

The Inclusion Notebook

Problem solving in the classroom and community

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Person-Centered Planning Issue

This issue focuses on the philosophy and practice of "person-centered planning." Person-centered planning offers people the opportunity to lead self-determined lifestyles and exercise greater control in their lives.

We have included an article on person-centered planning - what it is, how it is different from traditional planning, planning tools and steps. The Pull-out Pages (see page 5) feature ideas to help you get started developing your own plan and putting the plan into action.

To read more about the topics in this issue, please see reference list on page 11.



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Person-Centered Planning

Kathleen Whitbread, Ph.D.

"Clearly it is in our human grasp to see each other differently, to change our structures so that the barriers are leveled and to embrace each other's presence as full members of human society." -Judith Snow

Person-centered planning, also referred to as "individual planning" or "personal futures planning," is a way of discovering the kind of life a person desires, mapping out a plan for how it may be achieved, and ensuring access to needed supports and services. This approach is fundamentally different from how traditional services for people with disabilities have been planned and delivered in the past (Garner & Dietz, 1996). For instance, person-centered planning places the responsibility and control over a person's life in the hands of the individual and those who know and care about the person (see Figure 1 for key differences between person-centered planning and traditional planning.)

While there are many ways to approach person-centered planning, all approaches share a core foundation of six beliefs/characteristics (O'Brien & Lovett, 1992):

1) *Person Directed* - The plan is the person's vision of what he or she would like to be and do. The plan is not static, but active and changes as often as obstacles and new opportunities arise.

2) *Person Centered* - The focus is always on the person for whom the plan is being developed. The person's preferences and choices are honored. It is not about plugging the individual into an



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available program slot.

3) Capacity Building - Planning focuses on the strengths of the person rather than his/her weaknesses. It builds upon the person's capacities and affords opportunities that will encourage participation in activities that promote a sense of belonging to the community.

4) Network Building - The process brings together the people who care and are committed to helping the person articulate their future vision. They learn together and focus on action that will make the vision a reality.

5) Community Accountability - The plan ensures adequate supports when there are safety and health issues, while respecting people's full dignity as participating members of the community.

6) Outcome Based - The plan focuses on enhancing/increasing the following experiences as valued by the individual:

- ♦ Growing in relationships or having friends
- ♦ Contributing or performing functional/meaningful activities
- ♦ Sharing ordinary places or being part of their own community
- ♦ Gaining respect or having a valued role which expresses their gifts and talents
- ♦ Making choices that are meaningful and expresses individual identity

In summary, the process is always driven by a deep respect for the individual, a belief in the capacities and talents of all people and the belief that every person deserves the right to create his/her own future. Successful person-centered planning supports individuals to have the freedom to decide how to live; authority over services and supports; access to supports needed to live a full life; and responsibility for personal decisions and actions.

Figure 1

Person-Centered Planning vs	Plans are reviewed and changed as the person's life changes...
The focus is on the person...	Traditional Planning
A person plans his or her future based on individual hopes and dreams...	The focus is on disability labels
Plans build on a person's strengths, preferences, gifts, and capacities...	Professionals develop plans based on what programs are available
The planning group includes family, friends, community members, and support staff who know and care about the person...	Plans focus on treatment to help a person overcome weaknesses
Planning teams take the time needed to plan in ways that best meets the person's needs...	The planning team is made up of experts who know "what is best for the person"
	Planning is done in whatever manner is fastest, easiest and best

Planning Tools

Many tools have been developed to help people with the process of planning their lives. Some commonly used tools include:

- ♦ MAPS--Forest & Lusthaus (1990)
- ♦ PATH-- Forest, O'Brien, & Pearpoint (1995)
- ♦ Essential Lifestyle Plans--Smull (1992)
- ♦ GAP-Group Action Planning--Turnbull & Turnbull (1992)
- ♦ Whole Life Planning--Institute on Community Inclusion (1998)
- ♦ Personal Futures Planning--Mount (1987)
- ♦ C.O.A.C.H.--Giangreco, Cloninger, Iverson (1998)

For a more detailed description of these planning tools, please refer to the center Pull Out Page in this newsletter.

Planning Process Steps

While each of the tools mentioned above is unique, they all share common components and follow similar planning processes important to transforming a person-centered plan into an action-based reality (please refer to pull out page for helpful tips for each step).

