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Person-Centered Planning (PCP)

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Person-centered planning (PCP) is a process that helps students with disabilities plan for their future while also promoting self-determination. PCP helps students with more significant disabilities who need an alternative to traditional approaches in order to convey their strengths, preferences, interests and needs. Typically, a team of persons, usually family, friends and sometimes service providers, work together over time to assist the individual in defining and reaching his or her goals. The team works collaboratively through informal meetings to identify the person's priorities and assist the individual in attaining his or her self-determined quality of life.

According to the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET, 2004, p. 2) person-centered planning process can strengthen the transition to post-school activities through the following:

- Enhancing the quality of assessment and planning activities for both high school transition services and adult service agencies serving youth with disabilities.
- Fostering positive working relationships between families and professionals.
- Providing a way for educators and case managers from other agencies to better coordinate their services.
- Connecting families to adult service agencies before a student leaves high school.
- Helping ensure that services support the youth's goals and lead to successful outcomes.
- Helping identify and cultivate natural supports in the community.

Person-Centered Planning Tools

A number of approaches or tools exist for Person-Centered Planning. Six of the most commonly used are described below.

Circles of Support and Circle of Friends

Circles of Support is a mechanism for building a circle around the individual to improve the individual's quality of life. Generally, the "circle" is comprised of individuals who are not paid to assist or work with the person. It includes four steps which begin with a "vision" of what the individual wants to accomplish and ends with "connections" in the person's community and life. Circle of Friends, developed by Robert Perske, is a similar method.

Essential Life Planning

Essential Life Planning, developed by Michael Smull, looks at the essential quality of life components, explores how a person wants to live and finds ways to make it happen. The process

includes a "Learning Wheel" which guides those involved in planning. The heart of the process is "listening to" and "understanding" the individual.

Group Action Planning (GAP)

Group Action Planning, developed by Ann Turnbull and Rud Turnbull at the University of Kansas, is a person-centered planning process that engages a team in creative brainstorming to help individuals live their dreams. The goal of the process is to build the best life possible for the person. GAP contains five major components (and seven steps) built upon traditional action planning: "inviting support, creating connections, envisioning great expectations, solving problems, celebrating success."

Making Action Plans (MAPS)

MAPS, developed by Marsha Forest and Evelyn Lusthaus, is a person-centered planning process that asks eight guiding questions from which a team works together to assist individuals with defining their dream and building a plan to achieve their dream. Key questions address the individual's "history, dream, nightmare, strengths, needs." The process culminates with a "plan of action."

Personal Futures Planning (PFP)

Personal Futures Planning, developed by Beth Mount, contains a series of six tasks designed to help find capacities in individuals, identify options in their communities, and develop supports and services that will meet each individual's strengths and needs.

Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH)

Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope, developed by John O'Brien, Marsha Forrest and Jack Pierpoint, "begins with the end in mind." The process begins by looking at the desired outcome, also known as the "North Star." The process focuses on ideals, values, passions, and dreams. It looks at the "positive" and engages the support of others. Those involved in planning with the individual work backward into the present.

Resources

The Center for Human Policy, Law and Disability Studies

Syracuse University

Enter "person-centered planning" in the search box at the bottom of the page to access a number of resources, including [The Origins of Person-Centered Planning: A Community of Practice Perspective](#) (pdf) by Connie Lyle O'Brien and John O'Brien.

INCLUSION.com

Numerous resources can be ordered through this site, including books, CDs, and videos related to person-centered planning, MAPS, PATH, and Circles of Support.

Person-Centered Planning Education Site

Cornell University, ILR School, Employment and Disability Institute

This Web site provides a comprehensive review of person-centered planning processes including Circles of Support, ELP, GAP, MAPS, PATH, and PFP. Self-study courses with quizzes, activities, and supplemental reading and resources on multiple person-centered planning tools are also provided.

Person-Centered Planning

The Beach Center at the University of Kansas

This page contains resources on Person-Centered Planning, most of which can be downloaded for immediate use, including an e-book on the experiences of a family that used Group Action Planning (GAP) to facilitate an independent life for their son.

Resources for Person-Centered Planning

Technical Assistance Center for Social-Emotional Intervention for Young Children

Although this site is focused on young children, the PCP resource page contains sample worksheets, references and links that may be helpful to transitioning youth and their families.

Culturally Sensitive Collaboration within Person-Centered Planning

This article describes how person-centered planning (PCP) is relevant and applicable to families of other cultures and languages. Vignettes show how person-centered planning can be used to ensure sensitivity to differences in culture and language.

Reference

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. (2004, February). Person-Centered Planning: A tool for transition. (Parent Brief). Minneapolis, MN: Institute for Community Integration, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1431>

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