

FAST FACTS ON: DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

1997, Rev. 2001

- ❖ **What is Person-Centered Planning?**
- ❖ **How is it Different from Traditional Planning?**
- ❖ **Changing from Traditional Planning to Person-Centered Planning**
- ❖ **Three Styles of Person-Centered Planning**
 - Maps
 - Personal Futures Plan
 - Essential Lifestyle Plan
- ❖ **Resources**
- ❖ **References**

Person-Centered Planning



It seems like my daughter's whole day is filled with people trying to get her to do better at the things she most dislikes. She often resists people when they are trying to help her. People are always telling her what she is doing wrong. She gets discouraged and angry, every day. Her whole life is just a series of improvements people want her to make. She doesn't have any personal plans, or anything to work toward on her own. What is it all for?

Tanya D. Whitehead, M.S.,
Rev. 2001 Lynette Yisrael
UMKC Institute for Human Development
A University Affiliated Program

What is Person-Centered Planning?"

Person-Centered Planning is an outward sign of the presence of *respect* for the value of all persons. The basic beliefs at the root of the Person-Centered Planning process are that:

- All people have the right to plan lives for themselves that are personally meaningful and satisfying.
- All people have talents and strengths that they have the *responsibility* to develop.

Person-Centered Planning is a *way of thinking about people* that respects their interests, hopes, dreams, and desires. It is a *process* of discussion and self-evaluation in which a person discovers how he or she wants to live, and the person's friends help explore what needs to be done to reach these goals.

How Does Person-Centered Planning Differ from Traditional Planning?

When Person-Centered Planning is compared to traditional planning, the contrast between them highlights the benefits of Person-Centered Planning.

In the traditional planning process, people with developmental disabilities are placed in programs by experts, who develop treatments designed to help people with disabilities overcome their areas of weakness.

Since agencies serve many people with disabilities, there is a tendency to make all people in the program follow the same schedule. That helps the agency make good use of staff time, and it helps ensure that all people served by the agency are treated the same way.

One of the problems with the traditional planning style is that even though the agency was designed to serve the needs of people, people actually end up serving the needs of the agency. When people are placed in jobs or living situations not by choice, but in order to make an agency run more smoothly, then the needs of people are being overlooked in favor of the needs of the agency.

The underlying assumption guiding traditional planning is that authority over people rests in the hands of experts, who are trying to help people with disabilities improve. People who value individual differences and who advocate for Person-Centered Planning are challenging this assumption. Traditional planning is being challenged by people who believe that *all people have the right* to set individual goals and objectives of their own that bring meaning to their lives.

In traditional planning, people are expected to go along with daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly objectives set for them by an agency to help them reach goals that are also set by agency experts. Most of these plans look very much alike. The people plans are written for are very different from each other, but their plans look alike because it is easier for the agency that way.

For a long while people using the traditional planning system did not notice what was wrong with it. They carefully reviewed ten-percent of the plans every year. They tried to assess the quality of their programs, because they cared about the people who used the programs. But they were “measuring” with the wrong “yardstick”. They were trying to be sure that their employees were using a system that would provide people with standardized outcomes, instead of individualized outcomes.

The mistake being made was in thinking that all of the outcomes should be the same. High quality outcomes should differ according to the individual needs and desires of the people for whom the plans are made.

Standardized outcomes in lifestyle planning will always fail at the level of the individual, because no two people are the same.

Changing from Traditional Planning to Person-Centered Planning

In recent years there has been a great deal of interest on the part of people with disabilities, their families, and agencies in discovering a more humane and person-centered model to use in the planning process.

A number of person-centered models for planning have been developed. Three of

the most well known plans will be discussed separately below:

- **MAPS** (The McGill Action Planning System, by Vandercook,, York, Forest)
- **Personal Futures Planning** (Beth Mount)
- **Essential Lifestyle Planning** (Michael Smull)

MAPS: is a process developed from efforts to assist inclusion of children with disabilities in regular education classrooms and in the general school community. It is sometimes used to help formulate a student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP).

In the MAPS planning process, the student, school staff, family, and friends come to a shared understanding of the individual student. The student’s strengths as well as needs are noted. Then the student, with the help of family, friends, and professionals, develops an individual plan. This plan is for the purpose of supporting the student’s efforts to work toward his or her personal goals.

The values guiding the usage of the MAPS tool are:

- Inclusion of the student into the regular school community at all levels.
- An educational and life plan specific to the needs and desires of the individual student.
- Teamwork and collaboration in the planning process and in carrying out the steps needed to support the student.
- Flexibility (of everyone concerned)

A trained facilitator uses a set of seven questions to help guide the planning process. These questions are:

MAPS Questions

1. What is the person's history?
2. What is the person's dream for his or her life?
3. What is the person's nightmare?
4. Who is the person?
5. What are the person's gifts, talents, and strengths?
6. What are the person's needs?
7. What should the action plan be?

