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# Choices

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## A GUIDE TO THE PERSON-CENTERED-PLAN

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### More than just a meeting

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Supported by state and federal funds through the Michigan Department of Community Health

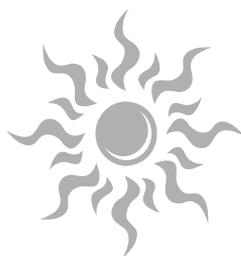
# What's This Guide About?

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In 1995 the Michigan Mental Health Code established a right for all individuals to have their Individual Plan of Service developed through person-centered-planning. This is a process for planning and supporting the individual receiving services that builds upon the individual's capacity to engage in activities that promote community life and that honors the individual preferences, choices and abilities. The person-centered-planning process involves families, friends and professionals as the individual desires or requires.

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This guide includes basic tools to help you and the consumer in the planning process.



## Contents of this Guide

<b>What's This Guide About?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What is Person-Centered-Planning?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Choices</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How to get there from here!</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meeting Ground Rules</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Meeting</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Consumer Satisfaction</b>	<b>12</b>

# What is Person-Centered-Planning?

Person-centered-planning isn't new and it isn't hard to do. It's really as easy as listening to people (or their families if someone is very young) about things like:

- where to live;
- how to spend time each day;
- who to spend time with; and,
- hopes and dreams for the future.

It's about supporting people in the choices they make about their life

It's about relationships.

It's about respecting cultural differences.

It's about strengths, not weaknesses.

It's about involving family, friends & significant others.

It's about community involvement.

It's about flexibility.

It's all about the consumer.

## It is not...

- × Doing whatever the consumers want without regard to health & safety, the effectiveness or costs of service, treatment or support options, or basic standards of reasonableness.
- × A blank check.
- × A quick fix.
- × A new name for planning meetings.
- × A "free" opportunity for the individual to get anything they ever wanted or desired.

# Choices

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Individuals with disabilities and their families know their own needs better than anyone else. However, some preparation may be needed to help the individual learn how to make choices. The old approach to planning was to focus on the person's deficits, which did not provide opportunities for the person to make choices and/or learn to make choices.

Person-centered-planning puts the focus on the individual who is encouraged to explore his/her strengths and weaknesses. Certainly there are all levels of ability to do this, and it is our job to support the person in self-discovery.

Some individuals have limited experiences in the community with respect to housing, work and social activities, etc. which prevent them from making the very best choices/decisions for their future. Therefore, it is critical that choices and options are clearly explained and the opportunity is given to experience various options.

## **Facilitator**

People have the right to choose who will facilitate their person-centered planning process. Some people may facilitate the process themselves. Friends, a family member, an advocate or a supports coordinator/client services manager can provide assistance if it is needed.

CSTS will assist a person to access the services of an independent facilitator. An independent facilitator has received training that prepares them for the process of supporting an individual in the planning process.

# How to get there from here!

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Before the actual person-centered-planning meeting, there are some pre-planning activities that need to take place and choices the person needs to make. The Supports Coordinator will explain what a person-centered-planning meeting is all about. How the consumer is the focus of the meeting and directs the planning process.

The Supports Coordinator will meet with the consumer to:

- Discuss who the individual wants to invite to their meeting. They may choose to have as many or as few as they want of their friends, family, neighbors, employers, etc. Choose a meeting time and location convenient for everyone invited.
- Choose who will facilitate the meeting. The consumer does not necessarily have to choose the Supports Coordinator.

## Communication

Some people may have difficulty hearing or speaking; some may speak a language other than English; some may not have experience expressing their needs and desires.

The way you express or understand something may not be the way the individual does. Their cultural background may be different than yours and this must be recognized and valued. All of these issues need to be taken into consideration when helping the consumer plan his/her future.

(Continued on page 6)

# How do we get there from here?

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(Continued on Page 5)

- Talk about what issues the person wants to talk about at the meeting or does not want to talk about. Some issues can be handled in a one-on-one session with staff.

Pre-planning will help the support group keep focused on the consumer's desires and needs for their future. The Supports Coordinator will ask the consumer to think about some issues and answer some questions before the meeting. The following are examples:

- Things I like a lot.
- Things I don't really like.
- Some things make me happy.
- Some things make me sad.
- These are new things I want to do and learn.
- The things I most often need help with at home and work.
- My health needs.
- The best things about my job.
- My ideas of a great job.
- My ideas of a great home.

# Meeting Ground Rules

When people get together to help the consumer plan their future, the meetings work best when everyone participating knows some of the ground rules. These should be discussed and agreed upon at the beginning of the meeting.

