

PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

Topic

In this video, BJ Stasio and Carol Blessing offer an overview of person-centered planning. They point out that many disability service organizations are now using the term ‘person-centered planning’; however, they tend to create fairly traditional treatment plans for people with disabilities. Person-centered planning (PCP), when done well, goes beyond the typical approaches to planning. PCP focuses on the strengths, interests, and positive future of a person. It aligns resources to support a person’s vision for the future by providing the kind of assistance the person needs or wants in order to move in the direction of their vision.

Relevance of Topic to System-Involved Youth

Young people who experience some level of institutionalization are “tagged” because of what got them there in the first place. The tag quickly becomes an identity that others use as a way to “know” somebody. A person can be tagged with multiple labels, making it harder to see the person for who they really are.

People who live inside of the labels and stereotypes that others put on them need a way to break free of these labels. People returning to community after being gone for a while may physically be back, but they still carry the messaging and experiences from where they were. The people around them may see them that way, too. Person-centered planning is important in shifting the perception of who the person is and who they can become.

To be person-centered is to get to know an individual as a whole person. There are three ideals that frame person-centered planning.

1. All people are born with gifts, strengths, capacity, potential and a purpose in life.
2. All people have the right to equal opportunity to explore, discover and express their gifts, strengths and life purpose.
3. All people have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of society by sharing their gifts and purpose.

Relevance to Youth with Disabilities

- Most young people have a hard time thinking of themselves in a strengths-based way. People with disabilities carry the added weight of stigma and stereotypes associated with the disability. Person-centered planning provides a holistic picture of a person.
- Having access to the same opportunities and experiences as same age peers is very important in expanding awareness, building competency, and reducing stigma for young people returning to community life.
- Building on existing strengths, interests and capacities offers young people a way to gain new knowledge, skills and abilities.

Recommendations for Creating Systems Change

- Use strengths-based assessments and person-centered approaches to get to know the person.
- Build on existing skills.
- Meet the person where they are, rather than where you may think they should be.
- Listen without judgement.
- Recognize and engage the person’s capacities and potential to achieve good things.



- Help the person to build a solid collaborative team or network of support.
- Assist the person to imagine a positive future and the role they play in it. Use program and service resources in response to their vision.

Questions to Consider

- When thinking about person-centered planning, remember that it is about the *person*, not about the program.
- Are strength-based assessment tools being used to create plans? Do they focus on a positive future? Do the supports and services line up with a future goal that the person has described?
- How can your programs and collaborative teams integrate more person-centered practice into supporting young people coming back into community?

Learn More

- [The Citizen-Centered Education Site](#)
- [What is Person-Centered Planning? Timothy Corey, YouTube video](#)
- [Person-Centered Care Planning: PROMISE project YouTube video](#)

Presenter Information

BJ Stasio is the President of the Board of Directors of the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS). He has been employed by the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (NYS OPWDD) for over 20 years, working on person-centered planning, voting issues, and self-determination training and education. Additionally, he has served on numerous boards in Western NY, and has a non-profit organization, Buffalo Racin', focused on getting people with disabilities involved in 5K races. BJ has represented the voices of self-advocates across New York State during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Carol Blessing is a senior extension associate with the Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University's ILR School where she leads system's impact projects aimed at supporting the full inclusion of people with disabilities in typical community life. She developed the landmark [Citizen-Centered Leadership online series](#), an international leadership development theory-to-practice program. Carol is the Training Coordinator for the Y-ReCONNECTS project, working closely with youth and professional Reentry Ambassadors who serve on country level teams.

