

3. Person Centered Planning

*The future belongs to those who believe in the
beauty of their dreams
Eleanor Roosevelt*

For many years, the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities lives were primarily influenced (some would say dominated) by others.

Planning often involved fitting individuals to whatever services were available -- it didn't really matter what the individual wanted. In those days, individuals with developmental disabilities didn't have much say in matters that affected them, nor did their families. But Person-Centered Planning changed that by introducing a new way of planning services and supports.

Over the past 30 years there has been more and more effort put into ensuring individuals and families serve as the key 'drivers' of the supports a person may need. Over that time, Person Centered Planning has emerged as a practical way of assisting individuals to be supported in the way they, as individuals, and their families, actually want.

At the time of transition, Person Centered Planning can be an effective approach in listening to what the individual wants and assisting the individuals to build the life he or she wants.

*If you don't design your own life plan, chances are
you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what
they have planned for you? Not much
Jim Rohn*

What is Person Centered Planning?

Person Centered Planning is a tool for building a better life. It includes:

- developing a personalized and unique vision, along with plans and support to achieve that vision.
- an invitation to personal commitment – all those involved in the planning process commit to actions that will help the vision become a reality
- assists in sustaining and enhancing relationships – key to a good and secure life

*You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.
You're on your own.
And you know what you know.
You are the guy who'll decide where to go
Dr. Seuss*

Plans are different for different people – no two plans are alike. The plan that is developed during the process is expressly designed for each individual and belongs to that person. It can be used for various purposes, such as telling others more about their special qualities or explaining what they need. Plans can be adapted as the person changes or for example when new friends come on the scene, they may need to be incorporated into the plan. Plans can also serve to strengthen community connections and creating opportunities for building relationships and making new friends.

Person Centered Planning is rooted in values that include:

- A recognition that each individual has strengths, preferences, and capacity to make choices

- A recognition that each individual has capacity to contribute to themselves and their community
- A commitment to listening to each individual to identify big and small choices and preferences.
- Recognition that individuals seek a quality life that includes what most people take for granted- a home, satisfying personal relationships, acceptance by the community, opportunities for work, leisure, and to contribute, freedom to make choices and decisions, attainment of hopes and dreams.
- Recognition that people with disabilities are unique individuals and valuable members of their community.

Person Centered Planning can be a very important aspect of Transition Planning as it can help in highlighting ‘what is really important for individuals - the ‘big picture’ - which can then serve as the basis for supports, services, or funding that each person may require.

The heart of Person-Centered Planning is community inclusion – being connected, having friends and being involved.

Person-Centered Planning is NOT a “cure all.” Person-Centered Planning is not an answer in and of itself. It is “taking action” that really makes the difference. It is also not just another assessment by professionals. Although Person-Centered Planning may be led by a facilitator, its success is based on the contributions and commitment of everyone involved in the process. Nor is it a standard package or routine format. You can’t buy Person-

Centered Planning “off the shelf.” Rather, it is an individualized process that is different for everyone.

Person Centered Planning Processes

We believe that implementations of PCP will be disappointing if people rigorously apply a procedure without sufficient regard for the context of relationships and agreements necessary for it to thrive
John O'Brien

There are many different ‘how to’ approaches available to help individuals and families ensure their interests predominate.

Planning can be done entirely by a family using their own resources. Planning can be done with resources from many of the sources now available for families from groups such as the Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL), Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN), or other community living advocacy groups.

There are also a number of different approaches to planning such as MAPS, PATH, Essential Lifestyle Planning and many others.

Person-Centered Planning involves the individual with a developmental disability, along with their family members, friends, and other important people in their life. Through a series of discussions, they help the individual develop a personal plan. This plan looks to the future, usually covering a span of three to five years, although it can be longer.

Sometimes it is a formal process involving a trained facilitator.

Sometimes it's informal – like when a few family members sit around a table and just talk about the future of their family member with a developmental disability.

Person Centered Planning Content

I believe in the imagination. What I cannot see is infinitely more important than what I can see
Duane Michals

The point of Person Centered Planning is to ensure that the content of the plan reflects each individual's needs, interests, desires, gifts, abilities, and dreams.

The *content* part of planning generally focuses on several core things based in what is generally thought to be important areas to consider in a person's life.

