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PERSONAL FUTURES PLANNING

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Of course, we all know what ‘Personal Future Planning’ is. It’s obvious from the name: it’s planning the future of the person; it’s the PFP, just another name for the IPP, IWP, IEP, IHP, Why are we changing the name again? So we can kill some more trees? To keep everyone off stride? Why?

Personal Futures Planning is a byproduct of our more positive and more ‘person-oriented’ approach to providing services for people with developmental disabilities. Innovators of this new approach prefer to say it is intended to complement (rather than replace) the more traditional IHP (or IEP, etc.). The IHP is often just a legal document to meet regulations, it is for the Team. Personal Futures Planning is for the person.

There are 3 steps in the Personal Futures Planning Process:

1. create a Personal Profile (capacity search)
2. development of a Plan
3. commitment of individuals to provide a Network of Support

Instead of a strength/needs list, there is a personal profile. The Plan is more focused on what the person wants rather than what we need to meet the regulations. Instead of a Team to work on the person, there is a Network of Support to work for the person.

Personal Futures Planning is a tool for fostering new ways of thinking about people with developmental disabilities. It is intended to help us focus on opportunities for people with disabilities: 1) to develop positive relationships, 2) to have positive roles in community life, 3) to have increased control of their own lives and 4) to develop the skills and abilities to achieve these goals.

Personal Futures Planning is an ongoing problem solving process. It helps those involved with the focus person to see the total person. The Plan is to be the person's vision of what he or she would like to be or do. It focuses on the positive attributes of the person rather than the deficits. Personal Futures Planning depends on the support and participation of a few individuals who care about the person and assist to insure things happen for the person.

I believe that the common thread and the key to becoming more positive and person-oriented in our approach is to begin looking at things through the eyes of the person and seeing what they see (i.e., seeing things from their angle). Instead of standing in a confrontational posture face to face with the person and telling them what they can and cannot do, we need to stand beside them, walk with them and provide support and assistance. We might not always be able to do that, but the challenge is to try to be able do it more and more of the time.

If I've only confused you more or you want to learn more about Personal Futures Planning, an excellent starting place is the booklet:

“It's Never Too Early, It's Never Too Late:
a Booklet about Personal Futures Planning”.

This booklet is available free (that's right - free!) by writing to Metropolitan Council, Mears Park Centre, 230 East 5th Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

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