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Factsheet – person centred planning

Summary

- Person centred planning is a way of assisting people to work out what they want, the support they require and helping them get it.
- Person centred planning has the person at the centre, is carried out in alliance with friends and family and is focussed on getting real lives for people.
- This factsheet outlines five features that distinguish person centred planning from other approaches.
- Person centred Planning plays a particularly important role in delivering the objectives in the 'Valuing People' White Paper

General Introduction: What is Person Centred Planning?

Person centred planning is a fundamentally different way of seeing and working with people with disabilities. Being 'person centred' or using a 'person centred approach' means ensuring that everything we do is based upon what is important to a person from their own perspective. Person centred planning discovers and acts on what is important to a person.

Person centred planning helps us do this by discovering and acting on what matters to a person. It gives us a structure to help us continually listen and learn about what is important to a person now and in the future and to act on this in alliance with friends and family. It requires a fundamental shift of thinking from a 'power over' relationship to a 'power with' relationship.

Numbers

There is an expectation in the guidance that some form of person centred planning is appropriate for everybody with a learning disability. The Government has outlined a number of priority groups to start the process with however, and these are outlined below.

The Key Five Features of Person Centred Planning

The person centred planning guidance describes 5 Key features that help distinguish it from other forms of planning

- 1. The person is at the centre:** Person centred planning is rooted in the principles of rights, independence and choice. It requires careful listening to the person and results in informed choice about how a person wants to live and what supports best suit the individual.
- 2. Family members and friends are full partners:** Person centred planning puts people in context of their family and communities. The contributions that friends and families can make are recognised and valued and gives a forum for creatively negotiating conflicts about what is safe, possible or desirable to improve a persons life.
- 3. Person centred planning reflects a person's capacities, what is important to a person (now and for the future) and specifies the support they require to make a valued contribution to their community.** Services are delivered in the context of the life a person chooses and not about slotting people into 'gaps'.
- 4. Person centred planning builds a shared commitment to action that recognises a person's rights.** It is an ongoing process of working together to make changes that the person and those close to them agree will improve a person's quality of life.
- 5. Person centred planning leads to continual listening, learning and action and helps the person get what they want out of life.** Learning from planning can not only inform individuals but can affect service delivery as a whole and inform and inspire others to achieve greater things.

Person centred planning is not...

The same as assessment and care planning: it is not concerned with eligibility for resources or other predetermined criteria.

Only for people who are 'easy to work with: It is applicable and useful for anyone regardless of ability, how they may challenge services or cultural background

An end in itself: Person centred planning can be a powerful tool in enabling someone to change their lives, however there are serious risks in focussing on achieving large numbers of plans rather than people getting the lives they want.

A replacement for other necessary forms of planning. For example services may need to plan in ways that help them ensure services are competent and reliable, however it is important that other forms of planning reflect and respond to person centred planning.

Why is it important?

Person centred Planning is not a means to an end in itself. If it is to be effective it must result in real change for people with disabilities. The purpose of person centred planning is to enable people to live the lives they want to in their communities.

People who have used person centred planning are finding that it can:

- Help people work out what they want in their lives and make them feel stronger and more confident
- Clarify what support people need to pursue their aspirations
- Bring people together to support people in joint problem solving and to energise and motivate people based upon better understanding of and commitment to the person.
- Help direct and shape the contributions made from service agencies, to ensure they are based upon what is important to a person from their perspective.

Person centred planning is particularly important as it is a key element in helping to deliver the governments objectives outlined in the valuing people white paper. Valuing people states: Development of a person centred approach requires real changes in organisational culture and practice. Achieving these changes should be a priority for partnership boards

Who Plans with People?

Self-advocates, families, friends and people paid to be in a person's life, use person centred planning. When individuals want to plan for themselves and have the energy and commitment to drive the change themselves, there are booklets that help people do this, maybe with some help from others.

If a person does not want or is not able to plan for themselves, whatever the reason, a family member or a friend may plan with someone, This is what most of us do when we are contemplating change in our lives. We use family and friends to support us to help us think and make decisions.

If a person does not have anyone close to them to help them plan then they will usually have to rely on someone paid to be in their lives.

Some different approaches

Any approaches that encompass the five features of person centred planning outlined earlier could be described as person centred planning. There are three tried and tested approaches that are commonly used and are well backed up in terms of resources, training and literature.

The three approaches are described briefly as below but more comprehensive information can be found on the website links.

PATH: Focuses strongly on a desirable future or dream and what it would take to move closer to that. It is a way of planning direct and immediate action.

Personal Futures Planning: It involves a committed group of people to describe a persons life now and look at what they would like in the future, it is useful to help people learn more about a persons life (unlike PATH, which assumes this knowledge) and create a vision for the future.

Essential Lifestyle Planning: a very detailed planning style that focuses on a person's life now and how that can be improved. It help people find out what is important to a person and what support they need to have a good quality of life from their perspective.

Key Government Papers

Department of Health (2001); 'Valuing People A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century,' HMSO

Department of Health (2002); Planning With People: Towards Person Centred Approaches: Guidance for Implementation Groups

Department of Health Planning With People: Towards Person Centred Approaches: Guidance for Partnership Boards

References

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