

November 2022 APS TARC Podcast Transcript

APS Oral History: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future

[00:00:00] **Krista Brown:** Welcome to the Adult Protective Services Technical Assistance Resource Center, APS TARC podcast. We come to you with the goal of sharing promising practices and innovations for the APS field, and to highlight what is achievable with fresh ideas and new partnerships to help you envision what may be replicated in your program.

In this podcast, Jennifer Spoeri, APS TARC subject matter expert, speaks with three legends of APS, Georgia Anetzberger, Tommy Reid, and Joe Snyder, who offer their unique perspectives and reflections on their long careers, how far APS in the field have come, and some of the critical challenges that lie ahead.

Now, let's join them in conversation.

[00:00:45] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Welcome to the APS TARC podcast. In the past podcast, we have highlighted various programs built with grant funding and shared this information in the hopes of innovation being replicated across the country and in the territories.

Today, however, we will be [00:01:00] changing things up a bit and we will have a conversation with three legends of APS. Just as we can learn from one another and sharing programmatic ideas, we can learn from those who have done this. APS work for years and have seen the significant growth in innovation occur.

It's also very refreshing to see how far our field of APS has come. So, without further ado, I would like to introduce Georgia Anetzberger, Joe Snyder, and Tommy Reed. I will let each of them tell the listeners a bit about their career and background in APS, Georgia. We'll start with.

[00:01:31] **Georgia Anetzberger:** So, when I first got the invitation to speak, I started thinking about how long that's been, that I've been involved with both the field of elder abuse as well as the adult protective services.

And when I thought about it, it's just two years short, a half century, so it goes back a long time to 1974 and uh, happened to be my first social work job. I had been interested in older people [00:02:00] and wanted to be a social worker, mainly to change their situation ever since I was 16 years old. And, um, this particular job came into existence in a rural county right east of Cleveland.

I had only 5,000 older people in it, in fact. But they were hiring me as. Um, older adult specialists could do anything and everything with regard to older people that might come along. And, um, what I found at this public welfare agency, and by the way, they were able to hire me because. Title 20 of

the Social Security Act had just been passed, and they were flooded with money to do new and different things than they had ever done before.

But what I find myself doing anything and everything for people was mostly adult protective services. And in doing that kind of work, I also found that [00:03:00] those cases, the individuals that I encountered, situations of self-neglect, of financial exploitation, of physical abuse, all of that, they just stuck with me.

And I got to think, if I ever had the opportunity in my life to make a difference for the lives of those individuals that I would do that. And so, Fortunately, had lots of opportunities over the years, and although the bulk of my work has been really in the field of elder abuse and not specifically with the adult protective services, in fact, adult protective services still has been a large part of, uh, what's important to me and what I've done so, Uh, for example, uh, I've spent 15 years administering adult protective services, uh, both at the public, um, public level, about five years of that and about 10 years, uh, for a non-profit that was [00:04:00] designated under a higher law with adult protective services work.

Um, I staffed the committee that wrote Ohio's Adult Protective Services Law and have been involved in subsequent amendments to that law. I helped establish the oldest. elder abuse networks in the country. And they both were initially around Adult Protective Services. The first was in 1982, the Protective Services Consortium, for Older Adults Cuyahoga County, uh, a local uh, network.

And then the other was the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services, the first state network in the country. And that was in 1984. I've been involved with five funded. adult protective services research projects. Um, I've put together Ohio's training curriculum for adult protective service workers.

And probably the last thing I'll mention is I've been involved with a variety of state and national [00:05:00] efforts to improve adult protective services. Uh, I served on both of the two groups, um, the expert panels for the Voluntary Consensus Guidelines. As well as the, um, similar group for the elder, um, Adult Protective Services Research, agenda.

[00:05:20] **Jennifer Spoeri:** So just a little part of APS background, right? You just touched a little bit of it being facetious. So next we've got Tommy Reed.

[00:05:29] **Tommy Reed:** Hi there. Um, so I am in Texas and um, in Texas, the APS program is a state administered program. There are 254 counties under that jurisdiction. And, uh, I've always worked out in the field in western part of the state of Texas.

Um, I recently completed a 48-year career. Um, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at [00:06:00] APS is the program inside that agency. And I've, uh, worked and managed in that agency's various programs, uh, for that period of time. Um, in the early 1990s, Texas had a, a statewide program that was called, uh, Community Care to the Aged and Disabled.

