Cade (00:00)
Alright, welcome back to More Like Than You Think. as always, I'm Cade and joined here with Lee today. We're gonna talk all about benefits planning in the context of young adults, youth and young adults with disabilities, what to expect, what things to know. There's so many people out there that are confused on what benefits planning is and what it even is and what it looks like and the app real-world application of it and everything. So

This is gonna be a great episode. sit down, relax, and take a listen with us as we talk about that. So I'll just give a second to introduce Lee here. Lee is I would say an expert in vi in benefits planning, works with the D DRC and Lee, if you could just explain to us what the D D R C is and your experience with benefits planning.

Lee Sylvester (00:54)
Sure. So Kate, it's really nice to join you. I'm excited to be on the podcast with you today. so yeah, I my name is Lee Sylvester and I work for DDRC, which is a large nonprofit nonprofit service provider in the kind of Denver area. we largely work with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, but also other disabilities kind of you know from kind of very young people to people that are adults.

people that are retired, just kind of the whole spectrum of people. And one of my main roles here is heading up our benefits planning program, which is something we got started a couple years ago. And it's really its main focus is to help individuals and their families really understand how benefits interact together, especially when work is involved, which is something that you know is a really important piece for young people as they're going through school is really

thinking about like, you know, what's gonna happen when I work if I have benefits and you know that's a big concern that families and support teams have. And it was something that I recognized I've been in the field for a long time and recognized a few years ago that it was an important piece and so was able to get trained and certified with both as a certified benefits planner but also an additional certification that allows me to work with kind of that youth age individuals. so

Cade (02:18)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (02:19)
yeah.

Cade (02:20)
Awesome. That's really important work. Glad you're doing that. Yeah. cool. So yeah, like I said, today we're talking all about benefits

planning, especially what young adults with disabilities and their families need to know when they're thinking about work and their future. and so maybe we could just start with

Let's say like I'm a young adult with a disability and I'm thinking about getting my first job. What should I know about benefits before I get get going?

Lee Sylvester (02:50)
Well,

I I think that, you know, it's a good question to ask, you know, when someone is looking at that first job, you know, we'll and we'll say like, you know, you're that age, kinda fourteen to twenty, somewhere in there, you know, you're going through school and you have disabilities, you may be connected at your school, you're maybe going through some training programs, and yeah, there's a good chance that you may have benefits because you have disabilities. you know, I know as a young person I actually have lived experience with disability. I have cerebral palsy, so

I was hooked up with D VR when I was in school and kind of thinking about work. So, you know, I wanted to know well what does this mean? So I think that the first thing to know is just that, you know, having benefits does matter if you have them and understanding how they interact is really important for somebody to ask and to, you know, kind of get connected to find out what's going to happen when they work. And the really cool thing I think for kids to know is that if you have benefits, especially if it's

like social security benefits, Medicaid, those kinds of things based on disability. There are a lot of incentives that allow people to try work and to

Cade (03:54)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (03:54)
keep the benefits they need while they're doing that. so yeah it's it's a good question to have and I think if finding out exactly what benefits one has and really understanding how they interact together is an important thing to know as we explore work. And I would say always think about what you want to do for work first and then we'll

Cade (04:13)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (04:14)
figure out how the

how your benefits can make that work for you.

Cade (04:18)
Right. Yeah, that makes sense. You really have to think about

like what you actually want to do first and get into it and then figure out what that means as far as benefits. Yeah. so if someone comes to you like for assistance or help or I'm not sure if you do that one on one work or how that works, but if somebody is going to a benefits planner to get assistance there, like what would they need to bring?

And how would they how could they prepare?

Lee Sylvester (04:47)
So, you know, I think that, you know, you're hitting on a couple key points is, you know, finding someone to talk to. And yes, I do actually do the work of benefits planning

Cade (04:55)
Okay, yeah.

Lee Sylvester (04:56)
directly. And you know, I here in Colorado the way that we're able to do that is through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation,

Cade (05:04)
Okay.

Lee Sylvester (05:05)
and through Medicaid waiver so long term services and supports.

And so, you know, that may be the case in other states as well. You'd have to kind of figure out that process. But really I think that when someone kind of gets connected with a benefits planner, the first thing that, you know, I want them to know is who they are. Like, what do you want? You know, what do you

Cade (05:27)
Mm, mm.

