Butler County MRDD Program

"Person-Centered Planning: What's That?"

Most people have a picture in their heads about what a "good life" would be like for them. Most families hold some sort of vision—often unspoken—for bright futures for their children. Lots of people have learned that making these pictures or visions clear and letting others know about and share in them often moves the visions toward reality.

That is the intention behind "person-centered planning"—first to help individuals and families be clear about their ideas about their futures and, second, to help organize pathways toward those dreams. Person-centered planning gatherings are occasions when an individual or family works with a skilled listener (this person is called a "facilitator") and other people **chosen by the individual or family** to describe the vision and specify ways to move toward its achievement.

At the MRDD Program we have skilled facilitators ready to work with people who want to use person-centered planning. For the person or family this would mean:

1. Identifying and inviting other family members and friends or allies to join the planning effort.

2. Being an enthusiastic and active contributor in a 2 to 3 hour initial planning meeting led by a facilitator. During that meeting people will try to share their hopes and dreams for the "focus person" as clearly as possible.

3. Helping to find the best possible place for the person-centered planning meeting to occur—a place that's comfortable for everyone.

The facilitators will guide the conversation during a person-centered planning meeting and will keep a careful (and colorful) record of what is being said. The meeting will end with a set of "next steps," agreed to by the group, that can set everyone on the path toward supporting the individual's or family's vision.

Does this always "work?" Not always. But a plan helps someone move from the hope of a better life into a set of personal commitments or promises that increase the chances that a vision will become real. There are no guarantees, but the plan can move people to act. Action is what realizes dreams.

We want to make person-centered planning available for anyone who wants to try it. Contact your MRDD Support Coordinator or Jack Pealer, MRDD Ombudsman (513-867-5924 or jackp@butlermrdd.org) for more information or to get started.