

## **BoggsCast Episode 11: Jennifer Turner**

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JAIME ZAHID: Welcome to the BoggsCast, where faculty and staff at The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities explore best practice, showcase success stories, and help listeners envision possibilities for innovation through interviews with state and national experts. Part of Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, The Boggs Center is New Jersey's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities program. I'm Jaime Zahid, Training and Consultation Specialist.

I'm joined by my colleague, Melanie Ayers, mom of a 24 year-old daughter with Down syndrome. She's a nursing professor. She is a member of the New Jersey Family Support Planning Council and Health and Safety Subcommittee. Melanie is currently completing her ambassador training for Charting the LifeCourse training tools. In this episode, we'll be discussing the Charting the LifeCourse Framework, what it is, and specifically how its principles can be incorporated into the person-centered planning process. For this discussion, we'll be turning to this month's guest, Jenny Turner, Assistant Director at the LifeCourse Nexus Training and Technical Assistance Center and Research Associate at the University of Missouri at Kansas City Institute for Human Development.

Jenny is passionate about the development and implementation of best practice that will drive systems change and impact families. Her commitment to advocacy and social justice originates in her first and most important role of big sister to a sibling with a developmental disability. The experiences she has had as a family member launched her trajectory into a career as a social worker. Previously a regional director for a large provider of state-funded services to individuals with developmental disabilities and a support coordinator, Jenny strives to bring all of these perspectives into her work as a facilitator of strategic thinking and planning.

Melanie, I'm going to give you a moment to elaborate a little on your introduction and get us started with some questions.

MELANIE AYERS: OK, thank you. So, hello. First and foremost, I'm the mom of Emma, who is an amazing 24 year-old daughter who has Down syndrome, along with her two brothers who are 19 and 22. So I have a house full of adults. I'm a nursing professor, and I've been a nurse for 29 years. Some of my disability advocacy is as a member of the New Jersey Family Support Planning Council and the Health and Safety Subcommittee, like you said, and I'm Secretary for the Region 8 Family Support Planning Council, and that covers Salem, Gloucester, and Cumberland counties in New Jersey. This July, I will be finishing the Charting the LifeCourse Ambassador Training, and that's been wonderful. And I'm learning so much through that program, and I just appreciate that you are allowing me to be a part of this.

JAIME ZAHID: We are glad you're here, Melanie. Thank you.

MELANIE AYERS: So Jenny, I would love it if you could start by telling us, what is Charting the LifeCourse?

JENNIFER TURNER: Sure. Well, thanks so much for having me. I'm really excited to talk about this framework. That's really what Charting the LifeCourse is that has really become a set of tools, a set of resources, a way of thinking and talking about what we want, how to get where we want to be, the types of resources and supports that we might need. So, you know, about 11 years ago, there was a bunch of families, actually, who sat down and started talking about-- What do we wish we would have known when our children were either entering the developmental disability service system or received a diagnosis or were-- just as they were journeying through life, what are the things that we've learned through that journey that we wish we would have known then?

And that conversation, and several after it, really led to the development of what is now the Charting the LifeCourse Framework. It ultimately is a way of thinking. It is, in my mind, giving language to a lot of the things that we probably know or that we're familiar with. But in the day-to-day life, in our day-to-day work, it's things that we can forget that we need to do if that makes sense. So, in a lot of ways, Charting the LifeCourse is a framework to help us think, but also to organize those thoughts. It's really about exploring, and planning, and problem solving, and advocating or really articulating what it is you want and need and what you think the best pathway is to get there.

JAIME ZAHID: Thank you for that excellent explanation. I think that one of the things that I love about the tools is, it's kind of exactly what you said. So the fact that they're not something really all that-- the thought behind them isn't that new, but it's stuff that we don't think that we need to think about if that makes sense.

JENNIFER TURNER: Well, I think you're right. I think that it's-- the thing about Charting the LifeCourse that I really love is that it is truly for everyone, right? So it's something that-- it's a way of thinking that we have really used to help support people with disabilities and their families, but it's also a way of thinking and a set of tools that I use in my own life that my aging parents, who probably wouldn't appreciate me calling them aging-- but they are. We're all aging, right? My parents, who are getting older-- they're using it to explore and plan and problem solve in their life, and I think what's really taken hold for a lot of people is that it's a very visual framework.

