

**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: 6 The Role of Relationships and Cultural Context in
Person-Centered Thinking**

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Page No: 1

Narration:

Welcome to the lesson on The Role of Relationships and Cultural Context in Person-Centered Thinking. 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:

A central part of what makes life meaningful is connections to others. People also value the ability to set goals or prioritize life according to their own values. Culture, background, and resources will have a large impact in these areas. As a result, the context of what is valued and how it looks will vary from person to person. It will also vary from community to community. This lesson introduces the learner to these important issues. It provides approaches for applying them. However, this lesson introduces this content only briefly. It does so in the context of the person-centered thinking skills and tools. It is strongly recommended that you seek additional training and information about these topics. You can check out the resources listed with this course to learn more.

Learning Objective

After completing this lesson:

You will be able to describe the methods you use to identify important aspects of relationships and culture in person-centered discovery.

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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Narration:

Being able to reach out meaningfully to different individuals requires an understanding of diversity. That includes skills and resources in the area of cultural competence. As a Person-Centered Counseling professional, you will need to work with people in the context of their relationship and roles. To do this you will want to have an understanding of diversity issues and social roles. This lesson is a starting point. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

The Importance of Relationships, Social Roles, and Culture

Relationships, valued social roles, and personal goals are a large part of what creates a good life for most people. These bring comfort, enjoyment, fulfillment, and opportunity. However, “community,” “family,” and “valued roles” are defined differently by individuals. Keep in mind, too, that the way people communicate will vary. So will their understanding of the Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional’s role. All of these aspects will influence what will work best for people. Artful consideration of people’s relationships and the cultural context of their lives is part of the PCC professional’s role.

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Narration:

Culture and diversity issues are at the heart of being person-centered. The ability to respond to people in ways that are meaningful to them is supported by understanding these aspects of a person. The skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to work with diverse individuals are very subtle but pervasive. They touch every part of the interaction. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

Influence of Culture and Diversity Issues

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Narration:

Considering people's relationship as part of person-centered discovery provides important information. In your role as a Person-Centered Counseling professional, it will help you know who the person cares about and who cares about them. It will define who they rely on and why. It will help you understand who might know more about the strengths a person brings to a situation. It may help identify critical gaps in networks. It may help you recognize when people are isolated in ways that are not desired or bring risk to the person. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

The Importance of Exploring Relationships

Life is primarily about relationships and social roles. The people we know do a lot for us. In fact, the value of these relationships is sometimes referred to as social capital. They watch out for us. They set expectations for us, encourage us, or mentor us. We give back by fulfilling these roles mutually or for others. In our families, jobs, and communities, we like to be thought of as useful and valuable. A Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional will consider a person's relationships in discovery. Some reasons for doing this include:

- <bullet> To ensure supports align with maintaining or developing the unique valued roles people would like to have at each stage of their lives, such as

friend, parent, or employee

- <bullet> To understand who might rely on the person

- <bullet> To know more about which relationships are very important for the person to maintain or develop (from their view)

- <bullet> To understand who is providing support for the person, including emotional, instrumental, or support for decision-making

- <bullet> To identify strengths in social networks that should be maintained or gaps that the person may want to fill

- <bullet> To identify who might be helpful in a well-rounded discovery process (other people to talk to)

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Narration:

Relationships, goals, social roles, and culture are all critical aspects to be explored in discovery. However, directly asking about these issues may or may not be the most useful approach. Discovery is a purposeful conversation. It should not feel like a job interview or responding to a checklist. Identifying what is important *to* the person and support for what is important *for* them is best done in a natural way. However, some ongoing practices and approaches will make it more likely these critical pieces are included. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

Supporting Diverse Individuals

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Narration:

People come with their own unique social networks. In fact, it's not uncommon for the initial contact for support to be a family member or friend of someone needing support. Even if the person calls for themselves, their family or others may be engaged in discovery, formal assessment, or planning. Some, people may have legal representatives. Sometimes the courts may have control over some aspect of the person's choices. Working with families, friends, and legal representatives will be a core part of your role as a Person-Centered Counseling professional. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page

Text:

Working with Family and/or Important Others

Loved ones in family homes provide the majority of support in this country. For many people this is the preferred choice. However, sometimes it is not desired or even possible. Even so, people and their loved ones usually want support that helps them stay engaged with each other. Sometimes families have significant formal or informal roles in the person's life. Other times less so. It's important to consider with the person the roles people play and how the person would like family engaged.

Discovery includes identifying what the person most prefers. It also includes identifying what family caregivers and other supporters need. For support to work well, it is best if everyone involved feels it's a reasonable choice given the circumstance. Everyone must be supported in the process. People must

be realistic about what they can and cannot do. There must be a basic quality of life for each person in the situation. Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals will often support a portion of this process through discovery and planning. By recognizing and working well with this aspect of support, families and individuals are more likely to have a good start on this portion of their personal journeys.

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Narration:

Keep in mind that family can be defined in a lot of ways. A person may consider only those tied by biology, adoption, or marriage to be family. Or they may consider people who are likely to be there for them in tough circumstances to be family. Cultures will define family differently as well. Letting the person take a lead in defining who, if anyone, is most important to include in activities is very important. Working through these dynamics can be fairly complicated at times. This is especially true if the person seeking support is dependent on family but also experiences conflict with family. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

Balancing Choice, Rights, and Legal Limits

One challenge for Person-Centered Counseling professionals in balancing person-centered strategies is when the person has legal limitations to decision-making or when family influence is unduly strong. The person may be a minor. They may be civilly committed, under guardianship, or on parole. They may be subjected to other limits such as sex offender registries. They may have willingly signed forms that allow others to complete legal work in their stead, such as through a power of attorney. However, the PCC professional may not always have assurance that the legal surrogate is working in the person's best interest.