And it provided limited home based, uh, services and care to that population. And our case workers, uh, at that time began to, uh, identify clients within. Caseloads who were victims of what we now call abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and realized that those clients needed more specialized care and more, uh, and services.

So, um, I developed a pilot program in our rural region. And a part of West Texas to experiment with specialized adult protective services case workers and units. Um, we got that off the ground [00:07:00] finally, and about six months after or into that, uh, pilot program, Texas, uh, Started its first statewide APS program.

And so, we were folded of course, into that program. And from there I became one of, uh, Texas first, uh, district managers. Uh, uh, being responsible for about a fifth of the state of Texas and sort of more or less that sort of thing from there forward. Uh, Judy Rouse was the first director of Texas APS at that time and was very instrumental in getting that started.

My geographic area of responsibility changed many times, uh, through the years, but usually consisted of around a hundred or so counties, uh, including vast geographic areas of, uh, West Texas. While much of that area is very rural and sparsely populated, uh, it also [00:08:00] usually consisted of one or more larger cities like El Paso or the city of Austin or some of the, uh, a little bit smaller towns.

So, um, the area also is bounded by two states and one foreign country, Mexico, uh, New Mexico, and. Oklahoma. So those added, uh, to the fun of working in that area. Um, my education was in, uh, business management and then in social services with a masters, uh, from Our Lady of the Lake for that. So it was, it turned out to be a really good mix of managing in this arena for, um, for all those years.

[00:08:42] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Right.

What a background. And Joe Snyder,

[00:08:48] **Joe Snyder:** Thank you, Jennifer. My Master's was in Counseling, and I have a certificate in Gerontological Counseling. So, I took a ton of gerontology courses, and it got me interested in the [00:09:00] phenomenon of aging and when long term care started at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, um, private nonprofit area Agency in Aging America.

Um, I started as a frontline worker and. As after a stop as a supervisor, nine years later, I was a director of protective services at, at, at the agency. Um, and to give you some context, when I retired in 2018, the law in Pennsylvania was 30 years old. And the first, um, five years, we had four different directors and then 11-month absence.

And the next 25 it was me. So, I got to form the program. With the help of all the people throughout the country that I leaned on, um, put together a program that, that flourished for 25 years. Um, at the same time, um, I was, I, I was working a lot. We do a lot in APS as you all know, but I was working [00:10:00] specifically with financial institutions, starting with banks and credit unions and going to broker dealer.

And that's continued throughout my career, continues today, so that became a theme for me going through same time. My second career was with NAPSA National Adult Protective Services Association, where I started as the regional rep and as I started as the regional rep, the first thing I did is called every administrator in the state in my region, invited them to Philadelphia for a meeting.

It's the first time we all met face to. And from there we just went to all the different states. We rotated. It was really great. And I had the inside, the regional rep. I was then the conference chair, the membership chair, the president elect president, past president. And for the last decade or so, I've been the policy chair for NAPSA, along with the, one of the founding members of the Financial Exploitation Advisory Board, NAPSA.

So, it's all [00:11:00] culminated, in a great career, and I've done a lot of work regionally and nationally. I was part of the first Elder Abuse Summit in Washington in 2001 and participated in the Elder Justice Roadmap Project, um, back a few years ago. So, so I've had a, I've had my, my career at brought up corporation aging in the aging and that's given me tons of opportunities to meet and work with the people who I admire most, which is, APS workers and supervisors.

[00:11:33] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Wow, you guys have such a diverse background, but all within APS and it just shows you how much, how multifaceted APS really is. So, um, let's take a little turn here and I want to ask each of you, what do you consider to be the most important innovations or developments in APS during your career? So, Georgia will start with you again.

[00:11:57] **Georgia Anetzberger:** So there, there are three that immediately come [00:12:00] to my mind at least. And uh, the first has to do with the enactment of state laws that both legitimized the Adult Protective Services as an intervention, but also provided direction for what it would be, how it would be handled. Um, and what it would cover.

Um, and also that those laws right from the beginning serve to limit adult protective services power to take away the rights of older clients and vulnerable younger clients that it was directed at and why that was so important. Um, there was a concern, especially during the 1970s, uh, that adult protective services had the potential of eroding rights, and by eroding rights it would have negative consequences overall, and [00:13:00] probably the initial, uh, thrust came from the research that had been done by the Benjamin Rose Institute.