These generally include: Relationships, Home, Health, Education, Work or other opportunities to contribute, ownership of decision making and choice, and Finances.

In planning for your child's move into adulthood not all of these have to be thought about at once. Things will continue to change and you will likely need to think about some of these things more than once as your child ages.

PCP Guidebook and Tool in Central Alberta

To assist families with Person Centered Planning, a number of individuals, families, service providers and staff in Central Alberta developed a *Person Centered Planning Guidebook and Tool*.

While not intended to be the only option for families, these resources try to incorporate the best aspects of various other planning tools.

The tool incorporates the following key elements but others can be added at the choice of the individual or family.

- An exploration of the individual's relationships to others
- An exploration of the individual's current home, community connections, work activities, and natural and paid supports
- An exploration of an individual's interests, gifts, skills, and personal qualities
- What the person is learning or would like to learn
- A look at what the person likes about their life and what they would change
- A look at how to best listen to, or hear, the person
- An exploration of each individual's personal qualities, dreams, and opportunities for social roles and community connections that are to be appreciated or enhanced
- An outline of each person's opportunities and challenges and the resources that are available to that person to assist in achieving their visions i.e. family, community resources, PDD
- An exploration of an individual's Vision for their Life in the areas of home, friends/ community and work/meaningful day activities and any other area that is important to them. This includes the identification of the outcomes that the

person wants to achieve in their life and the identification of the circles of support that are available to assist them in reaching those outcomes

- An identification of how the individual's plan will be reviewed including when, where, and with whom.

Risk more than others think is safe. Care more than others think is wise. Dream more than others think is practical. Expect more than others think is possible
Cadet Maxim

Thinking about these areas in a person's life can be an important step for many families as it can provide a strong foundation that can help shape the direction of their life, strengthen existing natural supports, or help in seeking paid services.

Completing a Person Centered Plan is not a requirement of Transition Planning, particularly as most families have already given a great deal of thought to their child's future, but it may of value and families are encouraged to learn more about Person Centered Planning to determine whether it is of interest to them.

There is something that is much more scarce, something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability
Robert Half

Copies of the PDD Central PCP Guidebook and Tool are available at www.pdd.org/central/pcp. The PDD NE Region has also created Person Centered Planning resources that are available at <http://www.ne-pdd.org/>

Who can be included in Person Centered Planning?

Individuals with developmental disabilities need people in their lives who hold a positive view of them and their future and who will do things that will help bring about the vision that forms the basis of the plan. Generally these types of people are considered to be part of the individuals social support network.

Co-workers, team members, and neighbours may be part of that network as may a teachers, support worker, or sports coach, to name a few. Cultivating people to be part of the social support network is important for your son or daughter to live an inclusive life in the community.

Independent PCP Facilitators

To assist families in Person Centered Planning, a roster of independent PCP facilitators is available in Central Alberta. These independent facilitators support the values associated with person centered planning and have received training in facilitating planning with individuals and families. More information about the Independent PCP Facilitators is available at <http://www.pdd.org/central/resources/personcp.shtml>

The human contribution is the essential ingredient. It is only in the giving of oneself to others that we truly live
Ethel Percy Andre

Participating in the development of a Person Centered Plan can be an important step in learning what's important and what's desired by an individual and can help make sure any services or supports truly support the individual.

Other groups, such as the Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) have also established facilitators that can also be available to assist families in certain types of planning.

What Happens after initial Person Centered Planning efforts are completed?

While Person Centered Planning, in some ways, never ends, the usual step that follows an initial effort is to arrange for supports or services needed for daily life or to achieve life goals identified. This moves the planning into the action stage – answering the question “Who will do what and when?”

If the person needs supports or services that person can take their plan (or portions of it) to show to a service provider. They can ask a services provider to tell how that service provider would help the individual in the desired service or supports areas.

With a person centered plan, individuals and families can explore options with several difference service providers. A community support coordinators can help with this exploration.

Each individual can choose options that best suit his or her plan. PDD resources may be available to help with some areas of your plan while others areas may be supported by family, friends, or others.

Each individual can also schedule time to review their plan. This can ensure it is kept ‘evergreen’.

See the **Person Centered Planning Fact Sheet**
for more info
