

**Administration on Community Living (ACL) No Wrong Door System  
Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) Training Program**

**Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

**Lesson Number & Title: 3 What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?**

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# Administration on Community Living (ACL) No Wrong Door System Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) Training Program

## Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices

Lesson Number & Title: 3 What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

Page No: 1

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### Narration:

Welcome to the lesson on What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role? This lesson is part of the course on **Person-Centered Thinking and Practices** in the in the Person-Centered Counseling Training Program. Please review the information on this screen and go to the next page when you are ready.

### Text:

**Welcome!**

Here is a description of the lesson you are starting:

Person-centered thinking (PCT) skills help people approach each other in a consistently person-centered way. They are a core skill set for Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals. This lesson provides additional information about what being “person-centered” means in this role. It helps learners distinguish between “fixing” approaches and “support” approaches. It introduces the three promises of PCT. It reminds learners about the power and importance of active listening in the role.

### **Learning Objective**

After completing this lesson:

You will be able to discriminate between “fixing” and “supporting” approaches as part of person-centered thinking practices.

To view course information, including On-the-Job Training Assessments, Portfolio Assignments, and a list of Activities, click on the “Menu” tab and then click Lesson Information.

This course is one of the six foundational courses in the No Wrong Door System Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) Training Program meant to provide basic skill and knowledge related to the identified competencies for a PCC professional. Click on the box below to learn about how person-centered thinking approaches are infused throughout these courses.

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## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

**Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

**Page No: 2**

---

### **Narration:**

Person-centered counseling is an approach that requires a strong ability listen to people. It helps people organize their lives in ways that make sense to them when they need additional support. This curriculum seeks to provide Person-Centered Counseling professionals with tools, skills, and strategies for a consistently person-centered approach. This lesson helps define the person-centered approach. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

### **Text:**

**Person-Centered Counseling: Myths and Reality**

***Activity: Person-Centered Counseling Quiz***

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## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

### **Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

#### **Page No: 3**

---

#### **Narration:**

The role of the Person-Centered Counseling professional will include the ability to complete a person-centered plan if requested. However, person-centered thinking and practices are more than knowing how to develop a formal person-centered plan. They are about changing the way the system intersects with individuals. Today, a variety of fields recognize the value of person-centered practices. This includes medicine, education, vocational support, human services, and even the criminal justice system. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

#### **Text:**

#### **Being Person-Centered**

Many people think that person-centered approaches mean engaging people in formal person-centered planning (PCP) processes. While formal plans may be preferred by some, they are not always necessary. Person-Centered Counseling professionals will have a role in helping to develop formal plans as requested. (You can learn more about planning in the course on Person-Centered Planning and Implementation.) However, person-centered thinking is a holistic approach to interacting with people. These skills are the focus of this course and the one-day in-person training. They are meant to ensure that people seeking services consistently experience helpful, meaningful, and self-directed outcomes connected to their supports. These skills work with or without a formal PCP in place. However, when there is a formal plan,

they help create a meaningful connection between those plans and professional approaches.

The resource section of this course has information on PCP in general. If you are interested in learning more about a variety of approaches to planning.

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## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

### **Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

#### **Page No: 4**

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#### **Narration:**

Many times, the first contact a person has with a system is not person-centered. The people they communicate with may be focused on issues driven by the system. This may include gate-keeping. It may include quickly assessing eligibility for specific programs. There may be an emphasis on discouraging overuse of programs but without support to develop other viable options for people. In these processes, what is known or learned about a person is very limited. Even when a professional takes the time to learn about what is important to a person, it may not be documented or connected to actual support. Review the information on this page. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

#### **Text:**

#### **Person-Centered Thinking**

Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals are part of a system of support. They will feel the pressures of balancing responsible use of resources with attention to each individual. It will be important to balance all parts of their roles. However, they will want to maintain the core beliefs and values of PCC. As a reminder, PCC professionals support people of all ages and abilities in:

- <bullet> Having positive control over the life they desire
- <bullet> Being recognized and valued for their contributions (past, current, and potential)

- <bullet> Being provided new and ongoing opportunities to be positively engaged during all phases of their lives
- <bullet> Being supported through a variety of relationships, both natural and paid, within their communities

Person-centered thinking skills and approaches help guide and organize respectful listening. This ensures that actions and decisions are most likely to be meaningful from the view of the person seeking services and those they involve in their lives. By using PCT skills, the professional can support actions that are likely to improve the person's situation in ways that are important *to* them and still include responsible use of public resources.