In Cleveland was one of seven demonstration projects, um, that helped develop the concept of, uh, adult protective services across the country. And it had a very rich, uh, and still does, for that matter,

a very rich research base within it. And so, it used. A randomized trial, uh, basically to look at the consequences of the receipt of adult protective services versus not receiving it but having similar characteristics as an individual.

And what I found was those that had received adult protective services were more likely to be institutionalized and died. And you can imagine the controversy that that. And it really was instrumental in really thinking about, and for those [00:14:00] that developed these laws, which began in 1973, by the way, those who developed those laws to be conscious of limiting the powers of APS so that it wouldn't have those adverse consequences.

So that's the first thing. The second thing, um, as you can imagine from what I said about myself, I'm a big fan of, uh, networks and teams and people working together. I think elder abuse is such a difficult, complex, um, A wicked problem, as they would call it, that um, in fact you have to have all kinds of systems, organizations, and disciplines working together.

It simply cannot be done otherwise. And so, I'm a big fan of networks and teams and consortiums and coalitions, and I think they have been fundamental in making any element. Dealing with elder abuse and, uh, the [00:15:00] use of adult protective services possible. So that's the second concept for having those kinds of things really began in the fifties and sixties, but making it all happen, took a couple decades later.

Uh, and the third thing that I would think was the most important development is the Administration for Community Living. Providing a home for adult protective services, which gives it a federal anchor, it, it provides it with support, has the ability to strengthen and to grow the program. That would never have happened had Kathy Greenlee not stepped forward and made that announcement and she deserves incredible. I believe so.

[00:15:45] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Thank you, Georgia.

And you know, yesterday we, we heard the continuation of that with the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, so the work continues from that federal home. So, uh, Joe, what do you consider to be the most important innovations or developments? [00:16:00]

[00:16:00] **Joe Snyder:** Well, I'm going to piggyback first of all just what, um, Georgia said, the, the, the, uh, the recognition.

Recognizing this is a multidisciplinary problem that requires a multidisciplinary response and the elevation of APS as being an equal partner, um, in the collaborations and, and a critical partner. Um, we we're proud that in our task force that we formed in Philadelphia, you know, APS founded, APS headed for it, still heads it through the, through the 13 years it's been in existence, bringing together all the, all the different.

Disciplines together. So I think those things, um, and, and what was really the first thing that came to mind for me is the collaboration and the network that's really, we had a lot of natural ones in Philadelphia, but we worked to establish more and to see them develop over the country, um, it makes it so much easier to work when you know and [00:17:00] respect your partner.

Um, and it just is a great thing. So that was first for. Second for, from a professional point of view, literally was the, Was the, um, was the founding and growth of NAPSA the National Protective Service Association. For me, I was the only director of a protective service program in Pennsylvania. No other city was big enough.

Pittsburgh subcontracted theirs and I had nobody to talk to about my issues and I can't even remember who first introduced me to. You know, told me, I think I first called Marilyn Whale in Tennessee, who was, who was instrumental in putting together these networks and then introduced me to Joanne Otto, of course, and Kathleen Quinn.

And I was off and running. Um, you know, I knew I was among my people immediately and people that all knew more than I did, so I could learn from all of them. And the, the ability to [00:18:00] talk to people across the country, the network as. Proud of saying, probably shouldn't be proud of this, but proud of saying I've never had an original idea in my life.

I just keep stealing bits of things from everybody across everywhere and trying to see how they would fit in to the concept of where we were going in Philadelphia and the overall, um, field of, of APS. And it was only made possible through NAPSA and to watch from the growth of people sitting around at the Texas conference meeting at 7:00 AM in the.

You know, a dozen people start talking to see the growth today of the, I don't even know how many members we have now. Jennifer keeps going up so fast. Um, 1800. 1800 members from from 12 or 15 and now that'd be the, you know, the grant for the National Training Center, which will revolutionize the field in my view, is just mind. [00:19:00]

And, um, you know, it's comfortable for anybody, anywhere, you know, a caseworker from Iowa to come up to you and say, hey, I've heard you've done this, and can you tell me, here's what I have. And it happens all the time amongst us. So, it's it that's really been for a professional growth. Growth and the growth of the field and pushing it.

Forward to where it should be. That's been, that's been the, uh, the big thing for me on a professional basis. So those are two things that come to mind for me.