Step 1 Prepare for the planning process

Step 2 Complete a profile of the person

Step 3 Develop the person's future vision

Step 4 Identify themes in a person's life

Step 5 Create an action plan to achieve the desired outcomes

Step 6 Put the plan into action

Step 7 Monitor and Revise the Plan

"No longer is planning based on 'the services available at the present time', which has been the age-old excuse that has restricted our thinking, planning, and actions."

-- Garner & Dietz (2004)

Making it a Reality - Creating, Monitoring, and Revising the Action Plan

One of the most common misperceptions of person-centered planning is that it is a short series of meetings, the purpose of which is to produce a one-time stagnant plan (O'Brien & Lovett, 1992). This misunderstanding leads people to underestimate the time, effort, and energy required to sustain the process.

The action plan is the step-by-step series of strategies and goals that will lead to the person's desired outcomes. Identifying and describing personal goals can be quite a challenge for the planning group. Goals must be clear, relate to the person's desired future and must be attainable. Desired outcomes must be stated in measurable terms so they can be implemented and monitored. Also, the plan must state who is responsible for doing what, along with a target date for completion.

Putting the plan into action requires a strong commitment from all those involved. It also involves a strong support network comprised of family, friends, community members, and paid service providers. Make sure each person who is involved gets a copy of the action plan. The action plan should include scheduled review dates monthly, quarterly, or some other time schedule to follow progress, solve problems encountered, identify unforeseen needs, revise plan, and of course, to celebrate accomplishments.

Conclusion

Person-centered planning is a significant change from how we have planned and delivered services to persons with disabilities in the past. Going forward, it will require new and different ways of thinking and working together.

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Q&A with Therese Nadeau

Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, there has been an increase in the number of people who rely upon service dogs to compensate for the impact of disability on daily living (Sachs-Ericsson, Hansen, and Fitzgerald, 2002). The first assistance dog training program in the United States was founded in 1929 for the purpose of training dogs to assist individuals who were blind. Since then, dogs have been trained to assist people who have hearing impairments, mobility impairments, psychiatric conditions, and seizures. The number of people with disabilities other than people who are blind who have partnered with service dogs in the past 25 years has increased steadily, increasing the likelihood that anyone may encounter a person accompanied by a service dog in the community or work place.

Recently, Therese Nadeau, a Project Specialist at our Center spoke to us about life with her service dog, Sassy.



Q What made you decide to get a service dog and how has Sassy made a difference in your life?

A Getting Sassy enables me to live completely independently. Prior to deciding to get a service dog my sister lived with me; when she was about to get married and moved into her own home I was faced with the possibility of having to look for a roommate, something I preferred not to do. Getting a service dog was a decision that I made over the course of several years as I knew it required a high level of commitment and carried with it a responsibility that extended beyond typical pet ownership.

Q How does having a service dog differ from having a typical pet?

A Sassy is with me 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and accompanies me wherever I go. She is trained to work, doing things for me that I am not able to do. The relationship between a person and their service dog is a unique bond; Sassy can anticipate things for me as I can for her. This bond provides me with a sense of security that I would not have otherwise.

Q What kinds of things does Sassy do for you?

A Sassy came to me knowing a minimum of 90 commands. Over the two years that she has been with me, she has been trained to learn additional tasks specific to our life together. For example, I use an electronic device to open my front door, in the event of a power failure, Sassy can open the door independently, something that is very important for my safety. Sassy also can get things out of the refrigerator, turn light switches on and off, press automatic door openers, pick up items off of the floor, retrieve items off the shelves of the grocery store for me and call 911 in case of an emergency.

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The TIN Pull-out Page

Person-Centered Planning

Person-Centered Planning is a process-oriented approach that can empower people with disability labels. It focuses on each person and his/her needs by putting the person in charge of defining the direction of their lives, not the systems that are available to serve them. This ultimately leads to greater inclusion as valued members of both the community and the society (Cornell Person-Centered Planning Education Site, 2004).

What are Some Commonly Used Tools?