Lee Sylvester (05:27)
want in life? Having a com just like you and I are having a conversation right now. It it's a people thing. You know, even

Cade (05:30)
Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (05:33)
though benefits are on paper and they're processes, what we really

want to do is

I

I wanna know who you are and what your goals are. I wanna know,

Cade (05:40)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (05:40)
you know, who who are the people in your life that matter.

who are the people that are going to help you get where you need to go. And who knows about the benefits you have if you don't be you know, so that we can understand that. And so coming prepared with just your full self and just

Cade (05:55)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (05:56)
kind of saying who you are and knowing who the people around you are supportive. I think that's the first thing. And just framing the whole conversation around

what's gonna matter to you as you're thinking

Cade (06:07)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (06:07)
about this, both in the immediate, kind of what's going on for you now, which is something we'll look at, what may be going on based on the decisions you want to make. And also thinking about the longer term of what it may look like for you to have benefits in the longer term, you know,

Cade (06:23)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (06:23)
depending on what your specific situation is. So I think those are some

Cade (06:28)
Gotcha.

Lee Sylvester (06:28)
things I want people to come in when I meet

Cade (06:30)
Yeah.

Yeah, it really sounds like just the such a big thing with anything work related is just knowing who you are and what you want to do and starting there and showing up further the support that you need, you know, with that.

Lee Sylvester (06:47)
I I think that yeah, I think that's an important piece, you know. And the cool thing about part of benefits, you know, especially when somebody is considering work is, you know, benefits planning's one piece, but there are also a lot of great supported employment opportunities for people when they're

Cade (07:02)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (07:02)
in school or if they have certain services that allow people to explore those work opportunities. I know at D D R C we do a lot of that work. Even benefits planning itself is housed under the supported employment department.

Cade (07:14)
Okay,

yeah.

Lee Sylvester (07:16)
because it really is, even though we wanna be able to recognize that benefits touches all parts of people's lives, that work is often one of the biggest pieces that people have and that's also from where a lot of the information needs to be understood is what's going on there and being able to say, you know, not only is it benefits planning available to you, but, you know, job coaches, job development, how are we going to help you get the skills that you need?

to kind of achieve your dreams, especially when work is what you're thinking about.

Cade (07:45)
Right, totally. Yeah, now one of the biggest things that I've heard a lot, from a lot of people in regards to benefits is will I lose my benefits at this point, that point, like if I do this, if I do that, like I've just heard that so much. and so would love for you to touch on that topic and like you know

Somebody somebody says, If I start working, I'm gonna lose my benefits, like what would you say to someone who has that fear?

Lee Sylvester (08:15)
Well,

first of all, I wanna acknowledge that any time someone is concerned about losing their benefits, it's a valid question. And I think it's a fair question to ask because they do matter. And you know, and work is certainly one of the things that people come at is like, you know, this I do know that work impacts benefits, and that is absolutely true. I'm not

Cade (08:34)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (08:35)
gonna say that it doesn't, but understanding how it impacts

and kind of alleviating that fear and actually walking people through a process so they can understand. Actually, I you know, I think this would be a great examp I have an example of somebody that we work with here at DDRC that had actually been choosing work for they've been working for twenty plus years and they got a letter from Social Security saying, we think you owe us forty thousand dollars And

Cade (09:03)
Cheese.

Lee Sylvester (09:04)
you know, her and her family and her support team was rightfully like worried. Like, is she gonna lose her benefits? Exactly that question

Cade (09:09)
Yeah. Hmm.

Lee Sylvester (09:12)
that you're asking. And, you know, should she stop work? Should you know, what do we need to do because her benefits

Cade (09:17)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (09:18)
matter? And I said, Let me take a look at it.

Cade (09:20)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (09:21)
And what we were able to do because she has a great team around her is to really say, you know what? Because the kind of social security

benefits you have, they can take into account the fact that you have a disability and you have certain accommodations around your job. They didn't

Cade (09:35)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (09:35)
take that into account when they were looking at your case. And

Cade (09:39)
yeah.

Lee Sylvester (09:39)
so there's a whole bunch of paperwork and processes to

Cade (09:42)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (09:43)
go through. But basically, we were able to have her job coach go and talk to the managers to verify that these things exist.

Cade (09:49)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (09:49)
We were

able to then, you know, because myself and other members in our organization kinda know how to do all the paperwork piece, we were able to p show this to social security and say, Hey, you didn't account for these things. And

Cade (10:01)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (10:02)
the conversation I had with her when she was worried was, you know what? If this goes the way it should, you're not gonna have to change a thing. We're gonna make the system

Cade (10:09)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (10:09)
work for you.

