

Person-Centered eLearn Course Information

Course Description

While there are many skills that can make up person centered approaches. This eLearning focuses on the following:

- 1 The Core Concept
- 2 Learning Log
- 3 The Donut
- 4 Working/Not Working
- 5 4+1 Questions

These selected skills are a great intro to the world of person-centered thinking. They are commonly used by families and support teams. Many times, those who support the person most closely are not able to attend more in-depth live Person-Centered Thinking training. As an alternative this eLearning course can be used. A working knowledge of these skills will enable supporters to engage with other team members effectively. Additionally, if the supporter does attend a full live or virtual PCT training, they will already have exposure to not only the core principles of person-centered thinking but also to some of the skills covered in the live training.

IntellectAbility developed this course in close collaboration with Support Development Associates (SDA).

Synopsis by Module

Many people may have heard of the term “person-centered” and assumed they knew what it meant. Others may not have a clue. A common misconception of being person-centered is that you recklessly give the person anything they want or let them do anything they want with no regard to risk or endangerment. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Being person-centered is about seeking a responsible balance between what is important TO the person and what is important FOR the person. This means supporting the person on an individual level by educating and informing them about decisions, consequences, and possible outcomes. To change our systems and mentalities from being service oriented to person oriented will take time and require various levels of change. That change will be required throughout the entire system... and it can start with you!

1 The Core Concept of Person-Centered Thinking

This Core Concept is at the center of all person-centered approaches; hence it is aptly named, the CORE concept. All person-centered skills revolve around this basis. The Core Concept is learning what is important TO the person, what is important FOR the person, and learning the balance between. This promotes the balance we all must apply to our lives every day. We are all constantly assessing things that are important TO us and FOR us. Hopefully, more often than not, we make responsible decisions that balance these. Life in either extreme never ends well. We also make trade-offs all the time. This is at the heart of person-centered approaches. Even the information gleaned from the use of any person-centered skill should always prompt us to ask, “what does this tell us about what is important TO or FOR the person and how do we support the person in light of this in a balanced way?”

2 The Learning Log

We are all familiar with the Progress Note. We've either had to write them or read them. They typically fall into two camps: the budding novelist whose flowery language paints a picture but tells us little or the minimalist, whose "just the facts, ma'am" approach gives us only the scantest of information. In either case, the content tells very little of the critical details needed to either learn what may be important To or For the person, much less how to make the activity better next time. The Learning Log seeks to address this. While not a replacement for Progress Notes, the Learning Log is designed to capture learning as it relates to an activity. It allows supporters to reflect critically on the activity and hence maximize learning about the person. It also gives supporters the chance to decide on new things to add or things to remove to make the activity more meaningful in the future. An inevitable outcome of using the Learning Log is that supporters discover things about the person they never knew!

3 The Donut

Ever been pulled into a situation that you did not feel prepared to handle? Maybe your intentions were good, you were just trying to help! With many aspects in life, it can be very easy to forget what your role or responsibility is in any given situation. In fact, you may not even really know what it is! This predisposes us to getting pulled into situations that we may not be equipped to handle. No more is true than in our jobs or in trying to assist someone who may need our support. The Donut is an effective management skill that helps us determine at any point what our Core Responsibilities are, where we can safely use our Judgement and Creativity to accomplish those core responsibilities, and what is Not Our Usual Responsibility. This clarity helps us, and others maintain proper boundaries and guides us in what our involvement should be no matter how sticky the situation.

4 Working/Not Working

Conflict always has to include four things: (1) a situation (2) various perspectives and opinions on that situation (3) a lack of clarity on others' perspectives (4) a feeling of being threatened to some degree. Often times we lock into what we think is "right" and never stop to consider the perspective of the other parties involved. Enter the Working/Not Working skill. This is a conflict resolution and negotiation skill. It allows each party's perspective to be captured as it relates to two areas, what that party believes is Working for them and Not Working for them. Once documented, this allows us to clearly see what things everyone agrees needs to stay the same or change. It also helps to clearly define what issues are therefore driving the conflict. Now we can move on to addressing the real areas of conflict!

5 4+1 Questions

Have you ever said, "I've tried everything, and nothing seems to work!" Sure, we all have. Maybe you are trying to lose that pesky weight or pay off that annoying credit card balance. We all try things in hopes of solving a problem. In time we all feel stuck in our efforts! The 4+1 Questions helps us reflect on our efforts in such a way that we are able to see why we may feel so stuck. It also allows us to make plans for our next steps based on information about what we've tried in the past and how that went. It's not unlike us to go into "fix it" mode when feeling stuck, this skill helps us avoid that and finally get unstuck!