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## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

**Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

**Page No: 5**

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### **Narration:**

Each interaction a Person-Centered Counseling professional has will be different. Under the day-to-day pressures of work, it can be natural to jump to providing solutions for people. However, being person-centered means going deeper than a person's immediate concerns. It takes effort and a willingness to slow down and listen. The goal of person-centered thinking skills is to ensure professionals understand what will be meaningful to the person. From there, support can be given to sort through options and take action. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

### **Text:**

#### **Using Person-Centered Thinking in the No Wrong Door System**

A "fixing" approach is when a professional offers solutions to a person's concerns without first knowing what is important to the person. Fixing assumes that the professional or others know what is best for a person in a given situation. Support assumes the person should be offered help to sort through this themselves. Being able to support means being able to listen.

If you can answer the following questions around the person's defined purpose for engaging No Wrong Door (NWD) services, you are likely using support approaches rather than fix the situation for the person. Ask yourself:

1. Are choice, direction, and control embedded in everything I've done?

2. Do I know what is important *to* the person? This includes their goals, expectations, and preferences.
3. Do I know what is important *for* the person? This includes their critical concerns and needs, especially in area of health and safety.
4. Can I describe the person's preferred balance between important *to* and important *for*? Have I been diligent in informing people of risk in ways that work for them? Have I supported the dignity of risk as an essential part of life that all people have a right to experience?
5. How have I helped the person explore where and how to get the services and supports that will achieve and/or maintain the "to/for balance"? Do I have effective approaches for this person to evaluate options and make informed decisions?
6. Have I helped the person define clear methods of evaluating if what was decided on is working or needs to change? That means way of measuring and evaluating progress or identifying problems that makes sense to the person.

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## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

### **Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

#### **Page No: 6**

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#### **Narration:**

Listening to understand is challenging. There are many reasons a professional can struggle to really listen for the unique “to/for balance” when engaging people. These reasons may include old habits or feeling rushed. They may include confusion over roles and expectations. They may also include the professional having trouble accepting or acknowledging the person’s views. This is especially likely if the professional feels these hopes, dreams, or aspirations are not grounded in reality or are not acceptable. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

#### **Text:**

#### **Listening as Part of Supporting**

Person-Centered Counseling professionals must have strong ability to listen for understanding. (You will learn more a specific approach in another lesson.) Person-centered discovery identifies what is important *to* a person. It helps avoid “fixing” interactions.

#### ***Activity: Support vs. Fixing***

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## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

**Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

**Page No: 7**

---

### **Narration:**

Implementing person-centered practices includes making and keeping three promises. The promises are: 1) to listen, 2) to act, and 3) to be honest. These promises are easier to keep when professionals consistently support the same people. In person-centered counseling, efforts to provide this ongoing relationship should be made. In addition, a practice of actively engaging appropriate follow-up is often helpful to ensuring a better ability to work together. People who have a relationship with the professional are more likely to trust them. They are more likely to share helpful information honestly. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

### **Text:**

#### **The Three Promises of Being Person-Centered**

People engaging systems often feel as if they are not very important to professionals. They don't always feel heard or respected. People who are facing the unknown often feel as if they are in crisis even if PCC professionals don't look at it that way. When professionals are unclear about timelines, next steps, and rely on the person to do all the follow-up, the person can become frustrated or overwhelmed. People often feel a loss of control when engaging unresponsive systems. They may try to regain control in unhelpful ways, such as becoming avoidant or difficult. Being person-centered means supporting healthy control on the part of the person. Making and keeping these promises supports control.