[00:19:29] **Jennifer Spoeri**: Great. So, it really all started in Texas, so Tommy can bring it home now.

[00:19:36] **Tommy Reed:** Well, Texas course never minds taking credit for anything. Um, . But, um, I, I do recall some of those, uh, early conferences in the beginning of the APS program that, uh, Texas, um, hosted and, uh, being a field manager, uh, we weren't in that, um, 7:00 AM meeting with you, Joe, but we [00:20:00] were, uh, very impressed with all the leadership from around the country who came to some of those meetings and from, from other countries and Japan and Norway and wherever.

It was interesting to see the program and its infancy at that time. Um, my thoughts are a little bit different from you guys because you're looking at things on such a broader, uh, and maybe more national perspective. And my thoughts about, uh, through the history of APS had more to do with sort of things that affected us here in the state of Texas, and I think automation was one of the biggest.

Uh, changes and had the greatest impact on us. Uh, Texas was one of the early adapters to automation and um, then as things went on, we became very, um, concerned about, and I think did a fairly good job of data collection. And a lot of that data has been, um, [00:21:00] helpful not only to our state as I understand it, but to others, um, others as well.

Um, that of course was an interesting ride and, uh, moving from, I, I, I remember the days of paper and, and, uh, paper files and all of that sort of thing and, and those changes to automation. And, uh, all that went through that. Uh, I was thinking yesterday about, um, the case, the, the changes just with some of the, uh, equipment and whatever we, I think early on, uh, we got something called bag phones, or we called it the brick.

It weighed about a hundred pounds, and you would put it in your car and then you had a little, uh, magnetic. Antenna you popped on the top of your car and had a cord running through your window into your car. And we looked so cool with those, uh, devices. They seldom worked because the connectivity was very awful at [00:22:00] that point in time.

And then particularly working in rural areas, like a lot of my staff were, uh, there really wasn't much hope, but we looked cool while we were doing. Um, I think we went from that to, uh, pagers and then blackberries were around for a bit and, um, then iPhones for some of the managers and then eventually iPhones for all of the staff.

Um, and it was pretty revolutionary. Um, In Texas, there's stiller issues in some parts of the state with connectivity issues because of being so rural and spread out. But those things do, uh, continue to improve over time. Um, a little aside about computers with automation, um, we had of course desktops in the beginning.

Uh, but at some point, and again, this is history according to me only, so if you can edit this, but, uh, my recollection is that one of. Uh, Texas [00:23:00] legislative sessions way back, um, the program asked for a certain number of additional staff, and the decision that was made was not to give us

staff, but to give us funds that were earmarked specifically for, uh, something called laptop computers.

We had no idea what they were, but the money was to be used only for that and came with the expectation from that legislature that they would be used in the field and not as just new desktop computers. And almost overnight, the, this gift was thrust upon us, uh, with, uh, little time for any planning or training.

Or preparation at all. And, uh, frankly, I, I think some, some staff still, um, who've been around long enough still remember that and suffer from the trauma of that and are still trying to adjust to the idea of using computers in a different [00:24:00] way. But, but over time, uh, we really, I think made, uh, good use of the automation and, um, even with the, the, uh, laptop computers, finally found some ways to do mobile case work in a more effective kind of way.

[00:24:17] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Wow.

That is, that is something All you needed was like a little siren to go on the top of the car with the brick phone, you know, just imagining, I mean, it's, it's something. So really networking Federal Home and ACL, collaborating with your peers and areas like NAPSA automation and technology. So those are, Really, really good things to point out about innovative developments in APS.

Let's take it more personal now, and um, I'd love to hear from each of you about what career accomplishment you're most proud of, because you've all had lengthy, um, and glamorous careers in aps, but tell us what you're most proud of. And we can again, start with [00:25:00] Georgia.

[00:25:00] **Georgia Anetzberger:** Well, actually a couple. Are things I've already talked about, but I have to begin with, it was, uh, such an honor and such a foundational thing, um, to, to be able to, uh, staff that committee that wrote Ohio's Adult Protective Services Law, partly because it was such a great committee, truly a great committee.

It it was comprised of 10 individuals, nine of which were women. One man, he happened to be a minister and also, um, had his responsibilities, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program. And among the nine other people, uh, four of them were attorneys. Uh, four of us were social workers, and one was a nurse. Everybody had experience in dealing with older people and about half of us had experience in adult protective service work, but it was such a vital, [00:26:00] active, um, committee that could debate issues and really deal with the hard decisions that had to be made.