So we've taken each of these principles, and there are tools, there's resources to help guide that, whether it's self-exploration or if it's a discussion or a conversation with someone else. You can write it down. You can draw it out. It's color-coded. I love color-coded things. And so, there's so much going on in our lives day-to-day, and there's so much information coming at us. There's so many decisions that we have to make, and I think what people can really grab onto about Charting the LifeCourse, is sometimes that set of tools where they can have all of the information in one place in a way that is really owned by them that

makes sense to them, right? There's all of these formal plans that we may have. So, my sister-- actually, my sister and I both had IEPs, and we had our medical plans, and then, Sarah now-- my sister has her ISP. That's what it called it-- that's what it's called in Missouri, so her person-centered service plan, basically, for the developmental disability services she receives. But those aren't really her plans. They're plans for whatever system she's interacting with. And I think what's great about Charting the LifeCourse, and I think how a lot of people are using the tools, is to help drive those plans. It's a way to really prepare for those conversations and to have the time and space and sometimes the courage to say, this is what I want, and this is what your role is going to be in my life if that makes sense.

MELANIE AYERS: And I love that. And as a parent, I can so identify with the concept of, you don't know what you don't know. And you don't know what's available. And these tools have-- they're very simple, and like you said, you can get all of your ideas down in one place and try to work through that to see-- how can we make our kid's life better?

JAIME ZAHID: I also love-- Jenny, you pointed out-- and I've said this so many times. For those listening who don't know, I do trainings for support coordinators in New Jersey and trainings around person-centered planning. And we use a lot of the tools within our trainings. Separately, we have a training all about the LifeCourse tools, and I'm always emphasizing to support coordinators and families and people with disabilities that these tools are not something that are unique to people with disabilities. Of course, they're really, really helpful for people with disabilities, but they're tools that-- I have a three-year-old. I could use them with my three-year-old and talk about what we're going to do for the summer, or use them for myself around finishing my master's degree. And so, I think that that's something that's really awesome about them, that they really can relate to everyone.

MELANIE AYERS: So these tools-- they're free, right? So can you tell listeners exactly where they can find these free tools?

JENNIFER TURNER: Absolutely. They are open and available to anyone who wants to use them for their own life or in their work. You can go to our website. It is [www.lifecoursetools.com](http://www.lifecoursetools.com). And just a fun kind of navigation tip-- we have all kinds of different tools and resources for lots of different things. If you're just starting out, I would tell you, go to that website, [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com), click on LifeCourse Library up at the top, and then it'll drop down a menu. And there's a person-centered page, and there's a family perspective page. So if you are wanting to use one of the tools or resources for yourself, try out that person-centered page. That's a great place to get started with our core set of tools and resources.

If you're a family member who's really thinking about how to explore and plan and problem solve for someone that you love or that you care about or that you're supporting, I would really encourage you to go to the family perspective page because that's going to give you an opportunity to think about your ideas, your perspective different from the person. So it really-- your voice-- so as a family member, obviously, I feel passionate about this. My voice, my opinions, my perspective is just as important as a supporter in Sarah's life, but my opinion is not Sarah's opinion.

And so, it's a great opportunity to really distinguish those two voices and make sure that you even have an opportunity to kind of compare. If the individual that you're supporting or your family member is willing to do that, it's a great opportunity to say, well, what do you think? And what do I think? And why do I think that? And why do you think that? And how do we find that common ground as we move forward? So [www.lifecoursetools.com](http://www.lifecoursetools.com). LifeCourse Library is where you're going to find our core tool kit. We've got all kinds of ways to dig in specific to a life stage or a particular life domain, so you can spend a ton of time just checking it out.

JAIME ZAHID: Awesome. Thank you, Jenny. So my next question for you, Jenny, comes from my own personal idea. I have a favorite tool. I'll admit I have a favorite tool. For me, it's the integrated support star. One of my colleagues loves to tease me on how I could talk about that star for hours, and I truly could. So I realize this is probably the equivalent of asking somebody who their favorite child is, but do you have a favorite tool? Do you have a tool that you could talk about for hours?

JENNIFER TURNER: So I'm really terrible at favorites questions. I will just tell you that right off the bat. My friends are always teasing me because I love to ask them, what's your favorite this? What's your favorite that? And then, they turn it back on me, and I'm like, I don't know. It depends. That's always my answer. It depends, right? And I think that-- So I'm going to use that cop out answer at first, and then I will tell you where I land. But I think my favorite tool depends on what it is I'm trying to do because each of the tools can be used for so many different purposes. So for planning, I love the trajectory, right?

