

## Leadership

Leadership comes in many forms. Leadership provides guidance and direction for the organization. The best organizations lead by carefully listening to the people supported and following their direction.

### Quality in Practice

#### Leadership within the organization

- Understand that the only way an organization can provide the highest quality of supports and services is to thoughtfully listen to the people it serves and the people who know and love them most.
- One way to listen is to invite people to be full members in the decision making process. Support people to be active, full members of the Board of Directors, advisory councils, board and agency committees, and any other group that meets to make recommendations or decisions about the work of the organization.
- Include people who receive services in every meeting. Given that the work of the organization revolves entirely around the people it supports, it makes sense that people should be involved in every decision.
- Provide education, training, and support to people so that they are fully contributing members of boards and committees and not merely there to fulfill a quota.
- Support people to join Toastmasters, community or internal leadership trainings, or take classes on public speaking to prepare them for participation.
- Invite family members and friends of the people supported to also be active, full members of boards and committees.

#### Leadership in the community

- Create ways to include people who are interested in inclusion and diversity to join in the decision making process from the local community. Communities have a wealth of talent and wisdom in the people who live in the community – ask for them to share.
- Support people and family members to join community and state-wide groups that will help develop their leadership skills and will contribute positively to the broader community.

- Identify advocacy and self-advocacy organizations such as NAMI, The Club House, The Arc, People First, Equip for Equality, that work towards bringing about larger systems change and increasing the present system capacity. Support and assist people to join these groups or develop branches in the local community.
- Support people to take on leadership roles in other organizations they are interested in. Examples include hobby groups, sports clubs, community centers, churches, local government, and many others.

#### Individual leadership

- Develop and implement strategies for people leading their own planning meetings. This could be accomplished by having people tell their personal story through the use of scrap booking, journaling, art media, video, audio, photos, etc.
- Support people to learn facilitation skills through person-centered planning trainings and support the person to facilitate his or her own meetings, as well as meetings for other people in the community.
- Support people to attend and present at local, state and national conferences on subjects they are passionate about.
- Support people to provide some of the training and orientation for new staff – whether on an occasional contract basis or as a full-time employee.
- Hire someone who receives services in a vital role in the organization – in the training or rights department for example.
- Assure that all people who are interested in the work and future of the organization can be involved. Support people who use alternative forms of communication or speak different languages or who have particularly challenging physical needs to contribute, as well as those who are more easily accommodated.