Cade (10:10)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (10:11)
That's what I love when I see happen is that this it's not you said this is what you want. Let's make how do we find that? So in her case, you know, we submitted everything, social security came back and said, You're right, you don't owe us any money. Actually we owe you money now because we hadn't been paying you for a few months. All of your benefits have been restored.

Cade (10:28)
Mm. Mm.

Lee Sylvester (10:31)
and she didn't have to change anything about our work activity. And because we actually did the benefits planning piece.

Cade (10:38)
okay, yeah.

Lee Sylvester (10:38)
is

that because now that it's been clarified, she knows that she can continue to work at the same levels that she's at right now, knowing

Cade (10:46)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (10:47)
that it's her benefits are gonna be there because we did all of the paperwork to prove it rather than getting a scary notice. so

Cade (10:54)
Right.

Lee Sylvester (10:55)
that you know I think so that's a perfect example I think of someone who actually had that fear and rightfully so. But we were able to

Cade (11:00)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (11:01)
just kind of work through it and then say, here, let's get the system to work for you and it

did.

Cade (11:05)
Yeah.

That's amazing. That's an awesome story. Like having a team around you and support and everything like that to address those fears and scary things when they come up like that, 'cause that's I mean, that would scare anyone. I'm sure. so it's awesome to hear that, you know, if you have support and a team around you to work together and know those things then

There's things you can do. I think that's big piece.

Lee Sylvester (11:33)
Yeah, and I think that you're hitting on a piece that's an important piece there as well is that, you know, benefits programs, they do send notices and most have really they have timelines. You know,

Cade (11:44)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (11:45)
usually you're not gonna get a notice it just says your benefits stop. They're gonna say, We need more information. And, you know, benefits planning is that space where if we've put together the materials in a way that makes sense,

And really I would like I think that's an important piece is to say that, you know, when we're doing benefits planning, it's not just about talking to somebody. It really

Cade (12:06)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (12:07)
is about after we've kind of had that interview that we were talking about, is really verifying the benefits somebody has and putting them together in what we call a benefit summary and analysis, which basically,

Cade (12:18)
Okay.

Lee Sylvester (12:19)
you know, we put it all together and it's it shows like these are the benefits you have, these are your work goals, this is what happens.

with your benefits as you reach these work goals or what's happening with them right now, some things you may need to follow up on, and really sets a baseline so that someone understands what's going on and they can make that informed choice. And then that benefit summary and analysis, which after it's completed, is something someone can use kind of as a resource as well.

And if they have future questions, you know, that's a good baseline, you know, I get that because I do provide support for people where I've done say that BSA and

Cade (12:55)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (12:56)
you know it's done, but then they keep me on kind of on retainer. We can do that with Medicaid waivers in Colorado, which is cool. that

Cade (13:03)
Mm, mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (13:04)
so when questions come up or work changes happen, they can call me and go, Hey Lee, you know, I'm thinking about they want to give me a raise. Is that okay?

Cade (13:11)
Mm.

Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (13:11)
My first user wants to be, well, yes. But

let's make sure, let's look and make sure that we're gonna know how that impacts your benefits.

Cade (13:19)
Right.

Lee Sylvester (13:20)
but having that baseline BSA really does help clarify that and kind of getting that so that people understand moving forward what's going to happen with their benefits when they make those decisions.

Cade (13:32)
Okay, gotcha. And do you do that is that something that gets put together like when you meet with benefits planner?

Lee Sylvester (13:39)
So generally the process, and again I'm speaking in Colorado, you know, I know,

Cade (13:43)
Yeah, yeah.

Lee Sylvester (13:45)
is that, you know, through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, or if this service is provided on the waivers, usually it's about a 10 hours that I have to spend with somebody to do the work of meeting with them, putting together this benefit summary and analysis and covering it with them. So a bunch of my work is sometimes sitting in front of a computer doing

paperwork.

Cade (14:06)
Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (14:07)
But the result of that is that we've been able to verify the benefits and then be able to share with the person what's going on for them and their team, as well as address any of the questions they kind of came into it with. And for D VR, like that's generally the capstone of doing the work if you're doing a full

Cade (14:25)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (14:25)
benefits summary and analysis. and also kind of where your aim is at the beginning of working with people on waivers for benefits planning.

Cade (14:34)
Gotcha. Okay, that makes sense, yeah. So moving on to kind of more family perspective,

Lee Sylvester (14:41)
Mm.

Cade (14:42)
what's something that you know you wish families knew about benefits planning when they're young adult or young person in their family is thinking about employment?