In order to draft legislation of that nature. And we became close to be truthful. And so after we got enacted Ohio Adult Protective Services law, I think we decided we had to stay together somehow. And that really led to my second thing. Which is establishing all kinds of elder abuse networks in Ohio. I've been involved in establishing five, and they're all still in existence.

Two at the state level, and three at the local level. In other words, in Greater Cleveland. There was really that group of individuals in the beginning that sort of. Served as the anchor and thrust to move all of that forward. Um, I'm such a believer in the worth of all that. And the newest thing I've been involved with is I'm one of [00:27:00] the founding members of what's called the National Network of State Elder Justice Coalitions and attempt to have all states across the country.

Have something, what? Those of us that have 'em, California, um, Ohio, New York, except what we found makes such a difference in dealing with this problem. Um, the third thing is something I haven't mentioned. Uh, so I have my, uh, PhD in social work and my doctoral dissertation, uh, was on elder abuse. And specifically, it tried to answer the question, why do adult sons and daughters physically abuse their elderly parents?

And was one of, if not the first research of its type to focus in on the perpetrators by interviewing the perpetrators themselves. Something that really has not been done much to the state. And that's unfortunate. And I say, [00:28:00] Because most of us believe, and some research does suggest that it's really the characteristics and the risk factors associated with the perpetrators that are more predictive of elder abuse occurrence than any connected with the victims.

And so it's. We really lack that kind of understanding. And I also believe in addition that if we're to really eradicate this problem, we have to begin to be more concerned about what kinds of services and supports are going to reduce the likelihood of elder abuse by dealing with those perpetrators and their issues and their needs.

[00:28:37] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah, absolutely. Um, Joe, what are, what career accomplishments are you most proud?

[00:28:44] **Joe Snyder:** So, in all professions, you hear people say often that I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me, and it's really true in APS. It's such a collaborative effort. And just look at this week, we've had, you know, Bill [00:29:00] Benson testified before the EJCC and collaborated with four or five others. Um, there's no sense of total ownership that you have to be new.

And, and we just all work together to get that. And Jennifer, you, and I this week talked before the FINRA round table, the financial industry regulatory authority for those who don't know. And we got together with the FINRA Office of Governmental Affairs, um, before that to make sure that our message was the most effective, um, to the audience of broker dealers that were listening and.

So easy. And again, no sense of, you know, well this is FINRA, this is NAPSA. We just got together, and I thought, you know, it came out really, really great and that happens all the time. So, in saying that, um, one of the things I'm proud of is NAPSA, um, picked me a couple of times to testify before Congress.

And in doing so, um, you know when I first started, I, Joan Otto. [00:30:00] And Kathleen Quinn and Bill Benson said, Will you write first draft? And we're going, we're going to edit it. Do you mind if we edit it? I'm like, I don't, I don't mind to write the whole thing. I mean, you know, your three first ballot hall of famers, you want to put your hand up my, you know, sport coat and I'll move my lips.

We can do that too. Um, you know, and it was just a privilege to go down there and talk there and know when I was talking on the panel. Because of everybody else. I was pretty much the expert there. I knew this stuff code as well as anybody that was talking that day. So that felt good. And the other one for, for the, the testimony is I got to speak at the first World of Abuse Awareness Day at the United Nations representing APS.

And that was a heady head thing. And, and again, to be up there next to the Brazilian Minister of Health and the Australian Prime Ministers represented to this and me, I kept saying, Um, and, and from that, um, people in Japan were starting their [00:31:00] first elder abuse law and they had heard my presentation and so they, they came to America the next year and they visited, um, the National Center in Elder Abuse in DC when Toshi Totara was running it and, and me in Philadelphia.

And I was able to take this delegation to. Guardianship hearing in the court. I had a judge that agreed to that and spoke to them afterwards, of course, we all, we had interpreters and to senior law center to sit down for an afternoon with legal service provider and how that works. And then to me, because we had just automated and got a centralized intake system, so, so we went through that.

We showed them how the report came in, what a case was. A couple of 'em went out in cases. It was really quite a quite. A neat thing. And as, as Jennifer knows, for years they were my screen saver on my computer. It was UN delegation. It was so much fun and so wonderful [00:32:00] to be part of that and just, just again, to the opportunity through NAPSA to do that.

