Direct Care Core Competencies (DCCC) Course

Learner Guide – Module 1

This guide is designed for use with the
Direct Care Core Competencies Course

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Welcome to Direct Care Core Competencies – DCCC

Welcome to the Direct Care Core Competencies course. This course will provide you with information about the roles and responsibilities of direct support professionals.

Purpose of Course

The purpose of the Direct Care Core Competencies course is to introduce you to the knowledge, skills, and terms that will assist you in applying and delivering maximum standards of care as a direct support professional.

Course Modules

This course has five modules. Each module begins with a list of learning objectives. There is an assessment at the end of the course based on all of the learning objectives.

The five modules are:

1. **Basic Person-Centered Planning**

2. **Introduction to Developmental Disabilities**

3. **Maintaining Health, Safety, and Wellness**

4. **Individual Choices, Rights, and Responsibilities**

5. **Roles and Responsibilities of Direct Support Professionals**

The estimated completion time for this course is 2 ½ hours.

Module 1: Basic Person-Centered Planning
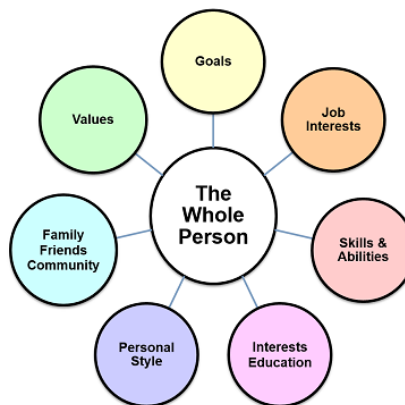
Person-Centered Thinking is the philosophy of Person-Centered Planning. It is choosing to think about and focus on the person's strengths, abilities, and aspirations, rather than focusing on the person's disabilities.

Module 1 Objectives –

By the end of Module 1 you should be able to:

- Identify the key elements in successful Person-Centered Planning
- Provide examples of Person-Centered Planning and self-direction
- Recognize components to self-direction and empowerment, and
- Be familiar with barriers to empowerment

What Does Person-Centered Planning Mean? –

Person-Centered Planning means the individual directs his or her own life. As a direct support professional, it is vital that you assist the individual in finding options that are best suited to their goals and work with their supports to help achieve them.

This module will define the term Person-Centered Planning and instruct you on how Person-Centered Planning is essential to provide quality support for the individual by encouraging them, and providing them with the freedom to make their own decisions.

The Person-Centered Planning requirements for individuals in Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) settings are defined under the 1915 HCBS Waiver and the 1915 IHCBS State Plan authorities.

Person-Centered Planning is an individualized approach that helps the individual with a developmental disability discover what he or she really wants by focusing on what is important, regarding:

- How they want to live
- Input from those who love them
- Health and safety (from their perspective)

- Continuous evaluation
- Being respectful of the individual, the family, and those who support the individual, and
- Taking the time and effort necessary to make sure the individual's voice is heard, regardless of the disability

Know the Individual

The best way to get to know people is to spend time with them. This is just as true of the individuals you will work with as it is with anyone else. Talk with the individual. Go places with him or her.

Pay attention not just to what the individual says, but also to what he or she does. Watch how they respond to particular events. Note how he or she chooses to spend their free time. This will provide you with a lot of information about the individual.

Self-Directed

Every individual has feelings, preferences, hopes, and aspirations. Consider the individual's needs and thoughts when establishing supports, and in achieving their aspirations.

It is important to place value in the choices of services and supports the individual would like to maintain, and allow the individual to direct the course of the planning.

Remember, individuals with disabilities may need support in addressing the assumptions and perspectives held by others regarding people with disabilities.

Person-Centered Empowerment

A Person-Centered Plan can be completed at any time, but for the process to be meaningful and beneficial, the individual's circle of support must be a part of the planning process.

All participants are encouraged to become active in the process of discovering and understanding the individual's needs, wishes, and aspirations.

Use your communication skills to avoid questions with boundaries. Use the individual's

preferred communication style. For example, if needed, use visual prompts for the individual's primary communication. Listen, give value, and encourage empowerment.

The following **tenets of Person-Centered Planning** require a commitment from all parties:

- To know and to understand
- To be of genuine service
- To be open to being guided by the individual
- To be willing to struggle for difficult goals
- To be flexible, creative, and open to trying what might be possible
- To be willing to enhance the humanity and dignity of the individual, and
- To look for the good in people and to help bring it out

Being Respectful

Person-Centered Planning allows the individual to feel respected. When a direct support professional takes the time and effort to make sure an individual's voice is heard, regardless of their disability, then the individual is allowed to focus on what is **important to them**. We listen to and respect the individuals we work with, and plan continuously. Respect can be shown by encouraging and allowing the individual to:

- Have the opportunities to explore and expand their choices and options
- Develop and expand natural supports through circles of support and similar informal support networks
- Make life decisions
- Express how they want to live
- Get input from the people who love them, and
- Let you help ensure they feel healthy and safe

Continuous evaluation of all parts of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) service delivery system will focus on these examples.