Lee Sylvester (14:52)
No, I I think that's a really good question. And you know, I've had the opportunity in my career to work in like residential and day programs and employment. So I've kind of been run the gamut of

Cade (15:03)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (15:04)
things. And you know, when I what I found with benefits planning with families when they're really thinking about early stages and, you

know, you're thinking about well what when my kid goes to work, what do I need to know? Is to know that, you know, there are some transition points that happen when someone is a kid to an adult at age eight

especially with social security. They kind of look at it from a perspective of, Okay, you know, w what were you learning as a kid and now how is it gonna impact your work as an adult? And so there are some points in there where

benefits are looked at in a bit different way. But one of the

Cade (15:38)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (15:38)
really cool things is is there are a lot of protections in place around say social security benefits for children

Cade (15:44)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (15:45)
that when they transition to adult, even if they aren't deemed to be disabled from a adult perspective, they can often keep their benefits

while they're still in school. So in that age eighteen to twenty one, as long as they're kind of enrolled in the appropriate spaces. There's also this is actually a really cool kind of to give you another story.

Cade (16:05)
Yeah, yeah, please.

Lee Sylvester (16:06)
is I was actually working with somebody this summer, who I believe he's nineteen and he's in the transitions program at his school. So it's kind of, you know, after age eighteen but before age twenty one where you f we're you know

Cade (16:20)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (16:21)
person with disabilities can still kind of go to school and get some work experience, that kind of thing, is he had a paid work experience that was offered to him over the summer separately and he was estimated to earn probably three to four thousand dollars and he had SSI income and there's something called the student earned income exclusion where students that are enrolled in school, even if it's summer, you don't actually have to be in class. But you know, if

you're still in school and you have SSI

you

can actually have a good chunk of the amount of money you make in a year excluded from reducing your SSI check. So in his case,

Cade (16:58)
Mm, okay.

Lee Sylvester (17:00)
he was actually able to go through the summer, earn all of that money, still keep his full SSI check, go back to school in the fall.

And that's and

Cade (17:07)
Wow, okay.

Lee Sylvester (17:08)
so that's a really cool benefit for people for SSI. so that's and something that not you know, a lot of people always know about and it's not something Social Security advertises, but it is something that a benefits planner can be like, Hey, this is an important piece if you want to,

Cade (17:25)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (17:26)
you know, be earning income while you're growing up. you're in going through

Cade (17:29)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (17:30)
that process.

Cade (17:31)
Yeah, I bet that's really important for that like window of eighteen to like twenty one whenever 'cause that's a just a transition period, like you know, kind of being an adult for the first time and stepping into new things and things changing a lot. So yeah, that that sort of stuff is huge, I

Lee Sylvester (17:52)
You know, and I think actually another thing you you were triggering for me

Cade (17:56)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (17:56)
is when I'm thinking about families is, you know, for individu you know, for kids that maybe they're gonna need ben maybe they feel like they may need benefits their whole life. You know,

Cade (18:05)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (18:06)
and maybe they don't work maybe they work but they don't work it a lot. You know, maybe they're just working a few hours a week and so on. So in those cases, often there's a good possibility that when their parents retire, the way that

Cade (18:18)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (18:18)
benefits interact for them can change and they actually can get benefits

off their parents' record, which overall is good. Like the it's generally a good thing,

Cade (18:23)
Okay. Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (18:28)
but that transition can be complicated and the way systems interact can be confusing. But it's also good for families to know that this is a change that happens and can inform maybe decisions they make around retirement if they think that their kid may be part of this space where they may get benefits. Because when they retire and this is kind of going out to the parents is that for

those in those cases, what their retirement benefit from Social Security directly ties to how much the kid would get from a

Cade (18:58)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (18:58)
benefit. So delaying retirement may be a lifetime benefit for kids.

Cade (19:02)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (19:03)
So but knowing that when someone's younger, so they can think about that if that's going to be a potential case,

Cade (19:10)
Sure.

Lee Sylvester (19:11)
I think is an important piece. So I I think that benefits planning

Cade (19:13)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (19:13)
can be very valuable early.

Cade (19:16)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (19:16)
And something

also, you know, D VR, at least in Colorado, can even authorize a limited benefits planning authorization where they're like, hey, if you want to talk to somebody like Lee for a couple hours, just to understand what's going on without going through that whole benefit summary and analysis process, that is

Cade (19:32)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (19:33)
something that they can authorize for people, for young people if it's a valuable tool here in the state.