- The facilitator should be chosen in advance with input from the consumer. He/she will need to write things down and keep the conversation moving along.
- Someone should write the team's responses on large sheets of paper.
- Someone, usually the Supports Coordinator, should take notes.
- Take turns. Let everyone have a chance to talk without interruption.
- Try not to judge anyone's ideas, because this is a time to be creative and to think about all of the possibilities.

(Continued on page 8)

## Tools



Some of the tools that may be needed for the person-centered-planning meeting are:

- × An easel, flipchart or large sheets of poster paper.
- × Masking tape or tacks (to post the large paper on the wall).
- × Marking pens.

# Meeting Ground Rules

(Continued from Page 7)

- Keep everything that is talked about in the room. Do not discuss it with anyone outside of the meeting.
- If you say you will do something, follow through.
- Support one another.
- Be adaptable and responsive to the needs and desires of the consumer. There is no single, best way.



## The Team

The following factors for keeping the team/ support group constructively involved in supporting the person:

- ☺ Communication. Sending out the results of the meeting & notices of upcoming meetings.
- ☺ Trust. Listen carefully to the consumer and each other.
- ☺ Facilitation. The person chosen keeps track of time, identifying issues & offers of assistance, & seeing that everyone has an opportunity to contribute.
- ☺ Have fun.

# The Meeting

The person-centered-planning meeting is an important meeting. The people the consumer has chosen to invite will discuss the individual's fears, hopes, dreams, and needs. In addition, they will help them plan for his/her future, assist and support them in making their choices happen. While this is an important meeting, what happens between meetings is more important. That's called life!

Because each effort to engage in person-centered-planning is as unique as the consumer, the process and format are meant to be flexible. In other words, not all person-centered-planning meetings will be alike.

It is more than just a meeting. When you are working on a person-centered-plan. Remember it is about five things:

- Getting to know someone really well.

(Continued on Page 10)

## Services

In person-centered-planning, supports and services to promote community inclusion are considered in this order:

- The individual.
- Family, guardian, friends and significant others.
- Resources in the neighborhood and community.
- Public funded supports and services available for all citizens.
- Public funded supports and services provided under the auspices of Washtenaw Community Health Organization.

# The Meeting

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(Continued on Page 7)

- Finding out about someone's life choices.
- Supporting someone's choices about where he or she wants to live, how he or she wants to spend each day, who they want to spend time with, and their hopes and dreams for the future.
- Working with others to come up with a way to make those choices a part of someone's everyday life.
- Figuring out what supports and services someone needs and wants.

It's as easy as that, it's as hard as that; and it's more than just a meeting.

One way to conduct a person-centered-planning meeting is by using a series of wall charts. Placed on the wall with headings, these charts help organize the information needed to assist and support the consumer in planning his/her future. There are numerous ways to facilitate the meeting and the process. Wall charts may not always be an effective tool in outpatient settings. Person-centered-planning meetings are not all alike and

(Continued on Page 11)

# The Meeting

(Continued on Page 10)

they should present numerous opportunities to be creative.

Some questions that the consumer and the support group will answer are:

- What are some great things about the individual?
- What is the individual's best day and worst day like?
- What are the individual's hopes and dreams for the future?
- What may get in the way?
- How can we support the individual?



## Feedback

Getting feedback on the person-centered-plan regularly is important to determine how the supports and services are working or to determine how to make them work better for the consumer.

It is important for the consumer to receive feedback on their progress. This should be done by the Supports Coordinator, informally, and regularly.

How supports and services are being delivered, the consumer's satisfaction, and progress toward the consumer's desired outcomes need to be discussed.

# Consumer Satisfaction

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If the consumer is not satisfied with his/her Person-Centered-Plan, the consumer, the guardian of the consumer, or the parent of a minor consumer may make a request for review by the Supports Coordinator. The review must be completed within thirty (30) days. If the consumer is still not satisfied they may appeal and/or talk to a Recipient Rights Officer or the WCHO Customer Services Department.

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**If you want help or information, feel free to call:**

**Office of Recipient Rights**

**Or**

**Customer Services  
1-877-779-9707**

**Or**

<b>Lenawee</b>	<b>517-263-8905</b>
<b>Livingston</b>	<b>517-546-4126</b>
<b>Monroe</b>	<b>734-243-7340</b>
<b>Washtenaw</b>	<b>734-544-3000</b>

The consumer's Supports Coordinator is:

and can be contacted at:  
(734) \_\_\_\_\_

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