Um, the other ones were more around working with the financial industry. I was lucky. Um, you know, after, after reading again, the collaboration thing and never having an original idea, after reading the Massachusetts Banking Project, it was out at the time, and really taking that and customizing it, I started knocking on doors because we weren't getting records and we weren't getting recognized financial industry.

Um, and I clearly from, from reading that and reading the. Publication, Can Bank Tellers Tell they came out from the American Bar Association? It was clear to me that there's two exceptions to the Federal Privacy Act that we should be getting records. And after knocking on doors for months, I finally got somebody in the banking industry, Wachovia Bank, which was a national bank in 14 states to agree with me.

And we started a pilot project that went from Philadelphia to Pennsylvania, 14 states. [00:33:00] We did at the end of it from 2003 2007, we, um, protected 62 million in assets. Um, we jointly investigated 3000 cases. And what was a throwaway line for me at the time was, we got no lawsuits, and that was

the second besides no federal law prohibits us from sharing and, oh, we can't share because some, everybody's going to sue us.

Well, it didn't happen. All that happened was family members and individual clients thanking us for saving their lives and fortunes. So that was big and it led to the, you know, me going down the financial services round table with my partner from Wachovia and starting a, uh, fraud prevention toolkit through the financial services round table and a paper on protecting the elderly and vulnerable from financial fraud, um, through them and came back and started taskforce in Philadelphia.

And it was just really, um, really great stuff to be part. [00:34:00] Um, and then finally, one more time with this, because of that work, I was approached by the Clark Foundation for the protection of elders to, uh, they had some money and they said, You, you seem to have good ideas. Um, what would you do with this? And I said, well, you know, I've been talking with my friends from the broker dealer industry in the banking industry, and they would love to have some standardization.

So how, how about if we create a standard form and guidelines to request records? And so, again, Because of that money, I was able to bring in three other APS programs and a bunch of, um, national and local banks and, and again, legal service providers in Philly. And we had a group, Jennifer, you were part of that group.

And we sat down, and we hammered out. The form that exists today, um, and have tweaked it since to, to include, we did it again with the, that was banks and credit unions. We did it again with the broker dealer agency and it's, you know, it's all over the place. We talked about it at the FINRA round table yesterday.

I talked about it, [00:35:00] um, when I was in Ohio last month and I was our plenary speaker. And it's just great that so many people are using that, and it's accepted, um, by the. By the financial service industry almost universally, so that, that they, those are probably the highlights, um, beside the, every, the highlight of getting to work every day with the, the greatest people in the world.

Aps workers and supervisors.

[00:35:27] **Jennifer Spoeri:** That's right. The APS field does bring special people into it. And Georgia, you mentioned you were at GSA. This.

Right.

[00:35:37] **Georgia Anetzberger:** And yes, and, and listening to what Joe had to say. So, um, when I attended GSA this year, I noticed that one of the symposium was, uh, basically populated by individuals from Japan and the focus of this particular symposium.

It's in what you have to say [00:36:00] because these were individuals that had worked with Toshi Takara when he really was instrumental in getting that law passed in Japan, the Elder Abuse Prevention Act. But now this new generation of individuals that were his mentees in a sense and following his. Um, they were involved in trying to reform the law to make it more appropriate and more applicable to the kinds of situations, elder abuse that they were encountering now.

And so, the whole symposium was based on, um, what kinds of changes should be made and the research behind making those recommendations for change. So, it's, it was wonderful to hear about all the energy in Japan. In general, happening around the subject area, but also wonderful to hear that, uh, the work of Toshi continues and it continues to be important, um, in his country of [00:37:00] origin.

And so it was, it was great

[00:37:02] **Jennifer Spoeri:** and it all started from a visit in Philadelphia with Joe Snyder. Sure. So, let's, uh, transition into the field and, uh, hear from Tommy about, Career accomplishments you're most proud of having what? Over a hundred counties? I mean, it's just, That's a lot.

[00:37:21] **Tommy Reed:** It's a lot, but it doesn't have the United Nations in it, so I can't, I can't, uh, go there.

But, uh, I, I would just, uh, thinking about this, I, one of the areas that I really am proud of is the work that we've done. Um, In the Texas APS program and, and it was an instrumental part of that with mobile case work. Um, as I mentioned earlier, um, we sort of had automation or, or the technology, if you will, thrust upon us, and we were ill prepared.