Cade (19:40)
Okay,

gotcha. That's really good info. I d I didn't even know that.

Lee Sylvester (19:44)
Mm-hmm.

Cade (19:45)
so it sounds like you know, I I'm kind of picturing someone maybe thinking about their benefits and everything and is like, you know, maybe I can find everything I need to know online, but I'm kind of seeing that that's not true. So what are you know, like that was probably one thing, but like what are some other things that makes

actually seeing a a benefits planner in person, what are the like draws to that and the benefits of that? instead of just being like, I can just find everything I need on

Lee Sylvester (20:18)
Well, I'll I'll say this, I I'm a certified benefits planner and have been

Cade (20:22)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (20:22)
for years and I can't find everything online. You know, I think that

Cade (20:25)
Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (20:30)
going to somebody who has this knowledge and being able to sit down with them is really valuable because each benefits situation is going to be individualized for the person and you know, you know, a young person that's thinking about work, whatever's going on for them is gonna be very different than maybe even the person next to them.

You know, a a great example is someone tells me as a benefits planner, I have social security benefits. That could be social security disability, that could be supplemental security income. There are a range of things where I have Medicaid and and so

Cade (20:59)
Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (21:01)
there are layers to those things and what a benefits planner will do is can verify exactly what kind of benefit you have so that they can then talk to you about your personal situation. And I think that I as

what I found is someone will go, I didn't realize that it was different because talking back to that fear piece that you have, they'll say, Well so and so said that they can only work this much and I'd

Cade (21:25)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (21:26)
be like and you I'm like, I don't know exactly what their situation is.

Cade (21:29)

Right.

Lee Sylvester (21:29)
maybe very different for you. I don't know what their case is. So let's talk about you and what's going on for you so that we can give you the information that's valuable. And honestly, you know, even with AI and all of the other kind of cool

Cade (21:43)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (21:44)
advances in the world,

This isn't one of those things yet that they can just be like someone can show up and they can like, Here's everything you need to know. You really

Cade (21:52)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (21:53)
do need somebody that not only can put this stuff together, but also really understand your individual situation so that they

Cade (22:00)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (22:01)
can

give you that personalized report and also answer questions with the family and the team because I think actually something I think it's important for people to understand on the podcast is you know a benefits planner's role is not to be a benefits manager it's not

Cade (22:15)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (22:15)
to you know actively take over things for somebody it's really to kind of give this snapshot of what's going on especially when work is involved and then often maybe to be someone in the background that can kind of point people in the right direction and give

give

them good information

Cade (22:31)

Mm.

Lee Sylvester (22:32)
and around what's going on for them and kind of translate some of these complicated systems and a way

Cade (22:39)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (22:40)
that is hopefully a bit more digestible.

Cade (22:44)
Right.

Yeah, and I think there's also something to say about having someone in your corner, like an actual person there, you know, who you work with is always just beneficial, you know.

Lee Sylvester (22:56)
I I I think that's absolutely true and I do encourage, you know, I think the best thing that, you know, someone can do is just start asking questions. You know,

Cade (23:05)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (23:05)
if you're in s if someone's in school and they're a question, you know, talk to your teacher. Say, hey, you know, especially if if someone with a disability they may be connected with Vogue Rehab through a swap program, through transitions.

Cade (23:15)
Great.

Lee Sylvester (23:16)
Those are just some common points of interaction

Cade (23:18)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (23:20)
and you know, saying, Hey and and if you know what benefit you have, being like, Hey, I need to really understand

how this is gonna impact. So keep asking those questions. You know, in Colorado at least, one of the great tools that we have is a benefit we have the Colorado Apscase Chapter Society Association of People Supporting Employment. Which I'm the co chair of the benefits planning

committee. So I have a I have a stake in it, but I

Cade (23:45)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (23:46)
we have

a benefits planning landing page, that just kind of says some of the success stories people have had with benefits planning, as well as has a benefits planning guide that shows people kind of those access points in our state about

Cade (24:01)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (24:01)
where you can access benefits paying. So vocational rehabilitation, certain Medicaid waivers. and then also points to some of the larger availability like the ticket to work program, which is something that's available for anyone that has social security disability or SSI income and wants to think about work opportunities. That's another way that they can kind of look into the understanding how benefits interact.

When they want to choose work.

Cade (24:32)
Okay,

yeah. Thanks for sharing those resources. That's super helpful. so kind of starting to wrap up here, what are the main takeaways that you would want a young person with a disability to take away from this conversation if they, you know, get to this point and maybe have lots of thoughts in their heads? Like what would you want them to really focus on?

