Self-Advocacy, Self-Determination, and Person-Centered Planning

Speaker
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Learning Objectives

Learning objectives:
1. *Distinguish for attendees the differences between self-advocacy, self-determination, and person-centered planning*
2. *Outline the roles self-advocates play in each of these situations*
3. *Detail actions self-advocates can take to assert themselves and take control of their lives.*
Self-Advocacy

What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-advocacy refers to an individual’s ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions. (VanReusen et al., 1994)
Self-Advocacy is...

- understanding your strengths and needs, identifying your personal goals, knowing your legal rights and responsibilities, and communicating these to others
- speaking up for oneself.
What does Self-Advocacy look like?

Audience

Participation
Self-Advocates are change agents!

- We ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE (in the service system)
- We decide WHAT TO CHANGE
- Make an ACTION PLAN for change
Things I like and things I’d CHANGE

➢ Things you like most about your life - things you would not want to change.

➢ Things you would want to change about your life---home, work, community.
Being a Self-Advocate means...

SOLVING PROBLEMS and
MAKING DECISIONS

resilience
advocacy
Two Levels of Advocacy...

**Individual**

Changes that *you* (or a friend) need in *your* (their) services and supports.

**System**

Changes in policies or rules that *everybody* in the *service system* needs.
Individual Level Problems...

Examples...

- Finding safe and affordable housing
- Navigating the Health and Human Services System
- Help with banking
- Getting around town
System Level Problems...

✓ How money is allocated for developmental disability services.
✓ The kinds of family support services that are available.
✓ Who lives in a institution and who lives in the community with Home and Community Based Services.
You can be “An Advocate for Change”

Someone who speaks up and takes action to make things right.
Someone who changes things!
What is Self-Determination?

Self-determination is the resolve of one's own fate based upon a freely determined set of criteria. This does not mean people are free to do whatever they choose without consequences for poor decisions. It does mean a person should be given the opportunity to succeed or fail in pursuit of their own happiness.
When emphasis is placed on the independent determination of choices the true value of self-determination is lost. No one is ever truly independent. Regardless of the presence or absence of a diagnosis, everyone is interdependent on others around them. The influences which shape who we are, come from surrounding people (whom we trust), and past experiences.
Supporting a person with a disability includes providing that person with complete information, presented in a matter they can understand in order to make an informed decision.

Learning self-determination skills are the most important factor in quality of life outcomes for all people.
Self-Determination as defined by
The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act)

- “A characteristic of a person that leads them to make choices and decisions based on their own preferences and interests, to monitor and regulate their own actions and to be goal-oriented and self-directing.”

- The DD Act definition of self-determined actions proposes that both the abilities of the person and the opportunities presented by the environment contribute to the degree of self-determination that can be expressed.
The DD Act Self-Determined Actions

An individual with developmental disabilities, with assistance:

- has the ability and opportunity to make choices and decisions;
- has the ability and opportunity to exercise control over services, supports, and other assistance;
- has the authority to control resources and obtain needed services;
- has the opportunity to participate in and contribute to their communities;
- has the support, including financial, to advocate, develop leadership skills, become trained as a self-advocate, and participate in coalitions and policy-making.
Principles of Self-Determination

Freedom

You (your friend, your mentee) has the right to decide how to live your (his or her) life.
Authority

You (your friend, your mentee) have/has authority (clout, influence, control) over a targeted (specified) amount of dollars.
Support

To organize resources in ways that are life enhancing and meaningful to the individual.
Responsibility

For the sensible use of public dollars and the acknowledgment/appreciation of the contribution/roles individuals across disability and aging can make to their communities and the workforce.
Confirmation

Of the significant/vital role(s) individuals must play in the newly designed system.
Person-Centered Planning
What is Person-Centered Planning?

