

Person-Centered Thinking and Practices

4 Supporting Positive Change in Service Delivery and Systems



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.

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Welcome! (1/2)

In the last few decades, there have been many positive changes in systems and community attitudes. However, there is further to go. Today, human services systems are still not aligned with person-centered practices. They do not reliably provide support in the context of inclusion, opportunity, choice, direction, and control for everyone. More change is needed. Everyone has a role in making this change happen.

This lesson will use terms and concepts that are part of the Learning Community approach to person-centered thinking to describe conditions required to fuel change in systems. It helps the learner understand potential roles and responsibilities for supporting positive change in a system.

Welcome! (2/2)

Learning Objective

After completing this lesson: You will be able to use person-centered practices and advocate for changes in the system beyond your direct control, such as those that are organizational or system wide.

Challenges to Being Person-Centered

A Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional must be able to recognize when approaches are not person-centered. They must be willing to take action immediately to support a more person-centered approach. In addition, people in these roles and others in the system often have valuable information about what needs to change in the overall system or at an organizational level. Identifying and supporting broader change can be part of the PCC professional's role.

Discontent as the Engine of Change

Thomas Edison is well known for being a prolific inventor. He attributed his success to discontent and a willingness to work harder than most. Edison is reported to have made over 10,000 attempts before he was successful with the light bulb. He had many famous sayings regarding how he viewed his efforts. Edison was neither content nor easy to discourage. Discontent combined with vision and determination creates amazing things.

Cynical Discontent: Signs and Responses

Positive change is only possible if people believe that it is possible. People must have faith that their efforts will pay off. This can be difficult to sustain at times. According the Learning Community, the following are some signs that cynical discontent has taken hold in an organization:

- Denial – People say, “This is no different from what we have always been doing” in response to new initiatives.
- Distortion – Perceptions are distorted to suggest that what people want is what they already receive. “Everyone is happy with our services. Why should we change?”
- Departure – The people who have the most passion leave the organization when they lose hope for change.

Supporting Optimistic Discontent

Hope is necessary for positive change. Hope is something that has been identified as a critical piece of recovery or well-being for people in all walks of life. It is something a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional has a role in cultivating. When cynical discontent has taken root, hope needs to be re-established. The PCC professional and other professionals can rebuild hope in all their relationships by creating trust. The promises of person-centered thinking help to engage hope.

Recognizing and Implementing Change at all Levels (1/2)

As described earlier, this curriculum looks at three different levels of change: individual (Level 1), organizational (Level 2), and system (Level 3). Everyone can implement individual (Level 1) changes. They do not require permission. They are the focus of much of this course. Below are some other examples of how people may need to be engaged.

Managers and administrators must approve organizational (Level 2) changes. Sometimes a policy change is needed. Sometimes more resources must be obtained or shifted.

Recognizing and Implementing Change at all Levels (2/2)

Policy makers and legislators must create system level (Level 3) changes. An example of this is the set of changes made to the Home and Community Based Services rules (2014).

Person-centered counseling includes making level 1 changes to your own practice. But it also includes recognizing and communicating Level 2 and Level 3 changes.

Recognizing Levels of Change

As a Person-Centered Counseling professional, you will encounter issues that require change at various levels.

— Advocating for Level 2 and 3 Changes

Supporting bigger change can be an important role for the Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional.

The Importance of Building Trust

Earlier in lesson, you reflected on a story about a person who needed some help and had signs of a serious mental health condition. However, he did not want to discuss the condition at that time. The approach the Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional took created a bigger problem.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (1/3)

- Discontent with a system is necessary before change will happen. Person-centered approaches can create discontent by clarifying what could be possible for people.
- Discontent must be fueled by optimism and hope or it will not lead to positive change.
- Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals in the system can support hope and optimism by engaging in strategies that build trust. To do so they must engage their own self-care and watch for signs of burnout or compassion fatigue.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (2/3)

- Strategies PCC professionals can use to support optimism in others include being honest and upfront about situations without discouraging people from their goals. They include taking timely action whenever you can. They also include being clear about what will take time, how much time, and checking in on progress.
- PCC professionals can support change at the organizational or system level. To do this well requires a willingness to be organized, engage over time, and work with others.

Conclusion and Lesson Review (3/3)

Learning Objective

After completing this lesson, you will be able to use person-centered practices and advocate for changes in the system beyond your direct control, such as those that are organizational or system wide.

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?