Lee Sylvester (24:59)
I I I think the first thing I want them I I would I would encourage anybody to think about that's listening to this is to think about what you want in life. Really just start from there and you know and if you are somebody that has benefits or if you're a family member and you know th your kid has benefits is to start asking questions about how these things are going to interact and get connected to somebody that can answer those questions either through the school and it's okay to ask questions. I mean that's something we always say to

kids.

It's okay to ask questions. And I think just asking those questions

about, hey, I really need to understand my benefits and how that's going to interact with work before I can make this choice. Or for families, to really kind of think about what does this look like for us as we're moving through our lives and how do we make sure that the person that we care about can really

access what they need moving forward. and I will add that I think benefits planning is real when someone does access benefits planning, what they may also find is they may also find that, hey, I didn't know that a benefit could do this for me, or maybe there isn't a or maybe there's a benefit that I don't have, but kind of leaves pointing to that may be valuable to look at that may be allows me to continue to choose work in an ongoing

Cade (26:16)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (26:16)
way, you know.

Cade (26:17)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (26:18)
But having that kind of confidence as they're moving forward.

Cade (26:21)
Awesome. I think that's an amazing takeaway. Thanks for wrapping that up for us. That was awesome. is there anything else that we didn't cover that maybe is in your mind that you still want to talk about before we end things?

Lee Sylvester (26:36)
You know, I I think that I I I want people to know that, you know, there are a lot of incentives and tools to be able to be used when some for when people choose work and you know and it doesn't have to be an either or thing.

doesn't have to be I have my benefits or I have work. It's really understanding how everything interacts together in a way that's beneficial. And I want people to know that you know you don't have to be afraid. That's why

Cade (27:02)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (27:02)
people like me exist is to help kind of help people understand that you can do these things. We just want

Cade (27:10)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (27:11)
to make sure that you understand what happens and there've been a lot of great success stories that I've seen and I hope that more

people will use services like this to help them kind of manage what's going on in their world and understand that they can make the choices they want in life and have the support they need.

Cade (27:29)
Yeah,

I do too. speaking of, if someone did want to find a benefits planner that they could get in touch with, maybe o across the US, what is a kind of a general rule of thumb? I know it's different in all sorts of states and everything. but maybe if you have any tips.

Lee Sylvester (27:50)
Yeah, so I I think, you know, for a young person, school. That's gonna be your best step is to talk to a teacher, talk

Cade (27:58)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (27:58)
to you know, a DVR a voc a vocational rehabilitation counselor. That that's something that exists in every state.

Cade (28:05)
Yeah.

Lee Sylvester (28:06)
you know, obviously they interact a bit differently in each state, but that is going to be a big kind of connection point is schools.

If somebody has Medicaid supports, that's also sometimes talk to your case manager if you're someone who

Cade (28:21)
Mm.

Lee Sylvester (28:22)
has that that person may be able to point you in the right direction. you can even look up benefits planning in your state and it may point to certain projects or resources that are available and then that ticket to work is really a national

It's part of social security. So it's actually very connected. So

people that are specifically

Cade (28:40)
Okay. Yeah. Okay.

Lee Sylvester (28:43)
to social security. and you know, I can tell you that there are benefits planners across our nation. They're wonderful. I get a chance to interact with them regularly. So we

Cade (28:53)
Mm-hmm.

Lee Sylvester (28:53)
are out there and you know, it's just a matter of finding that direct points of connection and keep asking questions until somebody says, Yeah, I can

kinda help you with that and kinda get you what you need.

Cade (29:08)
Yeah, totally.

Awesome. Thanks, Lee. really appreciate you sharing everything that you did today and that. And yeah, we will put the resources that Lee mentioned, like Ticket to Work, and some other resources in the description of this episode. So if you want to check those out, feel free to do that. and yeah, feel free to

visit Project Power's resource directory. We will put those resources in there and you can access them through there. As always, thanks for listening. If there's anything in this episode that you want further clarification on or have questions or anything, feel free to reach out to Project Power or me or reach out to us and we can get you in contact with Lee potentially or someone else.

Or anything like that.

Lee Sylvester (30:04)
Absolutely. I I remain available. I look forward to connecting and if I can be of support I would love to do that. I have a heart in doing this and I wanna see people be successful.

Cade (30:15)
Yeah,

that's awesome. I absolutely love that. Cool. Well this was an awesome episode. I hope everyone who's listening was able to get something out of this. and with that we will wrap up and see you next time.