It's just a great way to set that vision and say, here's what we're trying to achieve. Here's what we want to avoid. Here's the steps that need to happen. For problem solving, I love the star. You're really thinking about all of the different resources, all of the different opportunities. It's a great way for me, when I feel like I'm stuck, and like something feels way too hard-- The star is the place that I want to go to.

So it really does depend on what it is I'm trying to accomplish, but the tool that has probably made the biggest impact in my personal life, and I think-- to be really honest-- I think is maybe a missing aspect in a lot of our conversations in the developmental disability services world, is our reciprocal roles tool. And that's not one that a lot of people know about. It's not one of our portfolio tools, so to speak, but the reciprocal roles tool is a way to look at how are you-- So if I'll use myself and my sister as an example, how do I care for Sarah, but how do I also care about her? So it's really taking those two important aspects of relationships. It's helping us think about, as a family, who plays all of these different roles in Sarah's life? Not just caring for her day-to-day needs, but also, who knows about her history? And who does she trust to speak up for her when she isn't able to speak up for herself? Who just hangs out with her, enjoys spending time with her, and truly loves and has affection for her?

But at the same time-- and this is the piece of the conversation that I think is missing a lot of times. And to be honest, it wasn't something I had really thought about until this tool-- is who does Sarah care about and care for? And how does she reciprocate in those relationships? How does she contribute in those relationships? I think a lot of times, as a sibling of a person with a developmental disability, it can be easy to feel like we're always focused on Sarah, right? It's always about her and what she needs, and how do

we make sure that everything is in place for her, but Sarah has a lot of strengths and a lot of gifts and contributes to our family and to our community in a lot of ways that oftentimes go unnoticed.

And so, I think that it's been really impactful for me and for us as a family to recognize not only does Sarah-- how does Sarah care about us, even if it might look a little different than some of a "typical" sibling relationship, right? But also, how does she care for us? There are ways that she really does take care of things in our family system that, again, oftentimes go unnoticed. So reciprocal roles is probably where my-- it tugs at my heartstrings the most. It's probably my favorite aha moment tool, but I could make an argument for all of them being great.

JAIME ZAHID: Oh, absolutely. I actually have a colleague who happens to have a disability himself. And in working with him in the past few years, I've really seen how those reciprocal roles do go unnoticed. And he'll talk about supporting his parents and his grandparents in ways that are typical and are not, and he'll mention how people will assume that he can't do those things. But he can, and he enjoys it, rightly so. So I'm glad you brought that up. Thank you.

So Melanie, I know in some of our previous conversations, you've mentioned that you've used the tools for planning with your daughter and even with one of the service providers that she uses. Would you mind talking just a little bit about that?

MELANIE AYERS: Sure. So I have used the integrated support star to identify supports in the various categories for my own daughter. So we've used it to see where our supports are and how we can network and gain more supports to help her reach her goals.

I don't feel that this is a one-and-done tool. It's like, we look at it, and we see where her goals are, where our challenges are. Where are our supports? What does she want? What does she not want for her life? The first time we did it, we were able to talk through all of her wants and needs and how we could do that, and it was right before she had her service plan annual meeting in the adult world. So it was so easy. We were switching support coordination agencies, and it was so easy to do that initial intake because we had that conversation, and we were really able to easily articulate what Emma wanted for her best life and work with the support coordination agency to figure out-- How can we get her there?

And we revisited it, and when we did that, we found that Emma had different goals. So she wanted a language lesson, and she wanted to be back in dance class, and she hadn't been in those for a while. So now that gave me the opportunity to start looking for these programs for her and her Center for Independent Living-- I was sharing her tool with them. And so, they've incorporated a sign language piece to their program. And through just networking, we've now found a dance class.

JENNIFER TURNER: That's awesome. I love what you're saying. I think you're really picking up on the importance of those life experiences. I think a lot of times, that's one of the cornerstones of Charting the LifeCourse, of the framework, is it really is about life experiences and life possibilities. And so I think it's easy for us, again, whether it's in our personal life or in our work life, to get bogged down in the things that

have to happen or to get kind of fixated on some of those service system things, for lack of a better term. And I think what you're saying is really what we hope to do in the Charting the LifeCourse will do. It helps us zoom out a little bit and say, but what's the why? Right? Services are great. I'm not knocking services. We all use different types of services, right? But why? What are they helping us to do? What is it helping us to achieve? And I think you've just captured that so well, of thinking about all of the different life experiences across the life span and in all of the different life domains and helping to explore possibilities. And yeah, just broaden that vision because you're right. It changes, right? What I wanted to do last year at this time is not the same thing that I want to do now because of the experiences I've had and the things that I've learned, so...