An important qualification of a good facilitator is that he or she is committed to building an inclusive school community. The facilitator must also have good listening skills, be comfortable with both children and adults, and understand the importance of each person's contribution.

The facilitator helps the team draw their ideas together in order to formulate a comprehensive educational plan that supports the student's goals, and makes use of the student's strengths and talents.

Personal Futures Planning evolved from the desire to support the goals of people with disabilities, and the desire to provide assistance to service providers who want to transform the system.

Personal Futures Planning includes the following processes:

Personal Futures Planning

- Finding out what the capacity of the person is, what they do well, their talents and their skills.
- Discussions (with the person and their chosen relatives, friends, and occasionally professionals) which result in the evolution of a plan or vision of the person's own choosing.
- Building a circle of people that moves forward toward the vision through action (trying ideas, reflecting on the outcome, revising the action and trying again).
- Gradually working to change the system so that it will function on a Person-Centered basis. One person at a time, people in systems can learn to think and behave differently.

Personal Futures Planning places an emphasis on interdependence among people. When people join together as a group, individual strengths and talents are multiplied, and weaknesses become less significant.

The plans made are part of an ongoing process for the person and his or her circle of friends. Personal Futures Planning is not a quick fix or a one-time event. It is a new way of addressing the decision making process of goal setting and the acquisition of supports.

Essential Lifestyle Planning was developed to assist people in moving from institutions to community life. The process focuses on gathering information on individual core values and preferences.

The plan should communicate what is important to the person for whom the plan is made. The plan should define the important people, activities, routines, desires and goals of this person. The plan should define what is important to the person, not what is important to others.

The process is interactive, and is life-long. The only thing worse than never listening to someone, is only listening once, or listening, but then not doing anything about what has been communicated.

Simple questions can be used to learn about others. People attending an essential lifestyle meeting may be asked to share their opinions on how to finish statements such as these:

<p style="text-align: center;">Possible Sample Questions for Essential Lifestyle Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. People who know and care about the person say. _____.2. To be successful in supporting the person _____.3. The person's reputation is _____.4. If this is going to work we must _____.

A common concern of people who work in agencies is that they will be expected to make people's impossible dreams come

true. Essential Lifestyle Planning is not about planning fantasies. There is a difference between helping people work to achieve satisfying and productive lives, and creating fantasy lives.

Most people have very modest desires, dreams, and goals. Most plans are built around people's desire to live with others they like and can trust, and their desire to have work that is meaningful to them.

Essential Lifestyle Planning can help agency staff see that "life is not a program." There is a difference between providing support for people who are working on reaching goals they have set, and funding a program in which every person is moving lock-step through a pre-set "one size fits all" life.

Similarities of Person-Centered Planning Models

Person-Centered models utilize a positive view of people that supports them in discovering their talents, interests, and strengths, and supports them as they develop life plans that they find meaningful and fulfilling.

A more positive view of people requires that we learn to describe ourselves and others in terms that reveal our talents, strengths, and capabilities rather than our weaknesses and limitations.

All models of Person-Centered Planning take the focus for change off people with disabilities, and instead, seek to

change their social roles, and the organizational structures that support them. The goal of all Person-Centered Planning is to support people in developing their capacities and in finding a place in the community where they can belong in a meaningful way.

In any type of Person-Centered Planning, the person with a disability is supported and empowered, not directed and controlled. Person-Centered Planning moves beyond allowing people with disabilities an equal voice at the planning table. In this planning style, individuals with disabilities take leadership roles in planning their own futures. Individuals with disabilities are the experts.

Change from traditional planning to Person-Centered Planning is a slow process. It begins with learning to think about people and agencies in a new way. One of the basic changes is from a relationship in which one partner has power over the other, to a relationship in which power is shared in an atmosphere of respect.

Some people have objected that Person-Centered Planning is hard to implement. People may be uncooperative, or may not share the vision of the rest of the team. Some people find it difficult to allow a person with disabilities to take a leadership role in the planning process. Sometimes it is hard for a person with disabilities to accept this responsibility and opportunity. Sometimes people have trouble distinguishing what they want for people with disabilities from what people with disabilities want for themselves. These discrepancies between ideal Person-Centered Planning and

what may take place when trying to implement it does not negate its value. Person-Centered Planning is an ideal to work toward. Sometimes it will be easier to implement than other times. It is also a process, not an outcome. People's goals and desires change over time as their needs change, and as they learn through experience.

Person-Centered Planning has brought positive changes in the lives of many people. An example of someone who benefited from Person-Centered Planning is Alice Smith, a woman who lived most of her life in state centers. She describes the effect that Person-Centered Planning had on her as follows:

I am not a young woman. I was born in 1918 in Lewiston, Pennsylvania....I remember very well the day my father drove me to the Polk Center to live....I went to live at Polk in 1934, and stayed there until 1960....In 1960 my dad took me out of Polk and drove me to the Hamburg Center to live....

