



National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems

Transcript from a short video titled “Problem Solving During A Pandemic” with Kelly Lang for NCAPPS’ Pandemic Wisdom series

Kelly Lang received her undergraduate degree from The American University and worked in the insurance and human resources management industries. Kelly’s brain injury advocacy career began after she and her 3-year-old daughter were injured in a horrific car accident in 2001. Kelly has served on the Board of the Brain Injury Association of Virginia and is a member of the Brain Injury Association of America’s Brain Injury Council. She has published articles and spoken to university classes, support groups, and other professionals regarding her family’s experience with brain injury. She presented at the Interagency Task Force Conference in June 2018.

Hi, I'm Kelly Lang, and I'm here to talk about what person-centered planning means to me. Person-centered planning is an ongoing problem-solving process, used to help people with disabilities gain independence and control of their lives. They've been so used to people telling them what they should and should not be doing. This gives them the power to control their own lives, to know what goals they want to achieve, and then having the team help them to achieve those goals.

Person-centered planning has become essential, especially in this time of the pandemic. When the stay at home orders first came out in March, my daughter participates in a music therapy group. The music therapy, within a week, was allowed to convert to a telehealth session. She was able to meet with her therapists once a week – a safe environment. Not in person, but doing the next best thing meeting through a telehealth session and continuing all the work they've been doing.

They are also able to use telehealth for a social group she participates in. This was a little bit more difficult to get used to for her. It was difficult to seeing 15 different faces on the screen in front of her; some talking over each other and some using chat which was a distraction. However, with time, she was able to get used to it. The first few weeks she ended the call with a migraine headache. She was pretty much wiped out the rest of the day cognitively she could not do



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much else. But again with time and practice, she was able to participate fully in this group so that she would no longer have social isolation, which is, has been one of the worst parts of this pandemic for all of us whether we have a disability or not.

Another area where we use that personal-centered planning was when it came to wearing a mask. She did not like anything touching her face. She doesn't like anyone coming up to her face. So when it came time that we started talking about masks and going out into the community, she was very resistant. So we bought all different types of masks. All different types, shapes, sizes, and she found some that she liked. And we started slowly. We started with five minutes a day at home and worked up slowly. Yes, she had to be reminded, and yes, some days were more difficult than others. But eventually she's able to work up to wearing the mask for 60 minutes a day at home. Then we transferred that took her out into the community and started going to grocery stores. First 5-10 minutes were okay, and then she would start to hyperventilate. So we would leave, but we always made sure to end it on a positive note. And eventually, slowly she was able to work up to 60 minutes inside a grocery store or other types of stores without the hyperventilating. Was it fun? No. Quite honestly, most people don't enjoy wearing a mask. We don't choose to do it. We do it out of our own for our own safety and the safety of others. And she fully understands this and accepts this.

So, the telehealth industry has been vital for making keeping up her socialization and also so that helping her not be so isolated. Yes, she would much rather meet with people in person giving hugs or handshakes or pats on the back and laughing. This is the next best thing we have, and I am very, very grateful that we could work as a team to come up with a solution to help her achieve these goals for now.

Thank you so much.