

Staff Highlight: Dr. Bobbi Beale



What is your role at the Begun Center? Describe the work you do.

I work within the [Center for Innovative Practices](#) (CIP), led by [Dr. Rick Shepler](#). CIP is [OhioMHAS's Center of Excellence](#) for children, youth and families' behavioral health (BH) services. I have the best job possible! I spend most of my time providing training, consultation and technical assistance to BH agencies and providers across the state. After my 25 years as a clinical psychologist,

supervisor, program manager and administrator, I feel very confident in my role. I happen to love training, from researching the issues and developing the content, to engaging the participants and helping them to connect it directly to their work. I'm also grateful to have the opportunity to sit at some state level committees, including the [Trauma Informed Care Initiative](#). I believe that it's important to have clinicians' voices there, informing them about what's really happening in our communities and advocating for our clients' much needed services.

You are involved in adventure therapy. What's that, and how are you involved?

I am an Adventure Therapist at my core. In adventure therapy, the client actively participates in therapy, rather than being a spectator to change which is particularly important considering the kinesthetic needs of children and youth. The use of cooperative games, problem solving initiatives and adventure activities guided by the treatment team provide clients with immediate and concrete consequences of their behaviors. These experiences are then processed and discussed both individually and as a group in order to promote learning and positive change. It is this conjunction of adventure activities and the intentional processing and reflection of these experiences connected with treatment goals, which make the adventure activities an effective vehicle for clinical change.

I am a member of the [Association for Experiential Education](#) (AEE), and currently serve as on their board of directors as president. AEE is an international organization dedicated to advancing experiential learning around the world, with an active sub-group, [Therapeutic Adventure Professionals](#), that has provided me with support and networking to develop many successful AT programs over my career, including OP group, day treatment, and residential camp programs.

What are a few accomplishments that you have been most proud of during your career?

There was a brief, shining period in Ohio, when OhioMHAS required BH agencies to collect outcome data. I was a true believer; if we don't measure our work, someone else will. We collected thousands of Ohio Scales over several years, and then it was over. I took that data to my AEE colleagues and together with Dr. Anita Tucker, UNH, we evaluated the data and published the first AT study in the community mental health field. (Most AT research is done with private pay residential and wilderness programs.) The results were quite positive, with AT improving outcome scores to a greater degree than any other combination of services.

Since that time I've launched [Life Adventures for All](#), a non-profit organization committed to making AT available to our most vulnerable youth and families. We recently received a grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office to provide AT training and implementation support for 11 counties in Ohio. The county JFS or Children Services partners with a local BH provider, so that more foster children have access to AT. These teams each agree to not only learn how to provide AT, but agree to participate in a larger research project to demonstrate effectiveness and further validate the AT model.

When you're not working, what do you like to do in your free time?

I love to travel, especially if I can get inside the local culture. A huge benefit of being so involved in AEE is that I can travel almost anywhere and find an AEE friend to host me. One of my favorite trips was backpacking in the Costa Rica rainforest. Last summer I got to travel around Mexico after one of our board meetings. Next summer I hope to present at the 8th International AT Conference in Sydney, Australia.

If you were given \$1,000 and you had to spend it on something fun for yourself, what would you buy?

More travel experiences with my family. We've decided to visit all of the national parks and would like to get up to Acadia National Park in Maine next. So far, our favorite is Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming; we liked it so much we've been twice!