To, to work with that and really didn't do much with it, having laptops and tablets available to us and for [00:38:00] our use, but a lot of those just sat on desks and just were, um, uh, not used to their full capacity. And it really wasn't until some later years when intakes continued to rise. And, um, the numbers.

Staff allocated from the legislature did not rise to go with that. And we had to do more with less basically. So, we started looking out of, um, you know, desperation of how to do case work more efficiently and, um, And automation obviously was one of the, the obvious answers, but one that we were really not, uh, prepared to, to use so well.

So, uh, it took a lot of, uh, lot of work by a lot of folks to, uh, develop methods to, to do that and to really to use, uh, the laptop computers or tablets, uh, more effectively out in the. That was not an easy transition, and it's not one [00:39:00] that's not without controversy. I under, I know, uh, everywhere as to how much and how little you should use that out in the field, But we did find ways to use that in the field so that documentation could be done.

More closely to real time, and which was such an aid with the way things changed so rapidly on an APS case or being able to hand that case off to another worker, somebody's ill or whatever, and, um, have that documentation almost up to date. And so, we did, you know, our, our emphasis was really, Taking the equipment in the field, but only taking it into homes where that was a safe situation or where we, uh, or the case worker could do documentation soon thereafter in a safe, safe, uh, location or environment.

So, it was never, um, you know, forced, if you will, uh, into the middle of the mix with [00:40:00] the client. So I don't think there was ever a loss in relationship with the client, and yet I think there was some improvement in, um, The speed and probably the accuracy, or we thought so because documentation was done more quickly after the event.

So when recall was best and, and all that sort of thing. Uh, it, it sounds sort of simple on, uh, the surface, but it's much more complex than that. And then, um, implementing that with staff and convincing staff that there are ways to, to change your methods and, and your practice and, and fit that in, uh, that's a much larger hurdle to do and to find ways to do it effectively.

So, uh, but I think that we were fairly successful with that. Uh, the other thing, uh, just, just, uh, because I have the microphone for a minute, I just want to kind of give a shout out, if you will, to mid-level, um, APS managers. I think that, uh, [00:41:00] case workers, uh, rightly so tend to get most of the recognition out in the field.

Um, and I don't want to take away from them, and I'm still just amazed that we're able to hire, uh, good folks. To, to do that job for, for what most of them get paid around the country, but mid-level case, excuse mid-level managers. Um, I think, um, straddle that fence of having one foot and being, you know, with the client and with the case worker and the family and so forth.

And then, but they're also. Part of management and trying to advocate and get the resources and, and, um, the issues across that case workers have in the field, uh, to to upper-level managers. And it's a very, um, very difficult tightrope. They walk and, trying to wear both of those hats. And so, um, so I think I've used every analogy now that maybe that that can apply that.

Um, I, [00:42:00] I, I do just, uh, want to shout out to those midlevel managers. I think they did an amazing job in APS and, um, and teaching and educating and always, um, recruiting and training new case workers because, you know, there's never an end. To the changes in the revolving, uh, unfortunate revolving door with our staff.

So, um, anyway, good work to them.

[00:42:26] **Jennifer Spoeri:** I think that's a, a really nice shout out to the supervisors cuz you're right. One foot on this side, one foot on the other side. So, to wrap it up, um, if, if you guys could give me a

few sentences on looking forward, what do you think are the biggest challenges facing APS today and will be facing in the.

So, Georgia will let you kick it off one last time.

[00:42:50] **Georgia Anetzberger:** Okay. Thank you. Um, well, to come to mind, um, and I'm going to use kind of a phrase for both of 'em. The, the first phrase [00:43:00] is just say no. I think over time, Adult Protective Services has been asked to and has taken. More and more with respect to the variety of things connected or potentially connected to elder abuse, the variety of individuals and perpetrators, um, that, uh, might come under that umbrella.

And you have to begin to wonder if any agency can effectively and meaningfully do that. And I would suggest that I cannot. No organization, no system can do it all. And so, uh, an intervention like APS, which began back in the 1960s, early 1970s, began really with self-neglect and the potential of financial exploitation as the pivotal issues, you know, now takes on the whole waterfront.

And I. [00:44:00] Many of us question if that's even possible. So just say no. The second one is proof. I think, um, it is extremely important, and it'll be a challenge, but it's extremely important to demonstrate through research that APS makes a measurable and positive difference in ways that matter, particularly to the victims of elder abuse and the public at large.

