

How Person-Centered Are Your Planning Meetings?

The scope of person-centered planning, as envisioned by the people who designed it in the early 1980's, is much larger than most imagine. All Person-Centered Planning approaches are characterized by five elements that have been identified as common and fundamental:

- The person at the focus of the planning and those who love that person are the primary authorities on the person's life direction.
- Person-Centered Planning aims to change common patterns of community life. It helps create positive community roles for people with disabilities.
- Person-Centered Planning requires learning through collaborative action, and fundamentally challenges practices that separate people and perpetuate controlling relationships.
- Honest Person-Centered Planning can only come from respect for the dignity and completeness of the focus person as he/she is.
- Assisting people to define and pursue a desirable future tests one's clarity, commitment and courage.

Consider following questions to determine the person-centeredness of your planning:

- Did the individual choose this person-centered process to assist in their planning (was an array of options presented in a clear and understandable fashion)?
- Did the individual select who they wanted to assist in their planning?
- Did the individual select who they wanted to facilitate their planning?
- Did the individual make the session invitations?
- Is the individual participating in all phases of the process?
- Does the planning group include community members?
- Did the individual choose when and where to have the planning/meetings?
- Did the individual determine in what life areas planning would occur?
- Did the dreams and desires of the individual form the foundation for the process?
- Did the individual and the people who know him/her the best and love him/her the most contribute the most?
- Was/is the process positive and respectful?
- Were the strategies used to gain the individual's perspective respectful?
- Did the process identify and build upon the individual's gifts and talents?
- Were ideas for an ideal job or community contribution for this individual generated?
- Were other images of a desirable future identified?
- Does the vision/plan identify ways to assist the individual:
 - expand and deepen their network of relationships?
 - contribute to community life?
 - expand the number and type of valued social roles they experience?
 - increase their experience of choice, control, and self-determination?