Documenting on Choice and Community Inclusion
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Supporting Choice
The Meaning of Choice

- Having opportunities and options
- Understanding decision making
- Empowerment
- Supports to make decisions
- Creativity
- Having control
Supporting Choice

- Ensures individuals with disabilities have a range of options
- Prevents isolation or segregation from the community
- Informs planning
- Promotes information sharing
- Enhances person centered services
- Identifies individuals preferences
Providing Support for Decision Making

Change Perspectives
- Know the individual
- Create a shared process

Have a vision
- Be neutral
- Be realistic
- Use practical strategies

Manage risk
- Deal with conflict
- Offer customized support
Boundaries around Choice

• Imposed by society
  o Laws
  o Expectations/values
• Values
  o What is and is not OK for me and those I trust
• Ripple effect - One choice creates boundaries on other choices
  o My relationships
  o The work I do
  o Where I live
• Resource Driven
  o Financial – how much time or money I have available
• Risk involved

The difference is when the boundaries are set for the convenience of the system it limits choices that meet the individual’s desires (operating hours, staff available, policies or procedures)
Decision Making

Types and processes:

- Informed Decision-Making
- Supported Decision-Making
- Substitute Decision-Making
What we really want

Supported decision-making is “a process of supporting and accommodating an adult with disability to enable the adult to make life decisions . . . without impeding the self-determination of the adult.”
If the individual has a guardian or representative….

- CMS says (§441.735) “…the State must have policies describing the process for authorization; the extent of decision making authorized; and safeguards to ensure that the representative uses substituted judgment on behalf of the individual.”

- Substituted-Judgment Doctrine is a principle that allows a surrogate decision-maker to attempt to establish, with as much accuracy as possible, what decision the person they are representing would make if he or she were “competent” to do so.
Offering Choice

• Offer and present choices on any activities that align with the individual’s interests and talents
• Offer the opportunity make personal decisions, and complement efforts in decision-making
• Use technology (and adaptive equipment)
• Learn how the individual communicates
• Provide options for the person to communicate his or her choices and exercise control over types of service, supports and other assistance
• Ensure the individual has the authority to control and direct his or her supports.
Offering Choice (continued)

• Provide opportunities to participate in, and contribute to, their communities, but not in large groups
• Support, including financial support, individuals to advocate for themselves and others, to develop leadership skills through training
• Support the individual in making appropriate choices and decisions
• Notice opportunities specific to the individual
Community Inclusion
What is Community Inclusion?

Community Inclusion is the opportunity to live in the community and be valued for one’s uniqueness and abilities, like everyone else.

- Community inclusion encompasses:
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Education
  - Health status
  - Leisure/Recreation
  - Spirituality/Religion
  - Citizenship and civic engagement
  - Valued social roles (e.g., spouse, employee, member)
  - Peer support
  - Self-Determination

Community inclusion offers the opportunity to live like everyone else and results in community presence and participation without a disability label.
Benefits of Inclusion

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<tr>
<td>Presence - participating in all settings where people without disabilities are present, including classrooms, board rooms, businesses, neighborhoods, and community events</td>
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<td>Choice - having multiple experiences to draw from, selecting and engaging in activities as desired, choosing who will participate with you</td>
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<td>Competence - being recognized for strengths, contributing, having opportunities to learn more</td>
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<td>Respect and Valued Roles - being seen as a person--as well as a person with a disability, being valued by others, not being seen as out of the norm or as a &quot;curiosity&quot;</td>
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<td>Participation - engaging with others, having a wide variety of relationships, being part of the event--not just an observer</td>
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<td>Improved feelings of well-being and self-esteem</td>
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<td>Access to resources and activities available to all citizens</td>
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<td>Expanded life experiences- Participating in activities in different types of settings</td>
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<td>Feeling the excitement of being part of a community group.</td>
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<td>Opportunities to make new friends and develop new and varied relationships</td>
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<td>Incentive to learn appropriate social behavior</td>
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<td>More diversity in relationships</td>
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<td>The cost of supporting people decreases when persons served do not have to rely on paid professionals</td>
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<td>Individuals with disabilities can share their gifts and talents with the community</td>
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<td>Belonging - a very strong feeling when an individual is valued by others (i.e., when others call just to talk or invite him or her to hang out)</td>
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Principles to Community-Based Inclusion
Community-based inclusion instruction is individualized and focuses on those specific skills needed and wanted by the individual for a desired life.

Questions to ask about this might be:
• What are the interests of the individual?
• What are the individual's gifts?
• What goals and dreams does the individual have regarding community life?
• What are the life priorities for the next few years?
• What community places does the individual desire to access?
• What skills will the individual need to function successfully in his or her desired lifestyle?
• What are the support needs of the individual?
• What are the available resources in the community?
• Which resources will lend themselves to meeting the needs of the individual?
How to Foster Community Inclusion

• Provide supports in a variety of actual settings where individuals want to be competent or will need to utilize life skills

• Focus supports on participation in functional activities rather than just performing an isolated skill

• Offer varied activities in a natural setting in order for the individuals to build real life skills

• Ensure activities take place at the time of day the task is usually performed

• Whenever possible, offer options that come from the natural environment setting where the skills will be utilized
Strategies to Promote Choice for Community Inclusion

Strategy 1: Identify who the individual already knows and where the relationship can be strengthened and deepened.