- **Person-centered planning** is a process-oriented approach to empowering people with disabilities. Its focus is on the individual and their needs, placing them in charge of defining the direction for their life, not on the systems that may or may not be available to serve them. This in due course leads to **greater inclusion as valued members of both community and society**.
Person-centered planning involves the development of a "toolbox" of methods and resources that enable people with disabilities to choose their own pathways to success; the planners help them to work out where they want to go and how best to get there.
Person-centeredness requires a personal commitment to employing mindful awareness and self-reflection about the connection between how one feels, thinks, and acts. It is beliefs forming thoughts that give rise to words leading to action that, in turn, create experiences. Person-centered planning is an approach where one can listens to people and learn about important aspects of a person's interests and needs. Person-centeredness is about purposely being with people that may or may not include planning.
Person-Centered Planning involves...

- A commitment to know and seek to understand
- A conscious resolve to be of genuine service
- An openness to being guided by the person
- A willingness to struggle for difficult goals
- Flexibility, creativity, and openness to trying what might be possible
- A willingness to enhance the humanity and dignity of the person
- To look for the good in people and help to bring it out
Community Membership:

Opportunities for Meaningful Interaction...

- Through connectedness in the community people define and realize themselves, and through this interaction important things get done.

- Person-centered planning processes endeavor to recognize and emphasize the distinctive talents, gifts, and capabilities innate in everyone. We study and realize where in the "real" world these gifts can be shared, appreciated, and reciprocated, and where the person's contributions and social roles will be valued.
Five Commitments that Build Community:

- **Anchors** - people committed because of their love for that person and are concerned with that person's well-being over time; a source of continuity for the person.
- **Allies** - people who commit their time and resources with the person to make a mutually significant change. They offer sensible help, assist with problem solving, lend experience and skills and suggest practical information. They make contacts for one another and bring others into the alliance.
- **Assistance** - persons that provide the help a person needs to deal with the effects of disability, enabling the individual to contribute their gifts. The commitment is to offer necessary help, in a respectful, creative and flexible way, without taking over.
• **Associations** - are the social structures that interested groups create to further their interests.

• **Agendas** - organize action and insure the development and implementation of just and effective policies.

*These commitments must be considered on a regular basis to ensure that significant players are moving in and out of the active process as needed to keep the person and his or her supporters on point and moving forward toward the realization of his or her life-defining priorities.*
Person-Centered Planning Tools
Foundation of Belief:

Person-centered planning…

- is a means for uncovering what is already there: the essence and extraordinary gifts and capacities of a person
- assumes that the person and those who love the person are the primary authorities on the person’s life direction, as such the person is the driver of the process
- is the beginning of the journey of on-going learning through the shared action that results from participation in planning and working together
- intends to shatter myths about people who have been given disability labels and to foster inclusive communities
Person-centered planning...
• relies on skilled facilitation in developing and moving the plan forward
• requires systems to respond in flexible and meaningful ways relative to the unique interests and needs of the focus person.
Some Popular Person-Centered Tools

- **Essential Lifestyle Planning** holds the basic belief that there are core elements in day to day living that reflect essential basic quality of life components that matter deeply to any one of us.

- **MAPs (& Path)** is a tool to help someone create and plan their own life. The MAP serves as the compass for setting direction toward a positive future. MAPs begins with a story- the history of the person’s life.

- **Personal Futures Planning** requires an on-going process of change through which person-centered practices replace system-centered methods.

- **Circle of Support** forms and operates totally in the interest of the focus person. The person and/or a trusted communication ally, determine every aspect of the circle from who to invite into the circle to the what, where, why and how the circle will function.
Transition Planning for Individuals with Disabilities

Transition planning is planning for the future. PL 101-476 Section 300.29 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that transition services should be comprised of a coordinated set of activities that is based upon an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities. These activities include but are not limited to: home-living, getting a job, career advancement goals, academic goals, getting around in and connecting to the community, managing money and having satisfying personal and social relationships.
References


Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas: http://portal.sliderocket.com/BYNED/What_is_Self_Advocacy_2_0_Online.


Texas Project First: http://texasprojectfirst.org/.
Questions?

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