Respectful Language

Respectful language refers to a way of speaking about an individual with a developmental disability that makes sure you are speaking first and foremost about the person, not their disability.

In other words, individuals with disabilities prefer to be referred to with language that respects their humanity, abilities, talents, and values. They wish to be addressed first as an individual, and not as a disability.

The following lists are examples of respectful and disrespectful words and phrases, in regards to individuals with disabilities.

Respectful words and phrases:

- People with disabilities
- Individual with autism
- Individual with Down Syndrome
- Individual who requires intensive or additional care
- Individual with an orthopedic disability
- Congenital disability
- Typical or people without disabilities
- Wheel chair user

Disrespectful words and phrases:

- Handicapped and the disabled
- An autistic
- A Down's child
- Afflicted with, suffers from
- Drain, burden
- Crippled or lame
- Birth defect
- Normal

Relationships

In the center of important relations, are personal networks. These networks are most often made up of:

- Family members
- People in the community
- Service providers, and
- Friends

Family members are generally people who are most important to the individual, who are close to and see the individual often, such as parents. This group can also include family members they see less often than those that are nearby.

People in the community are those who mean a lot to the individual, such as their employer. The group also includes the people in the community they associate with, such as doctors, or church pastors.

Service providers can include people the individual feels close to, and also people who provide services that they like.

Friends include people who are important and close to the individual as well as people they have met and like, but may be acquaintances.

Barriers

Individuals with developmental disabilities may often be isolated or discriminated against because they may learn more slowly or may not learn as much. Communication challenges often prompt others to believe individuals with disabilities are not capable.

Caregivers of the individuals need to focus on allowing the development of independence, and overcoming these barriers, while using the adaptations needed for the individual to interact.

What Can Be Done

Development of independence, and overcoming barriers can be achieved by listening to what the individual says. Help them be the owner of their life plans, and to take responsibility for their choices and decisions.

Interests

It is important to get to know the individual so you can help them become more independent and confident in making their own life choices.

Here are some examples of questions to help find out information about the interests of the individual:

- What are some of the great things about you?
- What are you good at doing?
- What are your interests?
- What do you enjoy doing?

When getting to know the individual, ask them what they like about their life, and what they would change about their life.

The answers to these questions will help you to learn more about what is important to the individual and to discover better ways to communicate with them.

Additional questions can include asking the individual about the personal qualities that are needed to appreciate and enhance their life. Ask what dreams they have for their life, and ask about themes, gifts, and interests that are developing for them.

Remember, getting to know someone is not a onetime event and should be revisited often to learn of new or updated likes, dislikes, and preferences.

Social Connections

When getting to know the individual, and discovering their interests, consider opportunities for social roles and community connections.

Interests, dreams, themes, gifts, and existing connections are what they need to focus on, to help achieve their goals. Explore where social opportunities exist both within the home and/or in the community, to help you experience and share the individual's interests. What are the social roles and meaningful connections to explore? What

supports are needed to set up and explore potential social connections?

Resources

What resources are available? Family, friends, relationships, and community life. Circles of support, along with home life, provide support so you and the individual can establish what is needed and wanted to gain social connections, and to help the individual reach their goals.

Life-enhancing supports also help the individual to achieve their goals. These supports include nonprofit organizations, for profit agencies, civic and community groups, faith-based organizations, and professional associations.

Circle of Support

What is a circle of support?

A circle of support is the group of people who provide support to the individual. They listen, and provide life-enhancing opportunities.

They can be family members, friends, acquaintances, memberships, legal representatives, faith-based organizations, not-for-profit services, community groups, and paid services. Paid services can be private pay services or waiver services.

A circle of support is particularly necessary for people who do not have family involved in their life. If the individual does not want to use a circle of support, it is important to find out why this is the case. Circles of support include the individual's personal relationships such as:

Friendships: close relationships, including a best friend

Acquaintances: casual relationships with others

Memberships: affiliations with groups that share common interests

Person-Centered Planning – Slide 25

Each Person-Centered Plan is an individualized approach that helps the individual with a developmental disability find what he or she really wants.

A Person-Centered Plan moves from an approach geared towards solving problems, to one focused on providing opportunities, freedom, meaningful interdependence, and success.

The Person-Centered Planning Process

The Person-Centered Planning process is driven by the individual and includes people chosen by the individual.

It provides necessary information and support to the individual to ensure that the individual directs the process to the maximum extent possible.

The process provides a method to request updates and is conducted to show what is important to the individual. This is to make sure delivery of services happens in a manner reflecting personal preferences and ensuring health and welfare.

It identifies the strengths, preferences, needs, such as clinical and support, and desired outcomes of the individual.

The Person-Centered Planning process also includes individually identified goals and preferences related to relationships, community participation, employment, income and savings, healthcare and wellness, education and others. Risk factors and plans to minimize them should also be included.

Once completed the plan must be signed by all individuals and providers responsible for its implementation. A copy of the signed plan must be provided to the individual and their legal representative**.**

Keys to Person-Centered Planning

- Listening to and respecting people
- Planning continuously
- Giving people the opportunities to explore and expand their choices and options
- Developing and expanding natural supports through circles of support and similar informal support networks, and
- Helping make life decisions such as community, work, leisure, etc.