There are dozens of legal ways in which rights are expressed or limited. In addition, the family configuration and resources may prevent the person from being able to fully express their own voice. At the same time, confidentiality and privacy laws may conversely limit what caregivers have access to in ways that limit their effectiveness in supporting the person. Families may be engaged in conflict over whether a person is competent or not. It's important to stay neutral about family dynamics. You do not have a full understanding of the situation. Offering empathy and resources to each member is important. Be transparent about your role and your limits in these areas. Advice from supervisors, legal experts and formal mediation may be needed.

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Narration:

Person-Centered Counseling professionals are not expected to be fully knowledgeable about every possible legal variation regarding consent and other legal limits. However, they do need to work within the law. They need to support individuals and their families find solutions that work for them. It's important to recognize that trends in consent and decision-making fluctuate. We continue to try to balance the rights of the individuals with safety. However, the current environment is one in which any restriction must be carefully justified. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

Balancing Choice, Rights, and Legal Limits

Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals need to develop their network around these complex issues. In order to organize the best support possible, they need to keep their focus on quality of life and work within the law. Some general practices and approaches that a PCC professional will want to include:

- <bullet> Know and follow the confidentiality, privacy, and reporting laws that apply to your professional role in your state. Ask people to sign consents as needed for you to share or gain information. Ask to see actual documentation of legal orders
- <bullet> Recognize that trends in decision-making continue to move to

maximum individual rights and least restrictive options. Supported decision-making is an emerging practice that contrasts with “substitute” decision-making (such as guardianship). The goal is to provide people with specialized support for decision-making rather than having others make decisions for them

<bullet> Unless explicitly removed through a legal process, people maintain all of their rights. Even when they are under guardianship or similar arrangements, people maintain certain rights

<bullet> Sometimes full choice, direction, and control are not possible for a person at the time. Discovery should still be an open process driven by what is important *to* the person. However, you must be honest about your limits in supporting options. Maximize choice, direction, and control within the scope of what a person does control

<bullet> Recognize that families can become overly persistent when they haven't felt heard or supported. Find ways to listen with empathy. Connect them to resources that may help support them and provide balanced perspective. Sometimes privacy laws are used inappropriately by providers. Sometimes a provider is not savvy about the laws. Other times they may be exerting inappropriate control. If a family provides care, it is reasonable for them to have basic information about a person's conditions or needs. Work with the person to clarify what will work best as far as sharing information

<bullet> Recommend formal dispute resolution, mediation, or advocacy services when needed. Have resources on hand

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Narration:

This lesson can only begin to scratch the surface of what it takes to be culturally competent and work in the context of families. Person-Centered Counseling professionals are urged to continue their learning in these areas. People who invest in this type of knowledge are the first to admit that it takes work. However, they often find the effort pays off in their ability to connect with a variety of people in more meaningful ways. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

Working in the Family Context

Reflection Activity: Cultural Competency

Directions: Listen to each of the following voice clips. 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. Consider sharing and comparing your answers with your supervisor or coworkers. It can be helpful to see what others heard and the resources they identified.

1. If this person called you what (if anything) would you consider recommending in the following areas?
 - a. Education

- b. Support
- c. Skill-building

2. Do you hear any culturally specific issues in this scenario? If so, list what you thought the cultural issues were.

3. What resources are you aware of that might help this person or you in planning and next steps? If you are not aware of any, use the Internet to do some research and find one resource that might help you or the person calling in this situation.

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Narration:

One of the biggest challenges that a Person-Centered Counseling professional faces is a sense of how much there is to know. Effectively supporting people in ways that meet their unique needs and cultures can feel overwhelming. However, the skills and tools of person-centered discovery and planning make this easier. Understanding that the first role is to listen and open the door to a good discussion of the person's views is helpful. From that understanding, the right answers for each person will begin to appear. Please review the information on the page. When you are ready, go to the next page.

Text:

Balancing Expectations and Developing Resources

No one human being is expected to know everything. The role of a Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professional requires a willingness to work well with others. That includes having knowledge of a variety of issues and views. It also includes ongoing learning, sharing, and mentoring. A PCC professional should have a variety of resources to draw from. However, they will also be willing to simply ask around when they are unfamiliar with something. Work teams might also consider how they assign work. Professionals may develop areas of specialty based on their interests and strengths. Referral to culturally appropriate services can be helpful. It can

support the capacity of the whole organization, if people mentor each other and share learning.

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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. Diversity in our communities makes person-centered counseling approaches even more important. The Person-Centered Counseling Professional's ability to use open-ended discovery and processes is important. They will help ensure a more person-centered focus when there are differences between values, beliefs, and ways of communicating. Exploring relationships can be an important part of discovery. However, the professional must tread carefully and respectfully in these areas. Keeping the focus on a good quality of life from the view of the person seeking support will help.

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> Culture and diversity will influence every aspect of a person's life. Person-Centered Counseling (PCC) professionals must be skilled in

communicating and working with people in ways that help the core values be expressed in culturally relevant ways. This will require ongoing learning and effort.

<bullet> Relationships are a central part of people's lives. Relationships are a primary way people experience support in community. They are a critical piece to most people's sense of satisfaction with life. Therefore, discovery should include exploration of relationships as makes sense.

<bullet> Legal aspects of consent and privacy will influence the ability of the PCC professional to support choice, direction, and control. Be very careful to learn about rights in each situation. Be honest when you cannot support certain options but focus on what you can help with to improve the person's quality of life and support them in their hopes and goals.

<bullet> The skills and approaches a professional has cannot resolve every issues. They should have resources and make referrals for mediation, conflict-resolution, protection, advocacy (legal), and advocacy-support (informal) when needed.

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 describe the methods you use to identify important aspects of relationships and culture in person-centered discovery.

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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