

Learn More about Person-Centered Planning

Being person-centered is a way of thinking and acting that empowers people to have a high quality of life.

Person-centered practices assist people in creating a positive and meaningful life and build on people's unique interests and strengths. They refer to strategies and tools that are used in many different situations and settings to support people across the lifespan from the very young to the end of life. These strategies apply to everyone, including people receiving support, staff, organizations, and systems. A variety of organizations and settings use person-centered practices to improve the supports that are provided to people. Disability-related services, nursing homes, behavioral health organizations, family homes, and other human service programs are just a few examples of settings where person-centered strategies are used to improve quality of life.



Person-centered practices are contrasted with agency-centered or system-centered ways of thinking and acting in which people have only systems options or agency-based roles and practices that affect their life choices and experiences. The goal of systems change in these types of settings is to change the values and actions of staff and caregivers by moving away from the view that one must fix something that is wrong with a person to building on each person's unique strengths and creating opportunities for them to share these strengths in a meaningful way with other people in their neighborhoods and communities. Traditional planning methods have often focused on placing individuals into already existing services and supports. In person-centered practices, there is an emphasis on determining what is needed and then tailoring supports and services to meet each person's preferences, desires, and meaningful future.

Person-centered planning is a group and/or team-based process using any of a variety of methods that are based in identifying a person's strengths and interests. This collaborative, strengths-based process results in the identification of goals for establishing positive relationships, building community participation, and facilitating self-determination of individuals with a variety of abilities. In some methods, visual graphics are used during meetings with pictures or images used to communicate important people, activities, places, and things in a person's life. When these images are used, information can be shared without the need for complicated verbal interactions. The person-centered process results in an action plan that is used to implement changes in a person's life that will improve quality of life. Person-centered planning is not a one-time event or a form of documentation to complete. Instead, it is an ongoing team meeting process that helps create a vision for working to make a person's dreams a reality. [This link includes an interview with someone who has participated in person-centered planning.](#)

Person-Centered Planning Methods

There are many types of person-centered planning methods that can be used to guide the process. While these strategies vary, all person-centered planning processes tend to focus on common outcomes. These outcomes include:

- 1) increasing the person's participation in the community,
- 2) identifying new and enhancing existing meaningful relationships,
- 3) expanding the opportunity for an individual to express and make choices,
- 4) creating a dignified life based on mutual respect, and
- 5) developing team skills and areas of expertise in order to improve the person's quality of life.

Each method of person-centered planning has its own strengths that will work better for some people than for others. Knowing how the different methods work can help you find the best fit for the person you are supporting.

Examples of Person-Centered Planning Methods

Charting the LifeCourse

This planning approach helps people and their families identify the best life a person wants to live by developing a vision for a good life, thinking about what is needed and considering the types of supports that will help. [Click here to visit Charting the Lifecourse.](#)

Person-Centered Description (2-Day Person-Centered Thinking)

A description of what is important to and for a person, including how best to support them, developed in the 2-day Person-Centered Thinking training and using the tools included in that training. [Click here for more information.](#)

[Video of Michael Smull explaining the history of Person-Centered Thinking.](#)

[Learn more about how person-centered descriptions](#) and other PCT tools are used.

Picture of a Life (Part 2 of Person-Centered Thinking)

A planning process which utilizes the tools of the Person-Centered Thinking training, and includes both graphic and written descriptions of a person's desirable place to live, work, or other situation. Particularly useful when a person is facing a transition. [Click here for more information.](#)

People Planning Together

A planning format delivered in a 2-day Person-Centered Thinking training format specifically designed for people who receive services. The training is led by someone who receives services with a co-leader professional. [Click here for more information about People Planning Together.](#)

Families Planning Together

A planning format delivered in a 2-day Person-Centered Thinking training format that is specifically designed for families of people who receive services. The training is led by a family member of someone who receives services. [Click here for more information about Families Planning Together.](#)

Personal Futures Planning

A creative process in which a group of committed people designs a life of meaning and contribution for the person who is the focus of the planning. It is a group process led by a facilitator who draws upon people's creative thinking and draws pictures/graphics on poster paper. [Click here for more information about Personal Futures Planning.](#)

[Personal Futures Planning for People with Traumatic Brain Injury](#)– This manual introduces the person-centered planning approach referred to as Personal Futures Planning.

PATH

An 8-step planning process involving dreaming and thinking backwards. It starts with a dream/vision of what the "North star" is for that person. It is an especially helpful process to identify action steps toward reaching the dream/vision. [Click here for more information about PATH.](#)

MAPS

A planning process in which a facilitator leads a group of committed people in understanding a person and their dreams. It starts with the focus person's history and identifies dreams to move toward and nightmares to move away from. [Click here for more information about MAPS.](#)

Essential Lifestyle Planning

Originally developed for people with "severe reputations," and now useful for everyone. A person-centered plan is developed by identifying what are the core or "essential" values of an individual, and how a person should be supported to honor those values. [Click here for more information about Essential Lifestyle Planning.](#)

[Essential Lifestyle Planning for Everyone](#) – This manual is a facilitator manual

WRAP — Wellness Recovery Action Plan

A self-designed prevention and wellness process, WRAP is an evidence-based practice that is used by people dealing with mental health and/or medical challenges. Designed by Mary Ellen Copeland, it has an emphasis on peer support. [Click here for more information about WRAP.](#)

Wraparound Planning

A planning process used to build constructive relationships and support networks among students and youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities (EBD) and their families. It is community-based, culturally relevant, individualized, strengths-based and family centered. [Click here for more information about Wraparound Planning.](#)

Discovering Personal Genius (The Discovery Process)

A planning process intended to create lasting, satisfying, person-directed employment beyond the confines of traditional job development. Designed by Griffin-Hammis Associates. [Click here for more information about Discovering Personal Genius.](#)

Group Action Planning

Group Action Planning (GAP) is a person-centered planning process developed by University of Kansas researchers, many who have family members with a disability and problem behavior. [This video by Ann Turnbull describes Group Action Planning.](#)

[Click here for more information about Group Action Planning.](#)

Improving Quality of Life

An ideal quality of life is achieved when people feel they are happy and in good health, when they are successful, and are recognized by others as contributing to society. Quality of life is a concept that applies to everyone with and without disabilities. The way in which quality of life is assessed and measured is considered universal for people although each person's path for achieving an ideal quality of life may vary. International researchers have described eight quality of life domains.

- **Emotional Wellbeing** (feelings of happiness and contentment, experiencing positive social interactions with others, stable and predictable environments, sense of safety),
- **Interpersonal Relations** (opportunities for making meaningful connections with others, experiencing intimacy and affection, affiliations and interactions with neighbors and fellow community members),
- **Material Well-being** (owning meaningful possessions, resources available to access preferred items, housing, employment),
- **Personal Development** (opportunities for education and ongoing learning, developing skills related to social interaction, work or hobbies),
- **Physical Well-being** (pursuing wellness, maintaining health care and nutrition, mobility),
- **Self-determination** (opportunities to identify and seek out personal goals, making meaningful decisions and important life choices),
- **Social Inclusion** (natural friendship networks, participation in local town and city events that bring people together), and
- **Privacy** (experiencing the same opportunities that are part of today's society, ownership of key items and property, allowed due process, privacy and barrier free environments).

Robert L. Schalock, Ivan Brown, Roy Brown, Robert A. Cummins, David Felce, Leena Matikka, Kenneth D. Keith, and Trevor Parmenter (2002)

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