

Person-Centered Practice and Self-Determination

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Content

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Self-determination is the goal behind it: people with disabilities have the right to make their own choices, take reasonable risks, and direct their own services and supports. Our job is to give people real information and real options, then respect the choice they make.

What this looks like in practice.

- Listen first. Ask what the person wants for their life — where they want to live, work, learn, and spend time — before talking about programs.
- Offer informed choice. Lay out the real options, including everyday risks and trade-offs, in plain language and the person's preferred language.
- Support, do not decide. Family and staff can help, but the person directs the plan to the greatest extent possible.
- Watch your assumptions. Low expectations are their own barrier. Presume competence.

Why it matters for equity. People who have been underserved are often given fewer choices and less voice. Person-centered practice pushes the other way: it puts decision-making back with the person and their family, which is exactly where it belongs. It is also how the division meets its commitment to community living and self-direction.

The person is the expert on their own life. Our expertise is in helping them get where they want to go.

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Support, do not decide. Family and staff can help, but the person directs the plan to the greatest extent possible.

Connect the guidance to the person's goals, program rules, access needs, and follow-up using Person-Centered Practice and Self-Determination.

Confirm the current purpose, audience, and decision authority before using Person-Centered Practice and Self-Determination to connect the guidance to the person's goals, program rules, access needs, and follow-up.

Choose the sections of Person-Centered Practice and Self-Determination that match the situation; do not apply unrelated guidance as a blanket rule.

Document the action taken from Person-Centered Practice and Self-Determination, the people affected, unresolved questions, and the responsible follow-up owner.

For program service staff, use Person-Centered Practice and Self-Determination to connect the guidance to the person's goals, program rules, access needs, and follow-up; apply the guidance in the person-specific workflow, explain options accessibly, and document the next step. Start by listen first. Ask what the person wants for their life — where they want to live, work, learn, and spend time — before talking about programs.

Do not replace official legal, policy, clinical, supervisory, program, or Tribal authority.

Do not infer an individual's identity, preferences, needs, or experience from group-level information.

State uncertainty, use current authoritative sources, and escalate when the decision exceeds the user's role.

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