

Person Centered Planning

Why it Matters



This Person Centered Planning booklet was created for individuals and families supported by PDD Central Alberta Community Board. Copies are available on the PDD Central website at www.pdd.org/central or by calling one of the following PDD Central Alberta Community Board offices:

Camrose	(780) 679-5058
Drumheller	(403) 823-1653
Olds	(403) 556-4200
Lloydminster	(306) 820-4257
Red Deer	(403) 340-5003
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Welcome

Person Centered Planning is a process that Persons with Developmental Disabilities Central Alberta Community Board has been promoting for several years. We've completed research and done a pilot project and now in this booklet we want to ensure that individuals and families have the information they need to make informed decisions about Person Centered Planning.

We are sure that the Person Centered Planning philosophy can lead to more meaningful and fulfilling lives for individuals who receive services. We believe this process has proven itself to be very effective and we hope to make it a regular part of our approaches.

We hope you will give Person Centered Planning some consideration.

Lorne McEwen
CEO
PDD Central Alberta Community Board

Table of Contents

Bill's story.....	4
What is Person Centered Planning?.....	6
Questions and answers	9
Why here? Why now?	15
What the research told us.....	16
Who to call	19

What's in it for me or mine?

Bill's story demonstrates
the power of Person
Centered Planning
to change lives

Although every Person Centered Plan is different because every person is different, Bill's story is fairly typical of how the process works. Bill was 24. He lived in the country with his parents and ran a small farming business. He sold duck and chicken eggs at the local farmer's market and every fall he sold calves from his three cows.

But Bill was bored. Even though the quiet rural surroundings and the routines of his chores helped ease the anxiety his autism creates, Bill wanted a change. He began to complain. So, with the help of a community supports coordinator, Bill's parents arranged a Person Centered Planning meeting with a facilitator and the people Bill picked to attend: his parents, his brother, his best friend Tyler, Grandma Betty and all of the staff working with him.

The meeting was held on a sunny afternoon in July in the back yard of Bill's home. This was his territory. His chickens wandered around the yard as everyone discussed his hopes and dreams.

In a previous plan, Bill had wished for a career, a group of supportive friends and relatives, and a flexible, varied lifestyle. After reviewing this list, the group identified Bill's strengths and gifts. He had three years of experience in agriculture. He loved plants and animals. He loved to party and he took his work very seriously.

The group turned its attention to "Things As They Are Right Now" and the list began with Bill's desire for a change in his life. He didn't know what form this change should take, nor did he want to make irrevocable decisions or lose all the good things he had now, but he definitely wanted more variety in his life. He also wanted to stay in charge of his life and to try new things on his own terms.

The group headed its next list "What Could We Do Next?" and supplied several answers under the headings of Home/Living, Work, School, and Longer Term Security. Two priorities stood out, home and school, so this is where Bill and his friends focused their plans. They made sure their ideas matched Bill's gifts and strengths.

Bill began to visit post-secondary institutions. His PDD community supports coordinator started looking at rural living opportunities for him. Changes began to follow like boxcars behind a moving locomotive.

Bill hired a neighbour to board his cows. He moved to a 10-acre farm south of Olds and entered Olds Agricultural College. He stayed true to his dream of farming by taking agricultural classes while also widening his world and filling it with new friends and interests.

Bill is enjoying the life he wants because his family and friends listened to his wishes and made a Person Centered commitment to act on them.

Person Centered Planning

What IS it?

'Person Centered Planning is a philosophy and a set of related activities that assist individuals with developmental disabilities to plan for a life in which they can be valued and contributing members of the community.'

Beth Mount



Now that you've seen why Person Centered Planning matters, we turn to what it is.

For a long time society regarded people with developmental disabilities as 'broken' and concentrated its attention and its resources on trying to 'fix' them. Over the years, as programs were developed and service systems established, the voices of individuals and families were gradually, if inadvertently, muted.

Person Centered Planning emerged about 25 years ago as a way of consciously searching for new ways of understanding individuals with developmental disabilities, and their experiences and desires. It assumes that each individual and his or her loved ones are the primary authorities when it comes to making plans. It is based on a person's gifts and abilities. It challenges everyone involved to look beyond perceived limits and think more creatively about what is possible. It is a pledge to listen.

Person Centered Planning can take many forms and comes under many names, but all true forms of Person Centered Planning have one thing in common: they work *with* a person, not *on* a person.

Person Centered Planning brings together the individual being supported and the people who play a vital role in his or her life: parents, friends, roommates, co-workers, clergy, etc.

Under the guidance of a facilitator, the planning group gathers information about an individual's friends, where she spends time, her personal history, her gifts, hopes and dreams, and her fears and challenges.

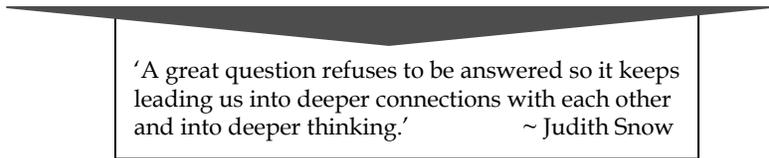
It is a creative process. The group can use any strategy they wish to explore the gifts, interests and preferences of the person at the centre. They can use scrapbooks, computer programs or video as well as, or instead of, pen and paper.