In about 1991, at the age of 72, my life finally started moving in the direction I had hoped for thanks to Positive Approaches and Person-Centered Planning...There were many concerned people on the committee who listened to me as I told them how I wanted a community placement that could meet my needs....I was speaking my mind and found that I was being listened to by people who could make a difference for me...

.My life is now what I have always dreamed it would be....

Smith, A. (1998). How Positive Approaches and Person-Centered Planning Helped My Dear Come True. The Pennsylvania Journal on Positive Approaches 2(1).

Resources

(MODDRC) Missouri Developmental Disabilities Resource Center

University of Missouri at Kansas City
2220 Holmes, Room 351
Kansas City, MO 64108-2676
(816) 235-1763
(800) 444-0821
TDD: (800) 452-1185
<http://www.moddrc.com>

Michael Smull and Friends Essential Lifestyle Planning

Workbooks, articles, and other publications
<http://allenshea.com/friends.html>
Support Development Associates
3245 Harness Creek oad
Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 626-2707
Email: mwsmull@compuserve.com

- *A Blueprint for Essential Lifestyle Planning* (manual that must be ordered)
- *Listen to Me!* (workbook that must be ordered)
- Person centered planning and perversion prevention (article available online)
- A plan is not an outcome (article available online)

Mike McCarthy Coordinator of Outreach Training UMKC Institute for Human Development

2220 Holmes, Room 308
Kansas City, MO 64108
(816) 235-1745

Terri Vandercook & Jennifer York

Integrated Education: MAPS to Get You There
Article available online at:
<http://ssd.k12mo.us/Inclusion/maps.htm>
Inclusion Matters
Special School District of St. Louis County

Resources and Reports on Community Inclusion

Articles on person-centered planning (and other topics pertaining to community inclusion). Available online or can be ordered hardcopy:

- <http://soeweb.syr.edu/thechp/randr.htm>
- The Politics of Person-Centered Planning (1999) John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien
 - Great Questions and the Art of Portraiture (1999) John O'Brien
 - Finding a Way to Everyday Lives: The Contribution of Person-Centered Planning (1993) John O'Brien and Hebert Lovett

References

- Certo, N.J., Lee, M., Mautz, D., Markey, L., Toney, L., Toney, K., and Smalley, K.A. (1997). Facilitating natural supports: Assisting Lisa to connect with her dream. *Developmental Disabilities Bulletin* 25(1): 27-42.
- Everson, J.M., Reid, D.H. (1997) Using person-centered planning to determine employment preferences among people with the most severe developmental disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 9(2): 99-108.
- Forest, M., & Lusthaus, E. (1990). Everyone belongs with the MAPS action planning system. *Teaching Exceptional Children* 22: 32-35.
- Hagner, D., Helm, D.T., & Butterworth, S. (1996). This is your meeting: A qualitative study of person-centered planning. *Mental Retardation* 34: 159-171.
- Holburn, S., and Vietze, P. (1999). Acknowledging barriers in adopting person-centered planning. *Mental Retardation* 37(2): 117-124.
- Holburn, S., Jacobson, J.W., Vietze, P.M., Schwartz, A.A., and Sersen, E. (2000). Quantifying the process and outcomes of person-centered planning. *American Journal on Mental Retardation* 105(5): 402-416.
- Marrone, J., Hoff, D., and Helm, D.T. (1997). Person-centered planning for the millennium: We're old enough to remember when PCP was just a drug. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 8(3): 285-297.
- Miner, C.A., and Bates, P.E. (1997) The effect of person centered planning activities on the IEP/transition planning process. *Education & Training in Mental Retardation*. 32(2): 105-112.
- Reid, D.H., Everson, J.M., Green, C.W. (1999). A systematic evaluation of preferences identified through person-centered planning for people with profound multiple disabilities. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 32(4): 467-477.
- Smith, A. (1998). How positive approaches and person-centered planning helped my dream come true. *Pennsylvania Journal on Positive Approaches* 2(1). Available online at <http://www.quuxuum.org/~greg/journal/smith.htm>
- Smull, M.W. (1998). Thinking about support broker roles. *Impact: Feature Issue on Person-Centered Planning with Youth and Adults*. Available online at <http://www.allenshea.com/plannotoutcome.htm>
- York, J., Vandercook, T., and Gaylord, V. (1988). Integrated education: MAPS to get you there. *Impact: Feature Issue on Integrated Education*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Affiliated Agency. Available online at <http://ssd.k12mo.us/Inclusion/maps.htm>
- Whitney-Thomas, J., Shaw, D., Honey, K., Butterworth, J. (1998). Building a future: A study of student participation in person-centered planning. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps* 23(2): 119-133.