

Action Planning

After asking a person what he/she wants and listening to the response, verbally and behaviorally, it is time for action. Taking action is about learning what people want to do and supporting them to do it. Some information can be acted on immediately and should be. Other information may take more time and take a group of people to talk together with the person to develop strategies for next steps.

Quality in Practice

Person-directed planning is the cornerstone of learning about people's needs and desires rather than relying solely on professional assessments.

- Person-directed planning takes place formally through facilitated meetings involving many diverse people **and** informally between the person and one other person.
- Encourage action that results from informal learning and do not require formal planning for every action taken. (For example: checking out a new hobby, learning about classes to take, or volunteer opportunities can often occur spontaneously and may lead in many directions).
- Remember that most of the things people want in life are not "systems" or "disability" issues and action can be taken without much or any specialized service.
- Empower direct support staff to take action on many of the things they learn from people.
- Establish trust. Trust is gained by listening to what a person says is important and acting to assist the person to achieve it.

When a **formal plan** is done:

- Commit to follow the plan as outlined and meet all timeframes.
- Clarify what will be done, in what order, who will do what, and the time frames so that everyone understands how action will occur.
- Identify the person responsible for coordinating the efforts that have been agreed to (often referred to as the facilitator). It may be the person, his/her family member, a staff member of the organization, or someone else who has been trained to facilitate person-directed plans.
- Assure that the facilitator checks in often with the people who have committed to action steps and offers support as needed.
- Keep the person and all others involved and informed about what is happening.

Taking action is an every day process, not a once-a-year planning event.

- If strategies are not effective, re-think and make changes that have the possibility of being successful in an acceptable time frame.
- Assure that the strategies most often used are the same strategies others in the community would use to attain the same goal and match the person's desired/learning style.
- Rely on people within the organization and people from the larger community to assist in taking action and supporting the person.
- Assure that the plans and resulting action can change in a fluid manner as people learn more about themselves and their communities.