Tool Name	Authors	Where Can I Learn More?
MAPS	Forest & Lusthaus (1990)	Inclusion Press 24 Thorne Crescent Toronto, ON M6H 2S5 Ph: (416) 658-5363 Fax: (416) 658-5067 Email: info@inclusion.com www.inclusion.com
PATH	Forest, O'Brien, & Pearpoint (1995)	Inclusion Press 24 Thorne Crescent Toronto, ON M6H 2S5 Ph: (416) 658-5363 Fax: (416) 658-5067 Email: info@inclusion.com www.inclusion.com
Essential Lifestyle Plans	Smull (1992)	Michael Smull Support Development Associates 3245 Harness Creek Road Annapolis, Maryland 21403 Ph: (410) 626-2707 Fax: (410) 626-2708 Email: mwsmull@cs.com
Whole Life Planning	Institute on Community Inclusion (1998)	Institute for Community Inclusion UAP Children's Hospital, University of Massachusetts, Boston
Personal Futures Planning	Mount (1987)	Capacity Works, L.L.C. PO Box 271 Amenia, NY 12501-0271 Ph: (888) 840-8578 Email: capacityworks@aol.com www.capacityworks.com
C.O.A.C.H.	Giangreco, Cloninger & Iverson (1998)	Giangreco, M.F., Cloninger, C.J., & Iverson, V.S. (1998). <i>Choosing outcomes and accommodations for children (COACH): A guide to educational planning for students with disabilities (2nd edition)</i> . Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing. http://www.uvm.edu/~mgiangre/coach.html

The TIN Pull-out Page

What are the Planning Process Steps?

Steps		Helpful Hints Checklist
1	Prepare for the planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Pre-plan with the individual ◆ Choose the right planning tool ◆ Form a planning and support team ◆ Choose a comfortable and accessible meeting space ◆ Invite people to the individual planning meeting via written notification ◆ Tell participants what to bring to the meeting ◆ Prepare agenda to effectively communicate ◆ Consider cultural factors
2	Complete a profile of the person's current life situation	<p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What do you like to do? ◆ Who is important to you in your life? ◆ Where do you go in your community? ◆ Do you belong to any groups or clubs? ◆ What people do you spend time with regularly? ◆ What are your greatest achievements? ◆ What are your greatest challenges? ◆ Do you belong to (or wish to belong to) a religious or spiritual community? ◆ How is your health? ◆ Do people who know you and care about you have concerns about your health? ◆ What is life like for you right now? ◆ What supports do you need to help you throughout the day? ◆ What is your financial situation? ◆ How do you communicate best with other people? ◆ What are you good at? ◆ What are your gifts and talents? ◆ What do other people say are your best qualities? ◆ Are you your own legal guardian? ◆ Are you concerned about your safety? ◆ Do people who know you and care about you worry about your safety? ◆ What is most important to you? ◆ Is there anything you would like to change about your life right now?

The TIN Pull-out Page

What are the Planning Process Steps? (continued)

Steps		Helpful Hints Checklist
3	<p>Develop the Person’s Future Vision*</p> <p><i>*At this step in the planning process, it is important for the person to dream freely and not worry about barriers such as a lack of money or support</i></p>	<p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If the world was a perfect place, and you could have anything you wanted, what would your life look like five years from now? 10 years? ◆ Where would you live? ◆ What kind of job would you have? ◆ Who would you see every day? ◆ How would you spend your time? ◆ Do you see yourself in a house or an apartment? ◆ How many rooms are there? ◆ Are you in the city or a small town? ◆ Who is living with you in the house? ◆ What time do you work from and to? ◆ Do you walk to work? Take the bus? Need another form of transportation? ◆ Do you work full-time? ◆ What do you do after you get out of work?
4	<p>Complete an Analysis of the Person's Preferences, Desired Outcomes, and Support Needs</p>	<p><u>Examples of Themes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High energy - the person is happiest and most successful when busy and active ◆ Isolation - the person has had very few relationships in life other than service providers ◆ Self-motivation - the person has always worked hard at things that are important to him or her, persevering until reaching personal goals ◆ Good health - the person has a strong history of good health and healthy living habits ◆ Unmet dreams - the person has always wanted to know how to read and write but never learned ◆ Special Talents - the person has always loved music and is knowledgeable about instruments, composers, and artists ◆ Lack of Communication - the person has no reliable way of communicating with people who aren't close family or friends

The TIN Pull-out Page

What are the Planning Process Steps? (continued)

