

## History

Connie Lyle O'Brien & John O'Brien (2002) A history of person-centered planning. <http://www.nasddd.org/resource-library/person-centered-practices/the-origins-of-person-centered-planning-connie-lyle-and-john-obrien/> another version is In Steve Holburn & Peter Vietze, Eds. *Person-centered planning: Research Planning and Future Directions*. Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes. Pp. 3-28. This book has a number of other useful chapters.

First things we published, which make the point that from the beginning our interest in person-centered planning lies in serving social and organizational change efforts aimed at inclusion.

John O'Brien (1987) Lifestyle Planning. In B. Wilcox & G.T. Bellamy, *The Activities Catalog*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

John O'Brien & Marsha Forest (1989). *Action for Inclusion*. *inclusion.com* The first iteration of the MAPS process in the context of school inclusion.

John O'Brien & Beth Mount (1991) Telling New Stories: The search for capacity among people with severe handicaps. in L. Meyer, C. Peck, & L. Brown, eds. *Critical issues in the lives of people with severe disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.

John O'Brien, Connie Lyle O'Brien & Beth Mount (December, 1997) Person centered planning has arrived – or has it?. *Mental Retardation*. 35. 480-484.

Attached are the tables of contents from *A Little Book About Person-Centered Planning* –which collected lots of the material that circulated as handouts in the early days– and *Implementing Person-Centered Planning: Voices of Experience* (both edited with Connie Lyle O'Brien). *Conversations on Citizenship and Person-Centered Work* (edited with Carol Blessing) brings the series to 2011 with interviews with people who have played important roles in developing person-centered approaches. All from *inclusion.com*.

This series of papers are the record of an inquiry that David Towell and I did in the early days of implementation of the Valuing People strategy in the UK (2003).

*Person-Centred Planning In It's Strategic Context Towards a Framework for Reflection-In-Action* <http://inclusion.com/downloads/obrienarchive/Person%20Centered%20Work/Cranfield%20I.pdf>

*Building Local Capacity for Person-Centred Approaches*. <http://inclusion.com/downloads/obrienarchive/Person%20Centered%20Work/Cranfield%20II.pdf>

*Getting More of Life: Improving the Timeliness of Person-Centred Approaches* <http://inclusion.com/downloads/obrienarchive/Person%20Centered%20Work/Cranfield%20III.pdf>

## **More recent thoughts**

About the broad context for person-centered work: deep change in supports in light of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

John O'Brien and Beth Mount (2015). *Pathfinders: People with developmental disabilities and their allies building communities that work better for everybody*. inclusion.com

About strategy

John O'Brien (2014) Person-centered planning and the quest for systems change. In Martin Agran, Fredda Brown, Carolyn Hughes, Carol Quirk, & Diane Ryndak, Eds. *Equity & full participation for individuals with severe disabilities: A vision for the future*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishers. Pp. 57-74.

About defining characteristics across approaches

(2014) *Common Threads: Approaches and Contexts for Planning Everyday Lives*. Toronto: Ontario Independent Facilitation Network. <http://www.oifn.ca/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Common-Threads-Reflections.pdf> inclusion.com

About practice

John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint & Lynda Kahn (2010). *The PATH & MAPS Handbook: Person Centered Ways to Build Community*. inclusion.com

## **Another connection**

New Paths to InClusion Knowledge Center. Materials from a multi-nation EU network. <http://personcentredplanning.eu/index.php>



# Implementing Person-Centered Planning Voices of Experience

John O'Brien & Connie Lyle O'Brien  
Editors



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**Contents**

**Voices of Experience.....1**  
 John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien introduce the book.

**A Turn for the Better.....11**  
 Pete Ritchie identifies the defining features of person-centered planning, provides an example of planning with a person who uses mental health services, and describes better and worse ways to implement person-centered planning.

**The Origins of Person-Centered Planning .....25**  
 Connie Lyle O'Brien and John O'Brien write a history of the emergence of person-centered planning in terms of communities of practice.

**A Plan Is Not an Outcome .....59**  
 Michael Smull advocates changing the service system by combining person-centered planning with control of available resources so that people can move toward living the life they want.

**Community-Building & Commitment-Building .....63**  
 David and Faye Wetherow describe the process of helping people rethink their ways of understanding as they make plans with individuals, groups, and communities.

**Increasing the Chances for Deep Change .....75**  
 Beth Mount, John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien identify twelve resources that each increase the chances that person-centered planning will make a significant difference in people's lives.

**The Value of Measuring Person-Centered Planning .....79**  
 Steve Holburn argues for the importance of systematically measuring the fidelity with which person-centered planning is implemented and the ways people's lives change as a result and provides an annotated bibliography on measuring the processes and outcome

**Opening the Door.....99**  
 David Pitonyak explodes typical ways of understanding challenging behavior by describing what he has learned in his relationship with Danny about what really matters in person-centered work.

**Two Is Not Enough.....121**  
 Mary Romer identifies lessons from her family experience that energize and direct her work in person-centered planning.