JAIME ZAHID: Absolutely. And I think that why is so important. As a former support coordinator, I can't tell you how many families I'd sit down with, and they'd say, I want to use ABC service provider. And I'd say, OK. Hi. Why don't we talk a little bit about what you want to do, what you're trying to achieve, before we select a service provider. And that provider that you suggested might very well be an excellent service provider, but we want to double check that the reason that we're using them aligns with the services and supports that they're able to provide us.

So one of the benefits of the tools that I've seen in my work is the ability for them to help in facilitating community supports and natural relationships, to support people and having meaningful relationships within their community and just overall meaningful days. So Jenny, can you speak to the value of the tools in the specific context?

JENNIFER TURNER: Sure. I'm going to go back to reciprocal roles and mapping relationships first. I think we use the term natural supports and informal supports-- and we all do it, right? It is the language of our system. It's how we've been taught to speak, but I think that can feel really confusing or overwhelming. I think about-- even my own life, I have some formal supports that I receive, the things that I pay for or somebody else pays for me, my health insurance, whatever that might be. And then, when you say natural supports, it's like, well, I don't know what that is. I don't know.

And specifically relationships, when you're thinking about asking a person for help or for support, it is-- I think it's natural sometimes for people to feel like then they have to do everything, right? They have to be everything. So I think one of the things that I love about that reciprocal roles tool or the mapping relationships tool, which is very similar, very related, is it helps to break down what specifically am I asking you to do, right? What is-- as a person in my life, at whatever intensity that might be. I have acquaintances who are part of my natural supports, right? They're not my best friends. They're not going to be deeply involved in supporting me, but there are things that they do in my life that are important.

I travel quite a bit for work. My neighbors pick up my Amazon packages. That's a natural support. If I were to ask my neighbor like hey, would you be my supporter? So I think that sometimes the tools can really help with identifying, again, getting back to that why and being very specific and helping teams really come together around specific needs or wants or desires. So I start there. I think then thinking about community supports and relationship building-- I always go back to the life domains. And the life domains-

- For those that aren't super familiar with the Framework, we talk about six different aspects of life or categories of life.

So we talk about and we think about health and safety, which are two of the domains that are really important, but we want to broaden that thinking to social and spiritual, which includes those relationships and what you do for fun. We think about daily life and employment, so what you do during the day, and education, and all of those different aspects. We think about community living, so where you live, and then we think about advocacy and engagement. How are you involved in decision making and in your community? So all six of those domains.

I think most of us develop relationships with people who have similar interests, right? We talk a lot about affinity groups. That's the formal term for it. And so, in relationship building, I think sometimes when you use the domains to identify what it is you want, what you enjoy, kind of what your interests are, what experiences you have had or want to have, it can give you a starting place to then think about where in the community can I go to be with other people who have similar interests. And then, that forms a natural network.

I'm a runner, so that would be in my healthy living domain and also a little bit in my social, spiritual. It's not about where it goes, but the point is, I meet up with other runners, and I now have a network of runners. Some of them, I just run with, right? That's all that they do for me. Some of them provide other types of support now in my life. So I think that, oftentimes, we might feel challenged to identify how to build those networks, how to build those community supports, and I would say always go back to the life domains. Always think about-- how can you connect with other people who are in similar places and have similar interests or similar goals and use that as a natural way to start forming those relationships.

And then, of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the star. So they can all go together, but the star really is about identifying all types of different resources, like Melanie said. So the star gives you a way to think about-- How can I use all of these different types of supports, people, technology, community, my own strengths and assets, and eligibility specific services to build and strengthen the others? Sometimes you may need a paid supporter to help you participate in community activities that then develop relationships. Or you may need technology to help connect you with other people, so it all fits together.

JAIME ZAHID: Absolutely, Jenny. And the beginning of your response, you delineated for us some of that jargon that I used in my question, and I appreciate that because we do-- you're right. In this field, we kind of get taught, self-taught in some situations, to use all of these terms like natural supports. And outside of this system, what does that mean to us? So thank you for delineating that and identifying that for listeners.

MELANIE AYERS: So I want to get back to something that you were talking about earlier, when you're doing these trajectories and what the person's idea of their best life and maybe their parent or family or their provider, whoever is with them, don't necessarily agree with that. What advice can you give to help them get the expectations and their desires to align a little better with the person who has a disability?

