

Making it Personal: How an Inspired clinic in Texas makes a difference one house at a time

All great things start with great ideas and Dr. Amy Badstubner's idea arrived in the winter of 2014 while working as an audiologist in Dallas, Texas.

Shortly after New Year's, while most of us were still full of ambition and anxiety about making the next 12 months better than the last, the audiologist got a call from a client who she knew was dying. The elderly client told Amy that their family was flying in to say their goodbyes. Unfortunately, her hearing aids were at the clinic for repair and she feared she would miss out on much of the visits. Amy decided to deliver the hearing aids to her client personally so she wouldn't miss a moment of this last goodbye.



"As I was driving home," Amy says, "I realized that I wanted to make house calls part of my job. What better way to give person-centered care than in a person's own home?" So, Amy quit her job and started her own audiology practice making house calls.

Five years later, house calls make up about 60 percent of Amy's business, but clients also come to her [Southlake, Texas, clinic](#). The cozy space in the stone bungalow is adorned with artwork and soft, comfy chairs. By design, the clinic puts the emphasis on the connection between the audiologist and the client rather than the tools and technology. Clients and their families feel compelled to linger and talk, which helps Amy learn the sometimes-personal information she needs to know in order to help them.

It's often the personal touches that separate a good clinic from a sensational one. Amy's small clinic has been voted Best Audiologist in their area four years in a row — thanks in part to the personal touches that color her clinic. Her approach has been influenced by a history of jobs and volunteer positions where she's worked with many different types of people. "Audiology is not my first career," Amy shares. "My undergraduate degree is in music therapy which led me to working mostly with people with intellectual disabilities." Amy has also worked in the prison system, a high school for deaf teenagers, volunteers with youth at her church, and is a foster mom.

"The greatest lesson I've taken away from engaging with so many different kinds of people," she says, "is to meet each person where they're at. You can help them get where they want to be, but unless you start where they are, you're not going to be successful."

It's a philosophy grounded in person-centered methodology — valuing the needs and preferences of the individual. Amy's dedication to PCC leads her to continually tweak and improve the person-centered hearing care she provides at her clinic.

Inspired by Ida

"Giving truly person-centered care has always been important to me," Amy explains. "So, when I heard about the [Inspired by Ida](#) program, I was interested because I knew it would give me the

opportunity to look critically at how we are doing at being person-centered and to grow and course-correct a bit.”

Inspired by Ida is a program that sets a quality benchmark for delivering person-centered hearing care. To become Inspired by Ida, clinicians complete courses in person-centered methods and agree to a code of ethics which underscores their commitment to PCC.

As well as being Inspired by Ida, Amy makes use of Ida tools. The most common one she uses with her clients is the Line. The Line is a deceptively simple tool that helps audiologists personalize and structure communication with their client and encourages them to take action on their hearing loss. It helps to turn someone’s personal view on their hearing loss and their ability to act on it into motivation.

Recently, Amy was with a client who came to the clinic only because her family insisted on it. She didn’t really believe she had a hearing loss. “But, when I brought out the Line,” Amy recalls, “she completely changed and was able to express her reservations and fears. She even said that she thought I should be asking a third question: How high is your desire to wear hearing aids. It was so fun! And I could see her taking even more ownership of this experience.”

“Hearing is a *personal* issue,” Amy continues, “not just one of hearing levels and word discrimination scores. What matters is how someone’s hearing loss is affecting their life, and their relationships. Because hearing is such a personal thing, how can we *not* practice person-centered care?”

For more information about Inspired by Ida, visit idainstitute.com/ida_community/inspired_by_ida