The Weird Guy.....131  
 Steve Holburn shows another facet of his talent in a short story about encountering capacity.

Great Questions and The Art of Portraiture.....137  
 John O'Brien defines the basic question in person-centered planning and connects facilitation with the work of sociologist Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot.

The Art and Soul of Person-Centered Planning .....143  
 Beth Mount explores artistic creation as integral to the process of person-centered planning.

The Rhode Island Facilitators Forum.....155  
 Jo Krippenstapel reflects on the experience of increasing the numbers and the capacities of people able to facilitate planning.

Some Words Along the Way .....169  
 Mary Jo Alimena Caruso and Kathy Lee gather the reflections of participants in a long term project to develop competent facilitators.

Helping Staff Support Choice .....193  
 Michael Smull provides a helpful way to clarify staff responsibility in situations that can become confused as people's freedom increases.

Communication Ally.....197  
 Meyer Shevin shows how well-meaning people can deny people with communication impairments the opportunity to participate in their own planning and defines a key role that provides a missing link in person-centered planning.

Getting Beyond Sick .....215  
 Karen Green McGowan defines medical obstacles to development for people with profound disabilities and shows the health benefits of different ways of thinking and planning.

Mutual Learning .....231  
 Susannah Joyce, Betty Boomer, and John Jones describe fine-tuning the person-centered planning process in collaboration with people who use mental health services.

Sequoia .....237  
 Sally Sehmsdorf demonstrates the process of creating an invitation to person-centered planning for senior parents and their families.





Pathfinders .....255  
 Connie Lyle O'Brien, Beth Mount, John O'Brien and Fredda Rosen describe a person-centered development process that supports some young people and their families to escape from segregated services and participate as adults in the opportunities offered by living in New York City.

Large Group Process for Person-Centered Planning.....275  
 Connie Lyle O'Brien and John O'Brien identify the benefits of large group processes for person-centered planning. Marsha Threlkeld joins in to describe how the process traveled to the Seattle area.

A Simple Half-Hitch .....291  
 Debra McLean outlines her method of using person-centered planning in assisting people to succeed at jobs that match their interests and talents.

Vocational Profiles .....301  
 Anne O'Bryan discusses the use of vocational profiles—a form of person-centered planning focused on supported employment—in the process of discovering good jobs.

Some Beginnings .....313  
 Jach Pealer & Sandy Landis describe a process for influencing a state's plans for deinstitutionalization and a way to assist people to create personal histories. They also reflect on how change happens.

Thinking About Support Broker Roles .....333  
 Michael Smull defines the systemic and organizational conditions necessary for the success of service coordination and presents the person-centered plan as a framework for learning.

Person-Centered Teams .....337  
 Helen Sanderson outlines and illustrates a team development process aimed at assuring that person-centered plans are implemented in the daily reality of service settings.

The Challenges of Person-Centered Work .....355  
 Patricia Fratangelo and Jeff Strully identify the personal and organizational transformations that moved their two agencies from group-based programs to personalized supports.

Planning with People .....373  
 Martin Routledge, Helen Sanderson and Rob Greig describe the development of guidance on person-centered planning from the English Department of Health, summarize its key points, and outline their efforts to support local implementation.



## Previously Published in

### *A Little Book About Person-Centered Planning*

#### The Power in Vulnerability

Judith Snow places person-centered planning in the context of interdependence and community.

*When I am in relationship with other individuals and if these others are networked with each other and especially if these others are different from each other, the possibility exists for all of us to have a rich life, drawing on each other's gifts. Differences in each other's physical and cognitive functioning, our interests, history and experience, our possibilities, our possessions and resources only add to the mix of possibilities that increase our total capacity.*

#### Learning to Listen

John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien reflect on listening, the foundation skill for person-centered planning.

*People come to life when they make contact with someone who works actively and faithfully to understand what they want to say. When people communicate in unusual ways, or when they have been rendered invisible by an environment that discounts the worth of their communication, the effects of listening can be profoundly energizing.*

#### Person-Centered Planning Has Arrived... or Has it?

Connie Lyle O'Brien, John O'Brien, and Beth Mount identify issues that arise as service systems mandate person-centered planning.

*We believe that implementations of person-centered planning will be disappointing if people rigorously apply a procedure without sufficient regard for the context of relationships and agreements necessary for it to thrive.*

#### Think Before You Plan

Michael Smull defines issues for facilitators to consider before agreeing to plan.

*Be sure to think before you plan. Thinking about a few issues before you get started can help you achieve a better outcome, prevent problems, avoid unnecessary struggle, and save you from public embarrassment. {Plans are} ordinary, day to day efforts to*



*understand how someone wants to live and what we are going to do about it. The overriding principle is that a plan is not an outcome, the life that the person wants is the outcome. The only acceptable reason to plan is to help someone move toward the life they desire.*

### **The Politics of Person-Centered Planning**

John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien situate person-centered planning in terms of enduring conflicts that arise at the intersection of individual and family life, community, and human service policy and practice.

