



# FEATURE ARTICLE



## PERSONAL PLANNING PROCESS

This is a planning process which assumes that all persons with special needs are capable of growth and change; clarifies the professional involvements with a person with special needs; brings the strengths, needs and goals for this individual and the service requirements for staff and agency together in a comprehensive plan; and ensures that all those who work/live with this person have an equal part in formulating the plan.

There is the belief that all people share the same universal human needs for security, belonging, recognition, achievement. The only aspect in which people with special needs differ, is that they do not always have the means and abilities to meet these needs independently.

Therefore, the purpose of the planning sessions, is to determine the type of assistance and support necessary to help this person to meet their universal needs.

The Planning Process Participants should include the following:

- 1) Individual for whom the plan is being developed should be present and encouraged to provide their input to the best of their ability.
- 2) The individual's family is an extremely vital component. Being the most constant and strongest bond, they contribute personal history of the individual. Generally the family knows the person best and have a personal interest for their development.
- 3) Current Service Providers who are directly involved with the person and have responsibility for some aspect of the individual's lifestyle. (Residential Support People, Vocational Support People, Recreation Personnel, and Teachers).
- 4) Potential Service Providers (Independent Living Services, Pre-Voc Program, Community Placement Officer).
- 5) Professionals with expertise in areas pertinent to the individual (Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist, Physician).

A facilitator with a good theoretical knowledge of the Planning Process and a strong belief in the human values base will be responsible for the following:

- leading the group through the process.
- overall responsibility for compiling and distribution data.
- responsible for calling group together, when necessary.
- deal with concerns of participants.
- responsible for efficient service delivery plan.

A Plan Secretary is a participant who volunteers for the following:

- Assume responsibility for some short term objectives.
- People will report back to case secretary when objectives are complete within certain time frame identified by the plan.
- If objectives can not be met, person should speak with the case secretary who will contact the facilitator who will call the group together if necessary.

The Planning Process itself, should be an orderly process for describing a desirable future with a person with special needs and deciding on a schedule of short term goals and supports that will organize all involved to move toward that future.

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## Personal Planning Process (continued)

The Process consists of the following format:

- 1) Functional Assessment/Ecological Inventory - Purpose is to provide information over a 24 Hour basis so as to identify functional needs and strengths. All aspects of the person are addressed - What is the person like
  - Health behavior
  - Family history
  - Service history
  - What is life like now?
    - at home?
    - at residence?
    - at work/school?
- 2) Who is L ?/Strengths - the group builds a list of strengths by clarifying and solidifying the aforementioned information (eg., Liz makes friends easily).
- 3) Needs - a list of needs is formalized to determine how the person can enhance these strengths (eg., Liz needs to create opportunities to meet new people, to increase her circle of friends).
- 4) Overriding Issues - The group asks themselves "If we did nothing for this person, what is the worst that can happen?" This helps to identify areas of concern, requiring change. (eg. Liz would be limited to a small circle of friends)
- 5) Goal Setting - Goals should state present status, future status, indicate direction of desired change, and be realized within one year. (eg., From: Liz having a small circle of friends, limited to other persons with special needs or staff persons. TO: Liz having an increased circle of friends consisting of persons with/without special needs.)
- 6) Goal Priorization - Goals are prioritized in regards to which the person chooses to work on first and which are creating the most concern.
- 7) Short Term Objectives - each goal is broken into small steps which when accomplished will lead us to the long term goal. Each objective is followed with who will be responsible for that objective and by what date.
- 8) Requirements - In order to meet certain objectives/goals, supports may be required under the following headings - Service Supports, Family, Staff Supports, Agency Supports & Equipment Supports.
- 9) Evaluation/Review - Outlines when group should reconvene to review objectives based on time lines set in goal statements.

The group will use wall size paper when writing the plan. It is visible to the whole team so that all present will know exactly what is being written in the plan at all times.

After the plan is complete, typed copies are sent to each participant for review and feedback.

Through utilizing the Personal Planning Process, we will be more able to meet human needs of people with special needs, who often rely on more able people's planning and organizing skills for assistance in meeting developmental and lifestyle challenges.

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