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## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

**Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

**Page No: 8**

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### **Narration:**

Keeping the three promises of person-centered thinking can be challenging at times but it is worth the effort. These promises help the Person-Centered Counseling professional stay focused on being person-centered. They also help people seeking support engage in productive problem-solving and shared action. Rather than feeling helpless in the system, they are more likely to feel supported. As a result, they are more likely to be actively engaged in developing successful solutions to the situation. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

### **Text:**

**Three Promises of Being Person-Centered**

***Activity: The Three Promises***

# Administration on Community Living (ACL) No Wrong Door System Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) Training Program

## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

**Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

**Page No: 9**

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### **Narration:**

To keep the three promises of being person-centered, you must be able to listen deeply and for understanding. However, applying what you learn often requires additional skills beyond listening. The tools and approaches in this curriculum are meant to support your ability to keep these promises. They can help you to listen more deeply. They help you identify what is important *to* and *for* the person and their personally defined balance between the two. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

### **Text:**

#### **The Three Areas of Person-Centered Thinking Skills**

The information in this lesson helps focus all the skills and tools on supporting people to solve their own problems, rather than fixing their problems for them. This curriculum teaches three sets of tools and approaches that help professionals explore and organize what they have learned. These skills can build on skills others you already have such as motivational interviewing. They can also be a foundation for Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals who do not have those other skill sets. They can help professionals avoid “fixing” approaches and move toward supporting.

These skills will be explored more fully in later lessons. This course focuses on three types of tools that support skills in the following areas:

- <bullet> Discovery skills: These help the PCC professional identify what's important *to* and *for* the person and the correct balance between them.
- <bullet> Everyday learning skills: These help the PCC professional evaluate, organize learning, problem-solve, and negotiate or mediate.
- <bullet> Other tools for managing roles and expectations include a matching profile and a one-page description, which help the person find the best support.

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# Administration on Community Living (ACL) No Wrong Door System Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) Training Program

## **Course Title: Person-Centered Thinking and Practices**

**Lesson Number & Title: 3** What is Person-Centered Thinking in the Person-Centered Counseling Role?

**Page No: 10**

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### **Narration:**

Congratulations! You have now finished the lesson. Let's take a few moments to review the key ideas and learning objectives. Being person-centered is not a new idea. You likely already have good skills to build upon. However, the tools and approaches in this curriculum are designed to support you in enhance your skills in this area. They support a consistently person-centered approach, regardless of whether a person has a formal person-centered plan or not. This lesson reviewed the importance of listening for understanding. It provided six questions a professional could ask themselves to ensure they are supporting not fixing. It also reviewed the three promises of person-centered thinking and how they help people stay in control of their services and gain more from interacting with the Person-Centered Counseling professional.

Please review the information on this page. You can also review the content as needed by using the "Left Arrow" icon at the bottom of the screen. This will take you back through the lesson. You may take the test now, later, or as requested by your employer. Good luck and thanks for completing the lesson!

### **Text:**

## **Conclusion and Lesson Review**



<bullet> Person-centered thinking is a consistent approach to supporting people in a person-centered way, even if they don't have or desire a formal person-centered plan.

<bullet> "Fixing" is what happens when we engage solutions for people. "Supporting" is what happens when we use discovery to understand what is important to a person and help them make the best decisions they can for themselves.

<bullet> The three promises of person-centered thinking (PCT) are to listen and keep listening, act on what we heard, and be honest if things will take time or we don't know what to do yet.

<bullet> The tools and approaches in this curriculum will support you in keeping the promises of PCT.

## Reflection on Learning Objectives

Directions: Review the objective(s) on this page. When you are done click on the "My Notes" icon at the top of the screen to use the electronic journal or use your own notebook. Write down your answers to the following questions.

1. What did you learn in this lesson that you felt was important?
2. What will you do differently because of the content in this lesson?

## Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to **discriminate between "fixing" and "supporting" approaches as part of person-centered thinking practices.**

If you are ready to take the test, click on the "Take Test" tab. You can also take the test later: It will be available from your "Personal Page." To access it, click on the "My eLearning Lessons View" button. Choose the lesson title from the list of assignments, and then click on the "Start the Lesson" button at the bottom of the screen. Click the "Take Test" tab to start the test.

We recommend that you complete the On-the-Job Training Assessments and Portfolio Assignments for this lesson. They will help you demonstrate

competencies for the ideas presented. To view On-the-Job Training Assessments, Portfolio Assignments, and a list of Activities, click on the “Menu” tab and then click “Lesson Information.”

Again, congratulations and good luck!

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