

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck, ND 58505**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Employment conference focuses on people with disabilities  
*Sessions will benefit individuals, guardians, service providers, and others***

BISMARCK, N.D. – A career coach and author, advocates, and experts on employment of people with disabilities, parent resources, and assistive technology will share their knowledge at a conference on employment of people with disabilities, August 18-19, at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel, 800 S. Third St., in Bismarck.

The North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities invites people with disabilities, parents and guardians, advocates, employers, and professionals who work to promote inclusive employment and community living to attend.

The conference begins Thursday, with registration at 12:30 p.m., followed by a welcome at 1 p.m. Registration is \$20, and same-day registration at the door is available.

The conference opening general session will begin at 1:30 p.m., featuring author and life and career coach Jodee Bock who will speak about getting beyond the fear factor to look ahead and create new possibilities.

General breakout sessions will follow on parent resources for employment preparedness for transition and on Mind Shift, formerly Specialisterne Midwest, a Fargo-based organization devoted to a world of work where all people are valued for their different ways of thinking. Mind Shift helps businesses benefit from the detail-oriented skills of people on the autism spectrum while providing meaningful, sustainable employment.

Ryley Newport and Ross Ryan of the Oregon Council of Developmental Disabilities will give Thursday's closing session from 4 to 6 p.m., on real jobs for real people that draws from their experiences in advocacy and public policy supporting employment of people with disabilities.

On Friday, Katherine Carol of the Colorado State Rehabilitation Council will give the opening presentation from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on ways to engage families in employment. Sessions on accommodations in the workplace, planning for the world of work, technology as a civil right and employment necessity, and a panel discussion on employment will follow. Bock will close the conference with a session titled: "Making the Leap to a Brand New Future."

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Individuals who need accommodations, including appropriate auxiliary aids to participate in the conference, can contact the council at 701-328-4605, ND Relay TTY 800-366-6888, or [britsmith@nd.gov](mailto:britsmith@nd.gov).

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities promotes choice, independence, productivity, inclusion, and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. For more information about the council, visit [www.ndcpd.org/SCDD/](http://www.ndcpd.org/SCDD/).

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