

# STORY HIGHLIGHT

## TERESA BERTSCH'S "WHY I'M HERE" STORY



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### **I wasn't sure I could. And then WE did.**

So there I was listening to the NARBHA Institute Board Chair and CEO talking about starting a behavioral health ACO (accountable care organization). I was distracted by my e-mail, the teams chat, the texts, and the calls that I kept getting. I thought, "**I have too much going on** to learn about ACOs, let alone a type of ACO that hasn't been done before". All of sudden, they turned to me and said "Teresa, maybe you should be the one to lead it!" Wait, did I hear that right? Feeling grumpy I said, "Hmm, **let me think about that.**"

Over the next few weeks, when the idea kept coming up, I'd think to myself, "**I'm not sure I want to do this or even know HOW.**" After a few weeks of discussion, everyone was still looking at me eagerly. And then I remembered what Sarah Dill MD (my coach) would have asked me when faced with a challenge, "**What if I did know how to do it?**"

**So I asked myself 2 questions:** 1) *what if this wasn't like any other ACO?* and 2) *what if we used the ACO as a vehicle to transform behavioral healthcare and also focused on health professional wellbeing?* I could feel a **particular buzz of excitement** that I sometimes get when I have an idea that inspires me. So I agreed, and I told them I knew just the people I wanted to hire: a high-powered team that could uplift the system; a team who had previously worked with me and who were dedicated, committed, and wickedly smart. **To my delight, everyone said YES!**

A few months in, I said to my dream team, "**Let's do a well-being conference** focusing on professional fulfillment and invite all the ACO community mental health medical directors and clinical leaders in northern Arizona. **Let's make it the conference we'd like to attend**, and invite speakers who could inspire all of us!" I could see the team worrying if we could pull it off because none of us are, what I call, "party planners." One person I thought of who could help us deliver "WOW" was Anca Castillo with Design Convo. So we asked her for help and she agreed. **This might actually work!**

And here we are all together at the conference. **What started as a far-flung idea has become reality.** I can feel the spark of possibility and hope among us. Fueled by applying new insights to complex problems, **we are hopeful that we can transform healthcare!** Through this experience, I also learned that when our values align with our efforts, there can be an upwelling of energy and creativity like we've seen today. Thank you everyone for your attention and enthusiasm, and as Gandhi said, *let's be the change we want to see in the world.*