Steps		Helpful Hints Checklist	
5	<p>Create an Action Plan*</p> <p><i>* The plan must state who is responsible for doing what in order to achieve each goal and list a target date for completion</i></p>	<p><u>Non-Measurable</u></p> <p>Sarah will make friends</p> <p>Tony will be more independent</p> <p>Corey will learn to read</p>	<p><u>Measurable Goal</u></p> <p>Sarah will meet someone who shares her interests and enjoys spending time with her by joining a club, organization, or group of choice and attending meetings regularly</p> <p>Tony will be prepared to handle emergency situations safely by participating in a 12-week first aid class and passing the course evaluation</p> <p>Over the coming year, Corey will read at a 2nd grade level, as measured by a standardized reading test, by working with a reading tutor three 3 times a week for ½ hour sessions</p>
6	<p>Put the Plan into Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Know the person ◆ Be persistent ◆ Focus on the person's immediate community ◆ Focus on the person's gifts and talents and the things the person is passionate about ◆ Realize that building a support network is never "finished" 	
7	<p>Monitor and Revise the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Monitor the implementation of the plan ◆ Have strategies in place for times when the group gets "stuck" ◆ Have team members identify what they need "to stay strong and committed" to the person and to assist with implementation of the plan ◆ Celebrate accomplishments 	

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Q Has Sassy ever responded to an emergency?

A Yes, Sassy reacted immediately to block a fall I had once in my home. Had she not been there and responded by doing exactly what she had been trained to do I would have been very seriously injured. Another time she reacted to my smoke detector going off due to a low battery. Sassy immediately prepared to pull me out of bed. Once I calmed her and assured her everything was safe, she laid on me to protect me until someone came over and replaced the battery.

Q If a person were thinking of getting a service dog, what would he or she need to consider?

A Service dogs are trained to give service to their partner around the clock. While this commitment is unconditional, a service dog is still a dog and needs to be taken care of. As such, the environment must be able to support having a dog on the premises; the dog needs a place for exercise and play. Typically, service dogs are larger size dogs like retrievers and need to have adequate space and accommodations. Additionally, the dog needs to receive regular routine veterinary services and should be well groomed. The dog's appearance is especially important since it will be entering a number of public spaces that might not regularly allow dogs.

Q How are service dogs trained and obtained?

A There are a variety of organizations that provide service dogs to persons with disabilities. Organizations vary in the types of dogs they train and the way in which they provide the training. Sassy came to me from Service Dogs International (SDI), a non-profit organization. I felt SDI was an appropriate match for me since Sassy and I received our training in my home from the start. Some organizations require a person to attend a "Boot Camp" to bond and train with their dog. That can impose a hardship on some individuals and in some cases make it impossible to obtain a

dog. The other aspect of SDI that appealed to me was the fact that all of their dogs are rescued dogs. Sassy was rescued from an abusive situation at the age of about a year and a half.

It takes about 6 months to a year to train a dog before it is placed. Once the dog is placed, the training continues as the dog and person adjust to each other and various situations and environments.

Q Does a person have to pay money to get a service dog?

A The cost of training a service dog can range from \$10,000.00 and up depending on what the dog is trained to do. Organizations differ in the cost of obtaining a dog. Some organizations are self-sufficient and provide dogs at no cost, depending primarily on donations and fund-raising to cover the costs. Other organizations charge a fee; the cost of the dog should be investigated as part of the research of finding out if a service dog is suitable for you.

Q Is there anything special that has come out of having a service dog that you did not anticipate?

A Yes. When I go into public with Sassy, she attracts the attention of other people. As a result, people who stop to notice Sassy typically extend their greeting to me and often that can begin a conversation. As a result I have come to know people and friendships have developed that might not have



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happened otherwise. Sassy has proven to be a social asset.

Q Are there any disadvantages or concerns associated with your decision to get a service dog?

A As with any animal, Sassy will age and eventually will not be able to work. The average number of years that a service dog can work is about 7 to 10 years. This varies on the amount of heavy work that the dog will do. Some dogs are balance dogs and help provide stability to people who walk or transfer themselves from a wheel chair onto another surface. The strenuous work the dog performs the shorter work life the dog may have. Proper health care is important.

Q Is there any other information you would like to share about your decision to get a service dog?

A For me, the decision to get a service dog took place over an extended period of time. During that time I looked into a number of possibilities; the final decision was the result of finding a provider that shared my vision and worked along with me to help me achieve my goals. The match between a dog and the person that it will assist must be exactly right. For Sassy and I there was an instant connection that enables us to work as a successful team, accomplishing things that I once thought might stand in my way of living independently. □

More on Person-Centered Planning

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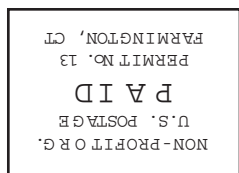
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