

Expectations for People

Expectations for organizations and for the people they support are constantly changing and evolving. In the past, services were provided to keep people away from community and to “take care of” people by keeping them healthy and safe. Later, we stressed teaching people skills to live in the broader community. Now, our role is providing supports that empower people to take their place as members of their communities. Managing these new expectations can be challenging to organizations.

Quality in Practice

Create a culture where people are perceived to be ready for the life they choose to live.

- People no longer have to meet different goals or criteria than other citizens to move forward with their life plans.
- Adults are adults, no matter their level of disability.
- These basic assumptions have the power to move people and organizations in entirely new directions for supports and services.

Expect that people have the capacity to choose their own lifestyle.

- Support may be needed to help a person make these decisions and maintain his or her lifestyle, but the choice must be honored and supported.

Believe that all people are necessary to create vital communities.

- Everyone has gifts to offer to community and it is the organization's role to find these gifts and support the person and the community in finding ways for everyone to matter.
- Believe that communities are open and welcoming to people with disability.
- Introduce people individually and based on common interests and passions and community members will respond positively.

Search for resources outside the traditional service system.

- Medicaid provides some of the resources to support people in their lives, but there are many other resources available including paying jobs, housing programs, sharing costs with roommates, poverty programs, natural supports, and many others.

- Think about what might happen to the person if the Medicaid system did not exist – How would his or her life change? How can we minimize the person's reliance on one source of funding?
- Respect the person's decisions about how best to use the resources available.
- Support people to understand the parameters of funding sources and work with them to best use the resources they have.

Recognize that community provides the real safety net.

- Connections with other people who we love and trust and who love and trust us are the best avenue to living a safe and healthy life.
- Support people to find and maintain connections with people within community and beyond the organization to assure the best safety net possible.

Empower your organization to control its own destiny.

- Decide who you want to be as an organization and work toward that goal.
- Do not allow changing state and federal rules to guide your organization.
- Determine the direction for your organization and use state and federal funding to assist you in getting there.
- Build other resources to fill in the gaps.
- Believe in the capacity of your organizational members to meet your dreams. People do have good intentions when choosing to work on behalf of other people. Support those intentions and give people the skills and supports necessary to move forward.