JENNIFER TURNER: Yeah. It's a great question. And, you know, I think that this is part of-- it's one of those natural parts of life. I think about, as I have gotten older and my parents having to let go, and that was gradual over time. I think one of the things that we don't do well in the disability field is that gradual letting go. It's very much like, OK, well, you're 18, so now you need to be able to make your own decisions. And now, you have self-determination because you're 18. And it's like, well, hang on a second. Decision making is a skill set that's learned over time, right? And that comes from making mistakes and learning from those mistakes.

And so, the first thing I would say is start early, as early as you possibly can, with small decisions, with small risks. That's something that has to be developed over time. I didn't learn how to make good decisions because I turned 18, and all of a sudden-- in fact, I made terrible decisions when I was 18, right? So I think there's an element of, first of all, just allowing that dignity of risk, the right to risk, the right to make some poor choices. But I think where I find Charting the LifeCourse to be really helpful in navigating that is everybody, again, having an opportunity to share their perspectives, their thoughts. So whether it's everybody doing their own trajectory and talking about-- What's my vision? What don't I want? What I tend to do is start with that. What don't I want? So I think that, oftentimes, when there's a difference of opinion, it's because there's some fear, at least that's been the experience in my life.

So with my sister, she actually got married for, and has since gotten divorced, unfortunately, but I didn't want her to get married. I didn't want her to marry that particular person, and it was because of some fears that I had for her. And I think we had to sit down as a family and really talk about-- Sarah, it's not that we don't want you to get married. It's not that we don't want you to be happy. It's-- we don't want these other things to happen. We don't want you to be exploited or-- there's a whole lot of personal things that could go into that I won't, but for us, it was zeroing in on what we didn't want, and then putting some safeguards in place for those things.

So again, in that example, kind of what it looked like for us and for our families is, ultimately, it was Sarah's decision to choose to get married. But we had a line in the sand, and said, if it gets to this point, are you OK with us stepping in and helping you leave this situation?

She said yes. Unfortunately, it got to that point, so my parents did have to step in and take some action, but that was a way that we could navigate. We still weren't happy about the fact that she was marrying this individual, but she learned from that experience. And heartache is something that happens to all of us. It's a normal part of life. So I think whenever we're thinking about sort of navigating the different expectations, the different desires, everybody getting to share what and why, and then thinking about what don't we want to have happen, and how can we put some safety nets in place to address those fears and barriers is a good place to start.

JAIME ZAHID: Excellent. And Jenny, you touched on so many great things there. And even just the example of your sister and her marriage, and unfortunately, the divorce. As you're talking, I'm thinking to myself, that's not something unique to disability at all. That's a sibling relationship. There's plenty of sisters and brothers across the United States right now saying, no, please don't marry that person, or fill

in the blank. And it's not unique to disability, and I think that it's so important, as family members, to recognize that we're going to have bad situations. And of course, nobody wants a bad situation for their loved one, but let's try and make it a learning experience, and make sure that there is safety precautions put in place. But otherwise, we do need to allow people to make their own decisions.

JENNIFER TURNER: And I think allowing people to try things, new things that maybe the parent or the family doesn't think that they can do. Just like when Emma was doing this computer work. I'm like, oh, I know she can navigate her iPad and stuff, but I'm like, I don't know if she can do this computer work, but let's give it a try. And it worked. So she always surprises me with what she can do. And just not putting those limits on our family members because we just never know what they're capable of when they're given the chance.

JAIME ZAHID: You're right. So Jenny, how can we change the narrative around the selection of services and supports? I think we have started to touch on this earlier. As person-centered planning is more widely and properly used, I'm sort of channeling the idea of training and even retraining people to stop looking for a menu of what's available, but rather, this is what I want and need. And where can I find it? Can you speak to that?

JENNIFER TURNER: Yeah, absolutely. I think that-- so I also spent some time in the provider world, so I'm very sensitive to providers, and I think sometimes they get a bad rap, right? We're trying to do the best we can and to provide the services that are needed. And you mentioned something earlier about the ABC provider may be the best provider. They may be fantastic and wonderful. I would add they also probably really want to know why you want them in their life, right? As a former provider, there are sometimes individuals that we would support, I didn't really know what we were supposed to be doing or helping with. And that's really hard as a direct support professional.

