

# Helpful Hints Guide

## A Resource for families/caregivers for service planning

This guide is intended to provide some context for families and/or caregivers when helping a family member prepare for their service plan meeting with a case manager.

**Q: What is a service plan?**

**A:** A document that outlines the services, supports and resources (waiver and/or other, paid and non-paid) that a person seeks in all aspects of their life.

**Q: What is “person-centered?”**

**A:** It means that a person with a disability is at the center of the decisions made about their life.

**Q: What is person-centered planning?**

**A:** It is “an ongoing problem-solving process used to help people with disabilities plan for their future.”

- Focus is “on a person and that person's vision of what they would like to do in the future.
- A ‘person-centered’ team meets to identify opportunities for a 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”

**Q: What is the purpose of person-centered planning?**

**A:** This process is designed to “assist a person in gaining control over their own life; to increase opportunities for participation in the community; and to recognize individual desires, interests, and dreams.”<sup>ii</sup>

**Q: Who is involved in putting together a plan?**

**A:** “The person and whoever they would like can be involved.”<sup>iii</sup> Additionally, a service professional such as a case manager is there to facilitate and document the process and the outcomes.

**Q: As a family member, how do I prepare for/participate in this process?**

**A:** Communication is key – especially with the person on which the plan is focused.

- Ask them how they “envision their future and support needed.”
- Communication is also important with other family members and friends.
  - “Don’t assume a family member’s role.
  - Talk with other family members about what roles they want to play. Some family members may want to play a larger role than you anticipate. Others may be reluctant to take on the role that you envision for them.
  - Try to listen and respect each person’s wishes.
  - It is also important to develop support networks outside of the family. Learn how other people approach planning for the future.

- It is important to set realistic expectations.
- Planning is not a one-time event. It's an ongoing process.<sup>iv</sup>

**Q: What are some questions I should ask or think about as we start this process?**

**A:** Questions to consider:

- What housing, employment and daily living options are available in your community?
- Who will support my family member with decision-making (if necessary)?
- What public services or benefits does my family member receive? Are there other public services or benefits available?
- Have you developed a long-term financial plan?
- Which friends and family members are important to my family member?<sup>v</sup>

**Q: How can I keep this a positive experience for my family member and me?**

**A:** When you meet together:

- Keeps things positive.
- Take turns talking.
- Respect everyone's right to choose not to talk.
- Listen to one another, and ask questions only to clarify.
- Be respectful of each other's ideas and information.
- Support one another.
- If someone becomes uncomfortable or upset, offer to meet again at a later time.
- Set a date and time to talk again about how the plan is working and how it might need to be changed.
- End the meeting with a positive summary of what you talked about.<sup>vi</sup>

**Q: Are there resources for me or my family member to use as we work on the plan?**

**A:** There are many! One resource, Helen Sanderson Associates<sup>vii</sup>, offers person-centered thinking tools "to give structure to conversations. Using them is a practical way to capture information that feeds into care and support planning, as well as to improve understanding, communication and relationships."<sup>viii</sup> Some examples:

- [Sorting Important To/For](#): "The fundamental person-centered thinking skill is to separate what is important to someone from what is important for them, and to find a balance between the two. We then summarize this information on a one-page profile."<sup>ix</sup>
- [Good day/Bad Day](#): "This person-centered thinking tool helps you to have conversations about what a good day is like, from when a person wakes up to when they go to bed. You can then look at the same detailed information for a bad day. This helps us to learn what is important to the person – both what must be present in their day and what must not happen."<sup>x</sup>
- [What's working/not working](#): "To develop outcomes and actions, we must first work out what it is about someone's current situation that they are happy with, and what they would change if they could - looking at things both from their perspective and from others' perspectives. This person-centered thinking tool works through this and starts to develop outcomes and actions to make sure the change happens."<sup>xi</sup>
- [Decision Making Profile](#): "Creates a clear picture about how a person makes a decision and how they want to be supported in decision-making."

It describes how to provide information in a way that makes sense to that person:

- How they want you to structure your language:
  - written words
  - symbols
  - pictures
  - audio format

It breaks the decision-making process into five sections:

- How I like to get information.
- How to present choices to me.
- Ways you can help me understand.
- When is the best time for me to make decisions?
- When is a bad time for me to make a decision?

When you are completing a decision making profile with a person look at their one-page profile and communication chart. See what these tell you about the best times and ways to support the person to make a decision. Talk to the person and those they know well to check this information with them and add to it. It might help to think about a decision the person has had to make in the past and then think about what worked and what did not work for them about how they were supported.”<sup>xii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> National Parent Center on Transition and Employment (2018). *Person-Centered Planning*. Retrieved from <http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/independent-community-living/person-centered.asp>

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iv</sup> The Arc (n.d.). *Learn about Future Planning: Parent*. Center for Future Planning. Retrieved from: <https://futureplanning.thearc.org/pages/learn/who-are-you/parent>

<sup>v</sup> The Arc (n.d.). *Learn about Future Planning: Parent*. Center for Future Planning. Retrieved from: <https://futureplanning.thearc.org/pages/learn/who-are-you/parent>

<sup>vi</sup> Allen, W. T. (2002). *It's My Choice*, pg. 18. MN Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. Retrieved from: [http://mn.gov/mnddc/extra/publications/choice/Its\\_My\\_Choice.pdf](http://mn.gov/mnddc/extra/publications/choice/Its_My_Choice.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> Helen Sanderson Associates (n.d.) *Person-Centered Thinking Tools*. Retrieved from: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/>

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid

<sup>ix</sup> Helen Sanderson Associates (n.d.) *Sorting Important To/For*. Retrieved from: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/sorting-important-tofor/>

<sup>x</sup> Helen Sanderson Associates (n.d.) *Good Day/Bad Day*. Retrieved from: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/good-daybad-day/>

<sup>xi</sup> Helen Sanderson Associates (n.d.) *What's Working/Not Working*. Retrieved from: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/whats-workingnot-working/>

<sup>xii</sup> Helen Sanderson Associates (n.d.) *Decision Making Profile*. Retrieved from: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/decision-making-profile/>

Compiled by the following SCDHHS Person-Centered Planning Workgroup organizations:  
[SCDHHS](#), [SCDDSN](#), [SCDMH](#), [SC Development Disabilities Council](#), [Protection & Advocacy of SC](#), [Center for Disability Resources](#), [Able SC](#), [Family Connection](#), [The Arc of South Carolina](#), and [MaxAbilities](#)