I think only. We'll get the kind of support, both financial and otherwise that it really needs and deserves.

[00:44:35] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Thank you. Thank you, Georgia. And Joe,

[00:44:40] **Joe Snyder:** I'm going to start by, Thank you. I'm going to start by again, stealing Georgia's idea of, um, just saying no because it's, um, you know, it can. I think it was my, our good friend Karl Urban, who first said to me this term we're the safety net for the safety net and why that's heady [00:45:00] and makes you feel good.

There's a danger in going above what you should, especially when you're limited in funding. And when you talk about, you know, we, we adult protective services with never meant to be everything for to everybody. At all times. It falls that way a lot as it did during the pandemic and other times. But there is a real danger in, in hurting your program in the long run when you do that.

Um, and there's not a single adult service worker who would ever say no to anything. So, once you give it to them, they're going to go and run. Um, so you've got to really, as a, as an administrator, really, really watch that. And the other one is, is related to that, is the whole question of funding and funding and recognition.

I mean, we're. You know, we talk about elder abuse being first mentioned in Congress in 1950 and having work done in the seventies, and yet here we are in 2022, um, still having to protect the Social Service Block Grant at every turn for the states that rely on that [00:46:00] and get the money, um, that we deserve to put us up where we should be with Child Protective, with Alzheimer's Association, with all the.

Of fields that need it, because we touch all of that and everybody looks to us at the end, and yet somehow, we can't break through the, you know, the barriers that exist of why doesn't anybody think this is going to happen. You know, why do we testify before Congress? And often people that are, you know, older, you know, like myself, and they're sitting there and saying, you know, this can happen to you.

Um, everything we say, you know, as we. Talk, Jennifer. I always started with every speech. If you don't, if you remember one thing that I said today, remember this, anybody can be a victim. Anybody can be a perpetrator. And, and I mean that a hundred percent across the board. So, join us in, getting the funding and recognition we need to put APS and elder abuse, prevention, [00:47:00] protection and investigation where it belongs at the top of the pyramid with everyone else.

So, so that's my. Um, soap box issues.

[00:47:08] **Jennifer Spoeri:** All right,

good takeaways and. Tommy?

[00:47:11] **Tommy Reed:** Well, I would just build off of what Joe was talking about because I think in Texas, one of the issues that we have, which then relates to the funding issue is the visibility issue. I think that, uh, APS is one of the best kept secrets in this.

In our state, uh, the average person on the streets never heard of our program, knows nothing about it. And, um, therefore, they don't support that. And many of our legislators, I would say are focused on so many other things, uh, oil and gas and whatever in our state. Um, and, you know, way down the list. And I really don't think they're very.

Of, of who, who we are and what the program can do. And so, we have little chance of, of [00:48:00] getting the resources that we need and deserve, uh, when, when that's the situation. And I think the other thing related to that is that sometimes we shoot ourselves in the foot as a program or we have here, I think because, um, we live in the shadow of, of CPS and other programs that are better funded and better known.

Sometimes I think we sort of hide because we can't handle the work we already have coming in the front door. And we're afraid that greater visibility will just increase the intakes without any kind of

resources to back that up. So, we just sort of hide in the corner and hope they won't notice us, uh, and, and just sort of leave us alone And, um, Anyway, it's, um, it always seems to come back to money and funding, uh, in, in so many conversations.

But, um, visibility is such an issue for us. I think.

[00:48:57] **Jennifer Spoeri:** Right.

Well, thank you. Thank you. So, the [00:49:00] takeaways I'm hearing are just say no, focus on funding and visibility that we are, We need to get out there and not be to the best kept secret anymore, but we need the funding and need to say no to keep you know the work Good.

So, to close, I'd like to sincerely thank the three of you. For sharing so much APS history and knowledge. It's really enlightening to hear how far the fields come and humbling to realize how far we still have yet to go. So, I'm sure the listeners will enjoy hearing from all of you about this, and the conversation will energize us to keep this going and, um, keep the good work that APS is doing each and every day.

So, thank you again.

[00:49:42] **Krista Brown:** Thank you very much for listening. The APS TARC is a project of the US Administration for Community Living Administration on Aging Department of Health and Human Services, and administered by WRMA Incorporated Contractors, findings, [00:50:00] conclusions, and points of view do not necessarily represent the official policy of the federal government to give us feedback on this podcast or any other APS TARC product.

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