*Person-centered planning belongs to the politics of community and disability. It is not a way to avoid conflict; it is one way to seek real and enduring conflicts in collaboration with people with disabilities who want to consider a change in their lives.*

### **Revisiting Choice**

Michael Smull identifies common abuses and misunderstandings of “choice” in the lives of people with disabilities and provides guidance on dealing with situations when it seems impossible to honor a person’s choice, finding balance between choice and safety, creating the kind of opportunities that increase capacity to honor people’s preferences about how they want to live, and increasing people’s control over their lives.

*What opportunities we provide, hold back, encourage people to find or protect people from depends as much on our values as they do on the preferences and capacities of the people we support. We need to listen to ourselves when we say that someone is not ready or that they should be able to do something simply because it is their choice. Our values influence and often control what we support. We need to talk about what our values are so that we understand the basis on which we are making decisions. We need to remember that the opportunities that are made available depend on the values of those with control.*

### **Positive Ritual and Quality of Life**

Michael Smull raises consciousness about the routines and rituals that structure our days and embody our relationships.

*As we look at supporting people in their communities we need to remember that much of the richness of community comes from the relationships that we have and the ritu-*







*als that celebrate and build those relationships... In our rapidly changing, mobile, and fragmented society, positive rituals deserve attention for all of us regardless of the presence of disability. For people who need substantial support to get through life, developing positive rituals should be a priority.*

### **More Than a Meeting**

Beth Mount identifies the benefits and limitations of person-centered planning, identifies ten conditions associated with positive changes in people's lives and outlines the framework for person-centered development projects.

*People interested in the future of person-centered planning must look past the lure of the quick fix toward the long journey of learning to do things differently on personal, community, and organizational levels. The resources of the system can be used to support safe havens where people can learn the art of person-centered development. The continuing challenge is to create environments which nurture the concern, commitment, and caring that engenders true relationships.*

### **The Quest for Community Membership**

John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien use the image of a quest to explore the relationship between person-centered planning and community building.

*How can person-centered planning contribute to building communities competent to include people with developmental disabilities as contributing members? Failure to actively and thoughtfully engage this tough question unnecessarily limits the effectiveness of the growing variety of approaches to person-centered planning.*

### **After the Plan**

Michael Smull outlines a learning process for closing the gap between how people want to live and how their services are supporting them to live.

*Whenever people are empowered a dynamic situation is created. The process of listening and then acting on what has been heard is an ongoing cycle. What people want today will be different from what they want tomorrow. The process is lifelong and interactive. The only thing worse than never listening is only listening once.*





## Participation Through Support Circles

Judith Snow moves outside the confines of a disability focus to describe the steps to circle building.

*Circles empower circle members because they are unpredictable. Energized by multiple, complex relationships they often become magnets of synergy, taking advantage of lucky accidents—opportunities that cannot be predicted or bureaucratically managed into existence. This living essence of circles drives out the deadening spirit of disability thinking.*

## A Circle Check-Up

John O'Brien and Jeff Strully offer a list of questions that support circle members can use to assess their contribution to supporting people.

*Circle members hold responsibility for developing a deep, accurate and clear account of the person's interests, preferences and dreams and assuring that this understanding guides the day-to-day behavior of the people who provide assistance.*

## The Ethics of MAPS and PATH

Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest define dangers and safeguards in the use of person-centered planning and provide a checklist for good facilitation.

*Good facilitators hold questions with people, then wait, and listen to the silence. The tension in this silence creates a safe space for people to fill with their deep yearnings and simple unspoken needs, the real stuff of life. As facilitators we open an inviting space for the focus person and insure that their ideas and wishes are heard. Then the hard work begins.*

## Telling New Stories

John O'Brien and Beth Mount differentiate person-centered planning from planning that serves systems by contrasting two different sorts of stories about people's lives and the role of service providers with them.

*Burton Blatt said, "Some stories enhance life; others degrade it. So we must be careful about the stories we tell, about the ways that we define ourselves and other people."*





### **Finding a Way Toward Everyday Lives: The Contribution of Person-centered Planning.**

John O'Brien and Herb Lovett identify what different approaches to person-centered planning have in common, discuss the ways person-centered planning influences change, consider its limitations, and define some of the controversies among practitioners.

*Person-centered planning can invite, align, and direct shared efforts to create positive community roles for people with disabilities. It allows people to exercise their practical wisdom to work for more inclusive, more just communities... The future of person-centered planning depends on the willingness and ability of its practitioners to improve through critical reflection on the effects of their work in the lives of people with disabilities and their families.*

### **A Guide to Personal Futures Planning**

John O'Brien considers the role planning plays in improving the lives of people with substantial disabilities, defines five essential accomplishments of human services as a perspective on service quality, and outlines a very early version of the procedure for personal futures planning.

*None of us creates our lives alone. We each create better quality life experiences with the other people who form our social network. And usually we are resources to each other without much formal planning. Like all of us, people with severe disabilities develop in relationship. But because they rely on other people's cooperation to an unusual extent, and because human services often play a larger than ordinary role in their lives, people with severe disabilities count on other's planning and organizing skills.*

