma and barriers that youth with disabilities face. Attendees will learn about the Mary Brougher Mental Health Initiative, a unique program offered through the Bender Leadership Academy for youth with disabilities, and the national civil rights campaign being led by this group promoting the message that we are #NotAshamed. Joyce will also share some of the steps that she has taken in her personal journey to become a leader in the disability community and what you can do to end stigma and support youth with disabilities in being proud of who they are.

**1:25 pm – 2:25 pm**

**Constructing Normalcy: A Discussion on Being an Ally and Advocate**

**Susan W. Parker, Associate Professor, Robert Morris University**  
**Student Panel**

The session title, *Constructing Normalcy*, comes from an important article by disability studies scholar Lennard Davis. In this session, a panel of undergraduate students and university faculty from Robert Morris University will discuss their experiences learning to be disability allies and advocates. They will share what they learned in their study of the social construct of disability and describe how their learning led them to create a university advocacy project that was submitted to the university provost and president.

**2:35 pm – 3:35 pm**

**Planning for College with Achieva: An Overview of Inclusive College Programs**

**Karen Oosterhous, MA, Director, Achieva Planning for College**  
**Amy Guthrie, MS Ed., Disability Advocate with Achieva**  
**Ben Guthrie, Self-advocate**

This session provides an overview of inclusive college programs serving students with intellectual disabilities. Attendees will gain an understanding of what an inclusive college program is, why it can be beneficial to attend college, what students gain from an on-campus experience and participation in student life, and how completion of a college program ultimately improves employment prospects. The session will also include information on finding the best fit, application, admission and enrollment processes, paying for college, and navigating campus life.



**Thank You!**

Thank you to everyone who played a role in helping to plan the Disability & Mental Health Summit this year. Thank you to our Planning Committee, to the many speakers who shared their expertise with us, to all the elected officials who attended, and to our friends at Beth El for being so accommodating.

**Special Thank You to Our Sponsor**





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