Core elements

PDD Central Alberta Community Board has set out the essential elements of Person Centered Planning as it applies in this region.

These elements are:

- The individual is the driving force of the planning process.
- The individual chooses the people he or she wants to be involved in the process.
- Family and friends are full partners in the planning process.
- Individuals have interests and gifts that provide a valued role for them in the community.
- Individuals desire and have the ability to gain and maintain mutually satisfying relationships.
- Continual listening, learning and action will help individuals get what they want in life.



'A great question refuses to be answered so it keeps leading us into deeper connections with each other and into deeper thinking.'
~ Judith Snow

How Person Centered Planning differs from conventional planning

Person Centered Planning is different than conventional planning in a number of ways. The traditional way of planning focuses on the needs of the individual, and how to address those needs. Person Centered Planning is different because it focuses on the person's gifts and capacities. An example of this may be that a person is interested in Art, or they are very dependable and want to be employed.

Person Centered Planning focuses on the person first, before looking at the supports the person may desire to assist them in achieving their goals.

John O'Brien is a pioneer in Person Centered Planning. To him, the great question is: "Under what conditions can this person discover and express more of who he/she is as a known and valued member of our community?"

Does it replace service planning?

No. Person Centered Planning is about individuals and their whole lives, not just the services they may receive. The two processes often work hand in hand. If a person who completes a Person Centered Plan decides to share the results with a service provider, the information may be used to drive a Service Plan or Service Agreement. For example, if an individual expresses a desire in his Person Centered Plan to have more friends, the next Service Plan could have as one of its outcomes that support staff will help the individual find new opportunities to meet people. Then, in a report to the individual and to PDD, a summary of the different opportunities could be used to check the accountability of the Service Plan.

Q&A

Frequently asked questions about Person Centered Planning

1. **What is the purpose of Person Centered Planning?**

Person Centered Planning changes the way we are accountable. Instead of looking at someone's deficits, we explore an individual's gifts, interests and capacities and discover new and exciting ways of helping that person share these gifts with the community.

Accountability is measured by how well we follow through on the promises we made and the agreements we reached when the person shared his or her visions.

2. **Who needs to be involved? What would a process look like?**

The planning process will look very different for every person. Individuals can be as creative as they wish! Their plans can look however they would like them to look. Do they have a special interests they could use to develop their plans? (Scrap booking, picture taking, video, quilting, drawing, painting, and pottery). These are just a few examples.

Individuals decide if they want to do Person Centered Plans. They decide who they want to be involved in their planning meetings. They may or may not choose service providers or community supports coordinators from PDD. It really is up to each individual.

The pre-planning process includes assisting individuals to make informed decisions about who is at the table. If a person has an idea of what he or she wants in life, the person can then decide who should be at the table. "Who can help me achieve my dreams of my life? I should invite those people."

3. Who should facilitate a Person Centered Plan?

It should be up to the individual and family to decide. It is paramount, however, that any person who facilitates a plan have formal training in doing so. It takes special skills and abilities to facilitate a plan ethically. Not every person has the desire or the skill to do so.

4. Who owns the plan and where is it kept?

The individual owns a Person Centered Plan. The individual may decide not to share any of the plan with anyone outside the group or may share only parts of it with a service provider. He or she decides where the document is to be kept. The individual may keep a plan at home or choose a family member to hold onto it.

A person centered plan should never be filed and forgotten. It is a living document.

Also, keep in mind that person centeredness can happen without a Person Centered Plan. The document is only a culmination of ideas. The important part is listening to the individual and recognizing the person's gifts and dreams. Person centeredness is about supporting individuals to be connected to their community and to develop valued roles.

5. When is the best time to review a Person Centered Plan?

Whenever the individual or his supports choose to review it.

6. When is the best time to review an Annual Service Plan?

An Annual Service Plan must be reviewed annually as PDD policy states.

7. Is PDD Central mandating Person Centered Planning in Central Region? Do Individuals have to have a Person Centered Plan in order to receive funding?

No. In order to stay true to person centeredness and the values that it brings, PDD is not mandating Person Centered Planning. PDD Central will provide a variety of opportunities for all individuals and families to gain information and an understanding of Person Centered Planning in order to decide for themselves if they would like to take part in this type of planning.

8. Is Person Centered Planning promoting natural supports so that PDD doesn't have to fund as many staff?

No. PDD is promoting natural support where it makes sense for the individual and where it may enhance a person's connections, experiences and involvement. In many cases, individuals may need support to make these initial connections, which may require some slightly different work for staff in situations where this emphasis on community connections has not previously been present.

9. How do you facilitate a plan for someone who cannot communicate verbally? What about someone with a more significant disability?

