

## PERSON CENTERED PLANNING

*A person centered plan can help those involved with the focus person see the total person, recognize his or her desires and interests, and discover completely new ways of thinking about the future of the person." — Beth Mount & Kay Zwernik, 1988*

**Person Centered Planning (PCP)** is an ongoing problem-solving process used to help people with disabilities plan for their future. In person centered planning, groups of people focus on an individual and that person's vision of what they would like to do in the future. This "person-centered" team meets to identify opportunities for the focus person to develop personal relationships, participate in their community, increase control over their own lives, and develop the skills and abilities needed to achieve these goals. Person Centered Planning depends on the commitment of a team of individuals who care about the focus person. These individuals take action to make sure that the strategies discussed in planning meetings are implemented.

### WHO, WHEN, WHERE?

**Who should be involved?** The focus person and who ever they would like can be involved. It is best when there is a facilitator and a person to record what is being shared. The facilitator should be a person that is neutral and unbiased, leads the group through the process, handles conflict and assures equal opportunity for all to participate. Others that may be included are parents/guardians, other family members, friends, professionals, and anyone else who has a personal interest in the person.

**Where can a PCP be held?** Anywhere that is accessible and comfortable! PCPs do not have to take place in a school.

**When should a PCP be held?** At anytime in a person's life. It is best done before transition services are determined. PCP can be a very useful tool to develop a transition plan.



### TOOLS & STEPS

The only **tools** you need to complete a PCP are a flip chart or large pieces of paper to record the information shared and several different colored markers. That's it! **Steps** of a PCP include:

1. Develop a history or personal life story of the focus person. This is accomplished by everyone sharing past events in the person's life. The focus person's parents and family may share the largest amount of this information. Things such as background, critical events, medical issues, major developments, important relationships, etc., may be shared.
2. Description of the quality of the focus person's life is shared next. This may be accomplished by exploring the following: Community participation, community presence, choices/rights, respect and competence.
3. Personal preferences of the focus person. Things the focus person enjoys doing. Also including the things that are undesirable to the person.

Note that PCP meetings can last several hours.

#### PURPOSES OF PCP

- ✓ To look at someone in a different way
- ✓ To assist a person to take control of their own life
- ✓ To increase opportunities for participation in community life
- ✓ To recognize individual desires, interests, and dreams
- ✓ To turn dreams into reality



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## ADVANTAGES OF PCP

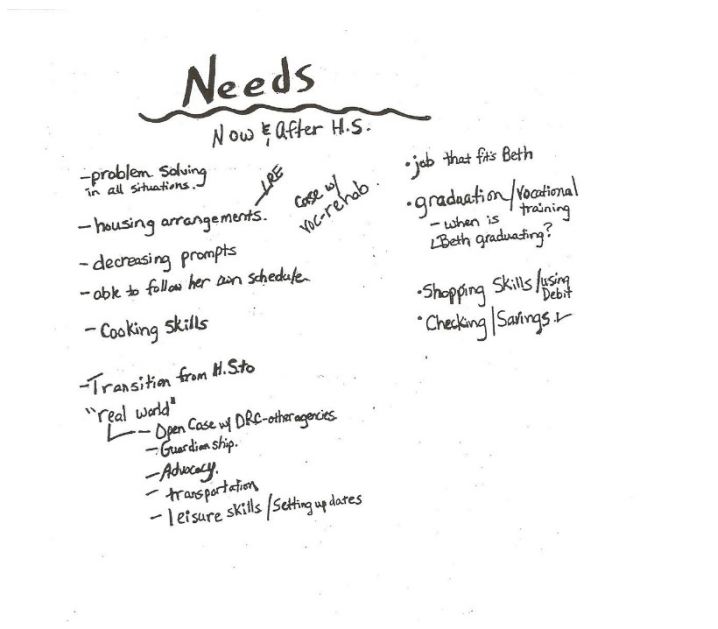
Traditional service planning focuses on weaknesses rather than strengths, relies on personal judgement rather than the family or individual, and uses what is there rather than what is wanted.

PCP believes that the person with a disability and his or her family knows best what they need and want. The family's choices and preferences are honored rather than being plugged into the available slots of a program struggling with high caseloads, budget constraints, and limited services. The plan also builds upon an individual's gifts, talents, and skills.

- ✓ That the group include a person committed to making connections to the local community.

Remember, this is the beginning of a process that continues throughout a lifetime. A PCP is a living document, that will likely evolve over time!

PCPs can be a useful tool for keeping the focus on your child, placing them at the center of decisions.



## SUCCESSFUL PCPs

For a plan to be successful, it is best if:

- ✓ The people have a clear and shared appreciation of the talents and capacities of the focus person.
- ✓ People have a common understanding of what the focus person wants.
- ✓ The group involved agree to meet regularly to review activities.
- ✓ The group include a strong advocate or family member assuring that the interest of the focus person is being met. Ask how will group members be held accountable?