Strategy 2: Determine the individual's interests and gifts and identify who would appreciate this individual’s gifts.

Example: Jason was a man with some mental health issues who liked to make up stories. Some people called them lies, some called them hallucinations. Where would this gift be valued? His supporters found a group for him to belong to: A local group of people who got together to do improvisation, just for fun. They really valued his gift for story telling!*

Strategy 3: Identify where you can find a person interested in the individuals’ interests or talents.

*Angela Amado, Connecting People with Disabilities to Community Members
How Staff Can Support Choice and Community Inclusion

• View the individual through gifts and what he or she has to contribute
• See opportunities rather than limits
• Look for “people” rather than “activities”
• Seek out resources
• Find the right person in an organization
• Ask questions
• Be persistent
• Develop a “community” sense, different from human services
• Offer choices
How Staff Can Support Choice and Community Inclusion (continued)

- Provide training to develop the individuals’ skills for future inclusionary activities
- Support the individuals’ participation at actual community and social events
- Promote the individuals’ participation in community activities as an individual, rather than as part of a group (individuals may have trouble making new friends if they arrive in groups)
- Research information about community resources and share this information with the individuals served
- Help individuals learn the necessary social skills for each setting
How Staff Can Support Choice and Community Inclusion (continued)

• Analyze inclusion barriers and help the individuals overcome these barriers
• Use a respectful tone of voice and friendly words when addressing individuals in public
• Do not share information about problem behaviors
• Be prepared for questions about the individuals' disability (plan ahead)
• Each individual has a different “comfort level” regarding privacy
• Pay particular attention to, and do your best to support, each individual’s unique needs and expectations
• Try to help individuals “fit in” by assisting them in their dressing, grooming and communication skills
More Tips to Support Choice and Community Inclusion

• Provide training and skill building to promote independence
• Be prepared to advocate for and educate others about the benefits of inclusion
• Understand when to get involved and when to stay out of the individuals’ relationships
• Teach daily living, vocational, and educational skills in natural settings in a functional and empowering way (example, support individuals to order their own food, etc. when in public)
• Network to find contacts and allies in the community who may have information about social or vocational opportunities
• Ensure the individuals have access to opportunities and education to facilitate building and maintaining relationships
• Provide information about human, legal, civil rights and other resources and assist individuals to use information for self-advocacy and decision-making about working, and social relationships.
Supporting Individuals with the Development of Community Inclusion

• Determine the individual’s strengths and interests
• Help with his or her vision for a desirable future
• Select the most important skills to learn to achieve these dreams
• Incorporate skills training into real life events
• Training should never be done as a prerequisite to real life
• Find places where individuals can fit in as they are and where other community members can take a direct role in skill development
• Competence comes from trying and often failing and trying again, thus, plan for mistakes (it’s a part of learning)
• Provide daily opportunities for individuals to communicate with others and make choices
Barriers to Community Inclusion
Barriers to Inclusion

Attitude: The principal barrier to the participation of individuals with developmental disabilities in community activities and organizations is typically to an extent a problem of attitude.

“A bad attitude is like a flat tire, you can’t go anywhere without changing it.”

-Anonymous
Common Assumptions that Lead to Barriers

• The “community” will not welcome people with disabilities
• People are fearful of them and think they have too many "problems" or needs to "fit in"
• People will get hurt (they will be rejected, taken advantage of, or get lost, etc.)
• It is a lot of work
• No resources (there are not enough resources, one-on-one staff, transportation, etc., to get and keep people connected in the community)
• Liability (who is liable if something happens, like if the person gets hurt while participating in a community activity?)
Steps to Overcome Barriers and Problem Solve

• With the individual and the team, identify the gifts, talents and dreams of the individual (be detailed)
• Identify the barrier(s) and write them down
• Think of options by asking (What would it take for the individual to participate safely?)
• List all the possibilities that could minimize or remove the barrier
• Evaluate the options (look at all the options and start evaluating the ones that would be the most practical for removing the barriers)
• Prioritize the solutions
• Eliminate the options that are not possible
• Review the two or three solutions on the list and discuss these with the individual and team and chose one to begin
Create and Implement an Action Plan

- **Create the Plan: This is the individual and team’s chosen solution.**
  - Develop a plan to remove the barrier. Figure out who will do what and when and in what order to solve the problem. This is called an Action Plan.

- **Implement the Plan: This is the action part of the process.**
  - Follow the steps you have outlined in your Action Plan and try to remove the barrier.
  - Ask the individual and team if the barrier has been removed. If the answer is “yes,” then you are done. If it is “no,” then take a look at what happened when you implemented your Action Plan.