Individuals may use different forms of communication. Sometimes individuals are not able to tell you with words what they like, dislike or dream for in their life. It is important to gather people together who care for the individual to help to discover what might work for that person.

It is important to continually refer back to the individual during the planning process. This helps them to understand that the plan is all about them. This can be done by directing questions to them, or when a family

member makes a statement about the person, ask the person if they agree. It has been shown that these ideas make the person feel that they are part of the process, even if they are not able to tell you that with verbal communication. Watch closely because they will tell you in other ways.

10. How does Person Centered Planning promote more community involvement?

Person Centered Planning is a great way to get to know an individual's gifts, interests and capacities. It enables us to take the time to listen closely and explore what a person really wants in life, then *act* on what we know. When a group of people gets together around an individual, great things can happen, including a better future.

John McKnight, who is well known for his work in community development, says that every person has gifts; the point is to identify them and find places in the community where individuals can share their gifts with other people. An example of this would be a woman who is interested in art. Where in the local community can she explore this interest? It may be in art galleries, art stores, artists' associations, etc. By going to these places, making these connections, the woman meets community members who recognize the common interest they share with her. This is how friendships begin.

Person Centeredness helps individuals identify and explore their roles in the community. Staff members, for their part, learn about the individual through a Person Centered Plan and then turn what they learn into **ACTION.**

Person Centered Planning

Why here? Why now?

'The function of a Person Centered Plan is to come to a common understanding so we can have honest discussions with one another and talk so that we can see where we're going.'

John O'Brien

Person Centered Planning developed in a grassroots way and it began with people committing to one another.

For many years, the power and authority to make decisions for individuals was vested primarily in the hierarchy of the services established to support those very individuals. Many people worked hard in the meantime to conceptualize other ways of working with individuals, ways that would enable them to create their own lives according to their own interests and desires.

During the 1990s, Person Centered Planning emerged as a key way of ensuring individuals were supported in the ways they wanted. It began in many small groups and eventually became a mainstream approach.

In 2000, members of the PDD Central Alberta Community Board, as part of its Business Plan, decided to implement a Person Centered Planning approach for all adults with developmental disabilities across Central Alberta. Work began with a review of the existing literature. PDD Central then assembled and modified the

known planning models to consolidate an approach that is flexible yet contains the core elements needed for success.

During the 2001-2003 period, groups in four communities were engaged in a pilot process of developing and trying the new Person Centered Planning process.

In late 2003, the pilot phase was ending, evaluations were in and many individuals and families were seeing tangible benefits from the person-centered approach to planning so PDD Central began to move from the experimental phase into region-wide implementation.

In 2005 Dr. Shelley Kinash from the University of Calgary interviewed 60 people in Central Alberta who had been involved in the Person Centered Planning Project. These people were individuals in service, family members, staff from agencies, PDD staff and community members.

Dr. Kinash concluded that Person Centered Planning had stimulated positive changes. Many staff members who took part in the pilot project were listening more intently to individuals and families. More individuals were finding their voices and advocating for themselves.

What the studies told us



Dr. Kinash also found that individuals and families needed more education about Person Centered Planning to understand it better and embrace the concept. The Person Centered Planning philosophy, after all, rests on the idea that individuals and families must drive the process for it to succeed. Here are some other findings from Dr. Kinash's report:

- Service providers were troubled by issues of accountability.
- Few people considered whether the plan is the property of the person or the agency.
- The Person Centered Planning process was largely systematized.
- Person Centered Planning worked best when it was used as an opportunity for being with one another and listening.
- There was a lack of education and training for front-line staff and for families.
- Most people were in life situations traditional for people with developmental disabilities.
- The "planning" tended to drop off.

Recommendations from the research

- PDD Central Alberta Community Board clearly and definitively separate accountability documentation from Person Centered Planning.
- PDD Central foster a group of Person Centered Planning mentors, with the requirement that the mentors be self-advocates.
- Service providers keep the process individualized and person centered
- PDD Central carefully assess who should facilitate planning in the context of each focus person's life.

Key directions

In response to the research recommendations, PDD Central Alberta Community Board staff set out a number of key directions/actions for implementing Person Centered Planning across the region:

- Develop a process to share information about research findings in each community and with key groups.
- Prepare a family-focused Person Centered Planning information package.
- Develop a process to deliver that information package to all families over the next year.
- Develop a process to track delivery of the information package and family understanding, interest and/or response to Person Centered Planning.
- Develop a roster of independent and 'certified' Person Centered Planning facilitators and provide training, certification and monitoring through Red Deer College.
- Develop a process for engaging and paying facilitators.
- Develop a roster of 'mentors' (family members and self-advocates).
- Enhance Person Centered Planning information available through the PDD website.
- Maintain regular communication about progress related to the above directions.

'Listen with an intensity that most people save for talking.'

Lily Tomlin as Edith Ann

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If you are interested in learning more about Person Centered Planning, or are interested in contacting an independent facilitator who will assist, please contact:

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In addition, at any time, feel free to contact your PDD worker.

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