



# **Making Lives Personal**

## **Use of Person Centered Approaches**

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Issue #4

Some of you may have seen the Matching Staff tool in training, in practice or in the tool box in each program.

This approach to person centeredness is a great way to learn about people from their perspective and modify your approaches to them accordingly or; in a perfect world, provide them with the perfect support person. We will be using this with each person in the community supports program in order to assist people supported and the agency in the transition of staff changes. We hope that this will help everyone involved to create better lives.

## **Tools vs. Approaches**

I attended a learning forum for Independent Facilitators in November. There was great discussion during a world café style session around using “tools” as a word to describe the approaches we use in person centered planning. It was felt that the word tools describe something we “do to people” not “do with people”. The concern was that if staff perceives these approaches to learning as “tools” they will simply sit down and fill out templates with people in planning and miss all of the great learning opportunities available in genuine conversation and everyday communications. I decided to put this question on a discussion board I am part of for HSA Canada and the overwhelming consensus was that it doesn’t matter what we call them as long as we are using them purposefully, mind fully, respectfully and in a way that has the intent to help people create better lives. This was a great learning opportunity for me. It struck me that active, true listening to people happens in every moment of interaction with people verbal or not. We need to be mindful of every opportunity to learn from people we are supporting in order to support them in a way that they prefer. We can document our learning as we go to share with others and create a record. All of the “tools” that we use in our agency are a few of what is available out there. They are not set in stone or the only way. They are approaches to learning. When used with the intent to learn more and move forward to help people achieve their best life they are immeasurably useful.

To quote Brene Brown “stories are data with soul”. Governments want measurable data, agencies work hard to provide that, often complicating the processes with policy while also working hard to support people effectively in a person centered way. People provide us with the stories that we need to learn and help them build more stories to share that turn into the data required. Listening to people, really listening to every word, action, sound is how we learn. We then record, plan and move forward.....they build the story. Approaches, tools, whatever we want to label it, it’s all about listening with the intent to build a good life.

# Simply Huge Success

Anyone who knows Ken A. knows how much he loves hunting. During a recent planning meeting which consisted of Ken and a few people who know him well simply sitting around a table and chatting, Ken decided the only thing he really wanted to do different in life was to make his annual trip to Whitestone and eat a partridge. Simple.

From this conversation we learned:

**Important To Ken** – his annual drive to Whitestone, hunting, his family, his home, his hunting camp, eating partridge, his friends in Whitestone

**Important For Ken** – to have accessible transportation to go to Whitestone, to have people who can support him on this road trip

**History** – Ken has spent most of his life in the Whitestone area with his family hunting and enjoying friends and family

**Dreams** – to visit his hunting camp and see his friends, eat a partridge

**Working** – his current living situation, family and CLPS supports

**Not Working** – recent medical issues

**Decision Making** –

*Medical:* Ken is consulted, final decision made by family

*Recreational:* Ken is asked what he would like to do, he makes final decision

**Actions** –

Kimberley and Barb would take Ken to Whitestone during deer hunting season with the Burritt St. van.

They would drive down the bunny trail to Ken's friends place and then see how close to the hunting camp they can get hoping that they see wildlife along the way.

A cooked partridge would be brought along for Ken to enjoy for his dinner.

*All of this information was gathered in conversation, reminiscing and laughter. There were very few direct questions asked that would "fit our tool templates". This information and more was then recorded into a one page profile and action plan. The best and most important outcome was that Ken got to go on his annual drive to Whitestone and eat a partridge and he was thrilled. Simple but huge!*