I'm going to spend eight hours with this individual, but I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing. So I think, as we-- that's at a very kind of micro level, a very granular level of when you're actually receiving the supports and services, but I think Charting the LifeCourse is a great way-- and Melanie really touched on this. You put forth your trajectory. You talk about-- where is it that I want to go? What do I want to accomplish? What does my good life look like? I don't think any of us wake up in the morning and say, man, I just really want some good services.

It's like, I want some good services, or I want coffee. I want to use coffee as a silly example. Listen, I love coffee. I love coffee. And part of my good life, and frankly, everyone around me's good life, is that I am caffeinated. This is important. I can use my integrated support star to say there's lots of different ways that I can get coffee. I can make it myself. It's OK. I can run through the gas station and get gas station coffee. Also OK, but man, there's a coffee shop in town. It's my very favorite coffee shop. I want to go to that coffee shop and get that service because I want good coffee so that I can be a kind person for the rest of the day, right?

So that's a really silly example, but I think as people with disabilities, as family members of people with disabilities, as people who facilitate person-centered planning, it's really easy to start with, well, here's the services that are available. At least you'll get something. What do you want? But we don't do that in our own life. We start with, what do I want, and then how do I identify what might be available? And if what I need isn't available, how do I advocate for change in order to make that available? I think that it's taking back a little bit of, again, the choice, the control, the power to say, I have the right to the life that I want to live and there are lots of different resources that can help me get there. I have the right to choose the one that makes the most sense.

JAIME ZAHID: Thanks so much for that, Jenny.

MELANIE AYERS: So as you're talking about what agencies and services can provide, how can we use the Charting the LifeCourse tools to help monitor and improve the quality of these services and what agencies-- and the system in general-- can provide for family members?

JENNIFER TURNER: So, I think, as we think about quality supports and services, it really, again, comes back to the why. What are those supports and services supposed to be achieving? And how are they helping the individual or the family move closer to that vision of what their good life is? How are they helping to fill in all of the colors of the star so that-- we talk a lot about not just an all green life. So how are we leveraging those supports and services to build relationships, to build skills, to access and really be connected to community resources, to use technology. So I think there's lots of ways that we can take the principles and the tools themselves to think differently about what supports are supposed to be achieving rather than, did the supports and service happen?

A lot of times, we measure the things that are easy to measure. We check the box of, were there eight hours of services? Yes. And so, I think if we start to dig into-- are these supports and services moving the trajectory, are we getting closer to that vision? And if we're not, have we identified and overcome some of those barriers, right? Like you said, Melanie, how are we changing the trajectory if that's what needs to happen? So I think that using each of the principles-- again, there's a way to really connect it to, what is it we want to measure, and how would we get that information? But ultimately, coming back to the purpose of services and supports is helping an individual to explore life possibilities, to plan, to problem solve, and to live the life they want to live. And so, are we really learning whether or not that's happening? That's what we should be measuring for that continuous quality improvement.

JAIME ZAHID: Excellent. Thank you so much for that Jenny. And unfortunately, I think we're about at the end of our time. And it's been a wonderful discussion. I really wish that we could chat on this topic for hours. I always get so excited to be in the presence of like-minded people on this topic, and really, on any topic. But unfortunately, our time is not infinite here. And so, any final thoughts or words of wisdom, takeaways that you'd love for, especially for people and families to take away about the LifeCourse tools?

JENNIFER TURNER: Sure. The one thing I would say is that there's no right or wrong, right? So as you're looking at the tools, if you jump on the website, there's no right or wrong place to get started. There's no

right or wrong way to fill out the tools. A lot of times, in our office, we just say throw the dart. Just try something. And so, I would just encourage anyone-- people, family, support coordinators, whomever. Just grab something that resonates with you and try it out, knowing that just the process is the point and that it's OK to just explore and figure it out.

JAIME ZAHID: Excellent. I love that. The process is the point. I think I'm going to steal that and use that every once in a while. And Melanie, thank you so much for sharing your perspective, as a parent and as a professional, on your experience with the tools.

MELANIE AYERS: Oh, you're welcome. Thank you.

JAIME ZAHID: Thanks for listening to this episode of BoggsCast, a podcast by The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. A full transcript of this episode can be found at [theboggscenter.podbean.com](http://theboggscenter.podbean.com). Be sure to subscribe to this podcast on your favorite streaming service to stay up to date with the newest episodes. To learn more about The Boggs Center, visit our website at [rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter](http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter) and follow us on Facebook at [TheBoggsCenteronDevelopmentalDisabilities](https://www.facebook.com/TheBoggsCenteronDevelopmentalDisabilities).