Person-Centered Planning

- Is timely and occurs at times or locations convenient for the individual
- Reflects cultural considerations and uses plain language
- Includes strategies for solving disagreements, and
- Offers choices to the individual about services and supports

The Person-Centered Implementation Plan should include:

- The individual

- The individual making decisions with others
- Steps taken for the individual to have the right to decide
- Approaches to assist in communicating decisions, and
- A description of how the guardian/guardian advocate assists in making decisions

Communication Skills

Communicating effectively with the individual you are assisting is important for the direct support professional to ensure that an open-communication environment exists.

Let's look at some ways to improve communication skills:

- **Talk at eye level** - Standing over an individual can be perceived as aggressive or domineering. If the individual you are speaking with is sitting, you should also sit and speak with them face-to-face.

- **Listen with full attention** - Do not interrupt, it can be distracting or aggressive. Encourage the individual to take the time they need to convey their message. Give them the time and patience to communicate, and give occasional acknowledgements to show that you are listening and understand.

- **Ask open-ended questions** - Allow the individual to answer with their true feelings. Remain non-judgmental. Just because someone believes something you do not, does not necessarily make them incorrect. Being judgmental will result in an individual being less comfortable or less willing to communicate with you.

- **Paraphrase or repeat words** - Clarify your understanding of the individual. Give them time to correct anything that you might have misunderstood. Summarize your preferences, and encourage the same for the person with whom you're interacting.

- **Use silence frequently** - Continuous talking can be overwhelming and over stimulating. Silence gives the chance to reflect and think about what was just said. Speak clearly and thoughtfully.

- **Be accepting of feelings** - Accept the feelings of the individual and be empathetic to their situations.

Value People

What are some ways we can show someone that we value them and encourage others to do the same?

- Educate and train the individual about how to advocate for themselves. Educate and train the people who support the individual in valuing opinion, choice, and dignity of risk.

- <u>Empowerment to be self-determined</u> - with positive reinforcement and an understanding of mistakes, we empower an individual to express and live their life without the fear of punishment for not succeeding.

- <u>Listen to the individual</u>. <u>Be patient</u> and speak in a calm voice. Make sure you are clear, and ask the individual if they have questions. <u>Respect</u> their answers and choices.

- <u>Encourage</u> the individual to express their wants and needs.

- <u>Assist in finding supports</u> - let the individual know that you are there to help them find supports and services to help them reach their goals.

- <u>Dignity of risk</u> encourages the individual to have the chance to succeed, and the understanding when a mistake is made. By speaking about other options and risks to help them make informed decisions, we minimize the risk of harm or failure.

People First Language

When we use people first language, we recognize that all people are unique. People who have disabilities should not be defined by their disability. By using respectful words and phrases, we are respecting the individual. Emphasize the uniqueness and worth of all people rather than the differences between them.

Giving an individual who has a disability the opportunity to succeed is also giving them the opportunity to fail and learn from their mistakes. This is referred to as **dignity of risk**. Instead of choosing for the individual you are assisting, they should make their own decisions.

Give your opinion on the different benefits and risks of the choices. This is referred to as informed decision-making. Once informed, let the individual choose for themselves and understand that making mistakes is an opportunity to learn and grow.

Speak directly to an individual who has a disability and not to his or her companion. This assures that you focus on the individual. Speak in a normal tone of voice, and be patient. Some people might take longer than others when communicating. Allow the individual to speak for his or her self whenever possible.

Remember that caregivers and other supports are there to assist the individual, not to speak for the individual.

Self-Determination

What is Self-Determination?

Self-Determination is the freedom to make choices and the opportunity to try new things.

Dr. Charles Moseley's article titled, <u>Making Self-Determination Work</u>, provides a new approach to supporting people with developmental disabilities. The concept is based on the idea that control over the services and supports offered to people with developmental disabilities should rest with the individual receiving the services.

Each individual shall have the authority to define and pursue their own vision. The role of the direct support professional is to assist in finding the supports necessary to help the individual work towards this goal. Personal relationships and community membership are valued.

All networks and systems of support should collaborate together to support the needs and vision of the individual. Working as a team is imperative, and as a direct support professional it is your job to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. However the main voice must be that of the individual, so that the individual has the final say in his or her life choices.

Module 1 Review

Let's review some of what you have learned in this module.

<u>What does Person-Centered Planning mean?</u>
>   It means the individual directs his or her own life.

<u>What is a barrier to individuals with disabilities?</u>
>   Barriers include isolation and discrimination.

And, <u>what is a circle of support?</u>
>   A circle of support is a group of people who provide support to the individual.

End of Module 1

Congratulations!

You have completed Module 1 of the Direct Care Core Competencies Course - Basic Person-Centered Planning presentation. You must complete the course assessment, and course evaluation before moving on to course 2.

We are just an email away!

If you cannot find the answer to your problem or require technical assistance, **please do not contact** the PFH technical assistance or FDOH; instead, contact the TRAIN Florida APD Support Team at apd.lmssupport@apdcares.org