

Person-Centered Thinking and Practices

1 The Core Values of Person-Centered Counseling (PCC)



Introduction

These slides contain content adapted from the Administration for Community Living's Person Centered Counseling Training Program. The content includes text and narration from online courses. To view original content or for more information, please visit nwd.acl.gov or contact NoWrongDoor@acl.hhs.gov.

Copyright Notice and Disclaimer

Certain materials incorporated herein are Copyright ©2016, Regents of the University Minnesota. All Rights Reserved. IN NO EVENT SHALL UNIVERSITY OR TLCPCP BE LIABLE TO ANY PARTY FOR DIRECT, INDIRECT, SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, INCLUDING LOST PROFITS, ARISING OUT OF THE USE OF THIS CONTENT, EVEN IF UNIVERSITY OR TLCPCP HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES.

Welcome! (1/2)

Person-centered counseling (PCC) is an approach to counseling that is built on the core values of choice, direction, and control. This lesson reviews these core values in the context of using person-centered thinking (PCT) practices in a No Wrong Door (NWD) system. The lesson will help the learner understand these values as a foundation to person-centered approaches. It will also review some common challenges in applying them. It helps the learner connect the PCT skills they will learn in other lessons to the values. Finally, it will review some ideas for how to maintain these values in practice when the system or others make this difficult. The remaining lessons in the course provide more details regarding how these values and other critical attitudes and skills can be applied through PCT and related skills.

Welcome! (2/2)

Learning Objective

After completing this lesson: You will be able to list the three core values of person-centered counseling and give an example of each value in practice.

The Core Values in Action (1/3)

Person-centered counseling (PCC) is a specific approach to supporting people seeking long-term services and support (LTSS). It applies to anyone, of any age, and with any LTSS concern. It does not start with screening processes or assessing people for program eligibility. It starts with active listening and discovery. These approaches ensure people are heard. (Discovery is taught more thoroughly later on in the course.) They help people formulate meaningful goals and actions related to their concerns.

The Core Values in Action (2/3)

Person-centered counseling approaches help do more than obtain access to services. They help people organize their resources in ways that support their overall quality of life. The information may be formulated into a formal person-centered plan, if the person chooses. Person-centered counseling may be a one-time contact between a person and the professional. Or it may be a series of exchanges over time. It may also include others who the person identifies as important.

— The Core Values in Action (3/3)

You will learn more about the role of a PCC professional and how these approaches apply in a variety of situations in this and the other courses. However, the core values of choice, direction, and control on the part of the person who is seeking support are always part of the approach.

Engaging People in Purposeful Discovery (1/3)

It's important to understand what is meaningful to an individual. To do this, a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional must engage in discovery. Both discovery and assessment can be performed using person-centered practices. However, discovery is not the same as assessment. Assessment is a process related to understanding if a person is eligible for a specific program or service. Discovery is a process that is meant to elicit an accurate, culturally relevant, and well-balanced understanding of the person's "to/for balance." It considers the person in their current and past context. It includes strengths, gifts, hopes, expectations, relationships, and other resources.

Engaging People in Purposeful Discovery (2/3)

What is learned during the discovery process can help identify if a person may be interested in pursuing supports that require screening and assessments. It may provide information that helps complete these activities. Discovery should include what a person has tried and what is already working for them. It should help get a sense of resources a person has including unpaid support.

Engaging People in Purposeful Discovery (3/3)

The intensity and length of discovery will vary. It will be influenced by the person's circumstances and reason for seeking assistance. However, with a person-centered approach, the PCC professional can provide information that makes sense to the person. The professional will find person-centered thinking (PCT) skills helpful to ensuring this process incorporates the values of choice, direction, and control. The rest of this course helps teach PCT skills.

Important Attitudes

As a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional, you will want to ensure the values of choice, direction, and control are present in all interactions. You will also want to engage with people in ways that are likely to be useful and empowering. You need to be able to engage person-centered skills and support self-direction. The following attitudes will help.

The Problem with “Good Intentions” and Untested Assumptions

The foundation values of choice, direction, and control can be difficult to apply at times. Many times we are not even aware that we are making assumptions. It takes skill and effort not to get caught up in our own views or experiences when supporting others. Systems as a whole push standardized approaches. It takes commitment to keep a focus on each person as an individual. We have to make sure that good intentions don't override people's choices and views.

Supporting Choice

Supporting choice can be more complicated than simply offering choices. Making good choices from those options requires access to high-quality information. This information must be provided in ways that are understandable and useful to the individual. Some people have had few opportunities or experiences in making their own choices. There are often barriers and challenges to supporting people in making their best choices.

Supporting Direction (1/2)

Informed choice and control support positive self-direction. People want to be able to decide for themselves how to live day-to-day. They want to direct the larger events of their lives in a way that makes sense to them. Services should fit within the person's expectations. However, at times, a person's choices appear risky or ill-informed. The Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional and others will struggle more with how to balance support for safety with support for direction. In situations of immediate and extreme risk of harm to self or others, the professional may need to engage protective or crisis services. They should know their roles and boundaries in terms of mandated reporting and similar responsibilities.

Supporting Direction (2/2)

However, in most situations, people have a right to decline available services even if there is a risk. They have the right to engage in the portions they want and refuse the portions they don't want. Denying people these rights is not only against the value of direction, it invites anger or discouragement. It also prevents people from experiencing the opportunity to take responsibility for decisions and to learn as a result, which is sometimes referred to as "the dignity of risk." Denying direction also presumes that PCC professionals know better what the person needs. This is not always the true. In fact, if people are properly supported, they usually have a pretty good idea of what will work for them and why. Respecting people's choices in directing their services is part of your role as a PCC professional.

Supporting Control

Helping people experience control as they find support and services is a central value of person-centered counseling (PCC).

Overcoming Barriers and Challenges to Core Values

Supporting choice, direction, and control can be complicated at times.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (1/3)

- The three core values of person-centered counseling (PCC) are choice, direction, and control.
- Discovery is a distinct process from assessment. The value of discovery is that it produces a well-balance and holistic view of the person that places their goals and needs in context. It is easier to support choice, direction, and control with this type of information.
- Attitudes that make PCC possible include believing in the rights and responsibilities of all people to direct their own services to the greatest extent possible.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (2/3)

- Supporting choice, direction, and control can be challenging in some circumstances. You may need additional training or support in working with situations in which people experience conditions that impair judgment or make it difficult to ensure informed choice.
- Trauma-informed processes consider people's comfort and need for healthy control. They are a good universal design approach.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (3/3)

Learning Objective

After completing this lesson, you will be able to list the three core values of person-centered counseling and give an example of each value in practice.

Reflection on Learning Objective

Directions: Review the objective(s) on this page. Write down your answers to the following questions.

1. What did you learn in this lesson that you felt was important?
2. What will you do differently because of the content in this lesson?