

Health

Health is basic to people's lives and should be the first concern of the organization. Feeling (being) healthy allows people to think about and work for other outcomes that are important to them. No organization can absolutely guarantee that a person will be healthy or that nothing bad will ever happen to him or her. The organization can have practices in place to support good health to the greatest extent possible.

Quality in Practice

- Support the person to define his or her own best possible health and honor those decisions.
- Assist the person to research and learn about healthy lifestyle choices.
- Assist family members and guardians in understanding the person's definition of his or her own best possible health and support them to honor those decisions.
- Support the person to access medical care and a healthy lifestyle (including support groups, gyms, and classes, as well as professionals and medications) that will lead the person to accomplish his/her goals.
- Recognize that every person has an individual definition of best possible health and avoid making judgments or decrees that restrict people from engaging in behavior that is legal, even if it may be considered unhealthy. Many people with and without disability choose to continue to avoid exercise, eat an unhealthy diet, use legal substances, or refuse medical advice. Being someone who is receiving services/supports from an organization does not end the right to make those choices.
- Consider the person's emotional, as well as physical, health. Be aware that many people have been traumatized at some point in their lives and many of their behavioral responses may be due to past trauma. Research community resources to assist people in dealing with trauma and support the person to access needed support.
- Look to the community to assist people in learning about and accessing health care options. There are many health-related community organizations, groups, and resources, including alternative medicine, that may be helpful to specific individuals or at specific times.
- Engage in community building with others in your community who are concerned about the lack of affordable, accessible health care options for all community members.
- Assure that people have knowledge about and support to implement surrogate decision making for health care before a medical crisis occurs. Medical powers of attorney, family consent statutes or policies, and circles of support can all provide decision making assistance in health care issues.
- Assure regular examinations by health professionals (physical, dental, vision, hearing).
- Provide access to specialized medical services when indicated (neurology, psychiatry, oncology, nutrition, etc.).
- Support access to relevant therapies (occupational, physical, speech, etc.) that support the person's pursuit of his or her goals.
- Assure medication administration practices that provide the person with information about his or her medication and medical condition.
- Provide training for staff in identifying and responding to medical symptoms and emergencies.