- **Assess the outcome: Did the Action Plan work?**
  - Why or why not? What about the quality of the outcomes? Is the individual satisfied with the outcome?
  - What would have to change to remove the barrier? Does another solution from the list need to be selected to try to remove the barrier?

- **Modify the Plan as needed: Change your Action Plan as needed to get closer to a solution.**
  - You may need to go back to the evaluating step, review another potential solution, and work through removing the barrier until an outcome is reached that satisfies the individual.
Activity

Omarion is a 38-year-old man with a great smile. He comes from a large family with two brothers and one sister. He enjoys being around animals and has had several pets growing up. Omarion is highly skilled and he has epilepsy. He has seizures twice a day. When he has seizures, he blacks out for about 2-5 minutes, doesn’t remember anything that happened, and is forgetful for a while. Omarion dreams of living in an apartment and working at a job where he can be with animals. How can Omarion be supported in his dreams?

1. What did you notice about Omarion?
2. Describe the roadblocks/barriers to inclusion.
3. What supports do you recommend for Omarion that could help him achieve his goals?
Must Haves To Overcome Barriers

• Voice: Voice of the individuals and their families

• Network: Connect individuals by providing opportunities for collaboration and engagement in their communities

• Support: Provide support to staff that equip them with skills and knowledge to influence change
Opportunities to Build Community Connections

- Neighborhood yards, community parks
- Community education and recreation programs for adults and seniors
- Community sports leagues, Special Olympics
- Faith communities or church, 4 H Clubs, Best Buddies, social media
- Interest clubs (such as gardening, bridge, birding, book, and dancing)
- Recreation and fitness center activities and programs
- Cultural and ethnic centers
- Community arts and theatre organizations
- Community volunteer organizations
- Neighborhood coffeehouses and bars
- Workplace sports teams and informal interest groups
- Nature centers
- Travel/tour groups
Documentation Must haves for Community and Choice

- Documentation on community: Document how staff are encouraging and supporting the
  individual to take part in the community in a way that is meaningful to the individual
- Documentation on choice: Document on how day-to-day choices are being made by the
  individual
- Documentation on social role development: Document on how the individual is
  supported to develop and pursue your own interests and important relationships
- Document on the rights education and responsibilities the individuals' experience every
  day in the community and when they make choices
- Document how staff support the individuals to navigate their community life and
  consider benefits and consequences of their actions
- Document how individuals are exercising their own rights, priorities and preferences
- Document how staff is offering informed choices and reflect the individuals’
  communication style
- Document the opportunities to exercise informed choices
Documenting on Choice and Community Inclusion

- Community activities, connections and inclusion should be featured in person centered progress notes to capture details of the activities, natural supports and the development of any new or existing social roles.
  - The individual’s response to the activity, any new learning, any connections made
  - What actions staff took and what specific support staff provided
  - What did staff do to help support the individual’s health and safety needs
  - What did staff do to address the individual’s other support needs (examples: managing medication, preparing food, guiding for street safety, using assistive devices, communication strategies, behavior supports, or safety plans)
  - Document any progress towards the person’s ISP goals and outcomes (is the plan working?)
Best Practices in Documenting on Community and Choice

• Capture any positive interventions and/or supports used prior to any modifications to the support plan
• Regular collection and review of data to measure the ongoing effectiveness of the progress or lack of progress
• Established time limits for periodic reviews to determine if the goals, activities or progress/lack of progress is still necessary or can be terminated
• An assurance that interventions and supports will cause no harm to the person

• What the individual likes to do
• The type of support needed – (detailed)
• Teaching steps during skill-building activities
• What is needed for success
• Record the learning and tie it to what is important to the individual (example: It is important to Joe to dress nice because it makes him feel good)
• Can combine several things that are important to the individual: (example: It is important to Joe to go bowling so he can spend time with friends) What the person can or likes to do
Documentation Checklist

- The individual’s response to the community activity is described
- Include supports for the individual
- Include progress towards Individual Support Plan (ISP) outcomes or goals
- Show the individual’s needs are being met and any new needs
- Document any incidents that occurred
- Include what the individual learned (including if someone does not want support)
- Use respectful language
- Avoid slang or abbreviations
- Include what the individual states he or she learned and enjoyed during the community activity
- Unique to the individual
- Focus on abilities
- Show the individual’s choices and preferences
- Identify the people that are significant to the individual
- Identify social connections
- Maintain confidentiality
- Include Hopes/Dreams/Goals that are a priority to the individual
- Be precise and indicate what hopes, dreams, and goals were explored via the community activity
- Connections to the community activity addressing and moving closer to the individuals’ hopes, dreams, and goals
Resources


• The Learning Community: *Supported Decision Making.* www.TLCPBP.com

• Department of Human Services of Illinois (DHS): *Module 5 Community Inclusion.* www.dhs.state.il.us
Thank You

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