DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

Person-Centered Thinking

May 27, 2020

What is it?

For people supported with services, it is not person-centered planning that matters as much as the pervasive presence of **Person-Centered Thinking**® **(PCT**®**)**. PCT® begins with learning *both* what is **"important to"** a person and what is **"important for"** a person and the **balance between them.**[1] PCT® skills help people describe both how they want to live, and a reasonable balance between the components of "important to" and "important for" in their lives. As the core PCT® concept, this balance is at the center of both planning and practice.

All of the PCT® skills that are practiced during training help participants:

- Learn more to inform ourselves about "important to."
- Find a better balance between "to" and "for."
- Discover how to implement what is learned.

"Important to" is learned through discovery processes so that person-centered descriptions, available on the Support Development Associates (SDA) website, and one-page descriptions, available on the SDA website, can be developed and updated as needed using everyday discovery tools.[2] View more information about one-page descriptions on the Minnesota Department of Education website.

Why do it?

Only a small percentage of people need to know how to write comprehensive person-centered plans, but everyone needs to use the PCT® skills that underlie planning. Training and supporting the use of PCT® skills will mean that:

- It is more likely that plans will be used and acted on, that the lives of people who use services will improve.
- You will have a number of ways to get plans started.
- Updating the plans will occur "naturally," needing less effort and time.[3]

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[1] Go-To Guide for Person-Centered Thinking Skills
[2] Core Concepts: Important To/Important For
[3] Our Work: Person-Centered Thinking

Where is it happening?

Person-Centered Thinking® training has been made available to educators in Minnesota since April 2018. We have begun getting feedback from the first educators who have been trained, and will begin to share locations where they report their use of PCT® skills with students and their impact by June 2021.

What are we doing?

MDE has scheduled one free two-day **Person-Centered Thinking**® trainings. The training for 2020 is:

- August 10-11, 2020 (Roseville) – Register for August training

COVID-19 Announcement: Given the evolving situation to slow the spread of COVID-19, we will wait until mid-July to make a decision whether or not to continue with the plan to host in-person PCT training in August. In the event that we cannot host an in-person training, we are looking into the possibility of other training options for those who register for this training.

PCT® training is designed for staff at all levels in an organization, as well as individuals who receive support and families. It is especially relevant for full-time staff who continually interact with students and for administrative staff. During two days of interactive training for acquiring and practicing effective PCT® skills, participants learn how to discover and balance what is "important to" and what is "important for" a person. Participants also learn how to use the information to write person-centered descriptions and one-page descriptions as noted above.[4]

How much and how well?

As of December, forty (40) educators have been trained in **PCT®** in Minnesota. Six (6) of those educators have reported using the skills from training, and have reported the following:

- Two (2) of them developed Person-Centered Descriptions.
- Three (3) of them developed One-Page Descriptions.
- Six (6) of them used at least one of the following skills below:
  - Relationship Map (1)
  - What's Working What's Not Working Sort (3)
  - Learning Log (1)
  - Communication Chart (2)
  - Donut Sort (2)
  - Rituals and Routines (1)
  - Good Day/Bad Day (1)
  - Positive Reputation (1)
  - Matching (1)
  - 4+1 Questions (2)

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[4] Sensible strategies for supporting people: Person-Centered Thinking Initiatives

Results (so far):

We are in the [Exploration Stage](#) of implementation at Minnesota Department of Education. The Person-Centered Practices in Education Leadership Team is identifying formal outcomes that can be measured and paired with success stories for students from birth to 21 years old.[5]

[Contact the Person-Centered Practices in Education Leadership Team](#) (MDE.Person-Centered@state.mn.us).

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[5] [Topic 3: Exploration Stage](#)