



National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems

Finding the Balance: Person-Centered Supports that Honor Safety and Dignity of Risk

Summary of a webinar from December 17, 2019

Introduction

This webinar was about supporting people with disabilities, to have the dignity of risk, to make their own choices. Letting people with disabilities make their own choices can be scary for other people. But it allows people with disabilities to learn and grow. When people can make their own choices, they are truly free.

Dignity of Risk is so Important.

Dignity of Risk means that people need to be able to make their own choices. Even if there are risks involved. There are lots of ways to support people to make their own choices.

1. Understand that everyone is the expert of their own life.
2. Really listen to what the person wants. When you hear what someone wants, you can figure out ways to help them sort out the risks.
3. Giving people the time and space to make decisions.

Supporting Dignity of Risk

When someone makes a decision that is risky, you can support them by:

1. First, make sure that you understand the decision. Next, why the person is making it.
2. Give the person information, so that they can make an informed choice. Everyone brings expertise to the table.
3. Focus on the person's long-term vision, and not on fixing them. We must also avoid expecting them to do everything perfectly. Also know as being a perfectionist.
4. Consider how real the risks are, and how long the person will have to live with the decision. Lastly, how hard it will be to undo if they make a mistake?
5. Think about how to give a "soft yes" and provide the least restrictive support. In order to help the person in their decision.
6. Don't hold past mistakes against the person. We must empower the person to make more decisions.






Personal Stories

Nicole says, "Being overprotective as a parent or professional is not helpful. It can squeeze the life out of people's hopes and dreams, and it prevents us from becoming all that we can become."

Chester says, “If you're really listening to somebody, your concentrating on thinking about what they said, not what you think is important and right for people.”

Marian says, “It is about getting real and staying real and listen to people as partners, what do we need to do to move beyond our fear and apprehension, because people shouldn't have to keep waiting.”

The speakers on this webinar were:

	<p>John Raffaele is the Director of Educational Services at the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals. John has Master of Social Work Degree, and is a highly experienced professional adult educator, group worker and facilitator. John's education is from Yeshiva University in New York City and The State University of New York at New Paltz.</p>
	<p>Marian Frattarola-Saulino is the Co-Founder and CEO of Values Into Action (VIA). The VIA family of organizations includes the first Supports Brokerage in Pennsylvania and one of the original Support Coordination Agencies in New Jersey. She presents internationally on co-production as a fundamental right, based on experience from her current operational work. Marian is also a co-founder of The Alliance for Citizen Directed Supports.</p>
	<p>Michelle Murphy is a Staff Development Specialist with the Arc Mid-Hudson in Kingston, NY. She is a credentialed direct support professional (DSP) with 15 years of experience in various roles. Michelle currently oversees the NADSP E-Badge Academy at the Arc Mid-Hudson. Michelle is known for her vibrant personality, her passion for employee self-care, and empowering DSPs to be their best selves while providing quality supports.</p>
	<p>Nicole LeBlanc has 12 years of experience in disability policy field. Dignity of risk is her passion, and she has created a booklet on disability employment policy through a public policy internship. She currently works as the Person-Centered Advisory and Leadership Group (PAL) coordinator for the NCAPPS. Her Motto is “Control Your Own Destiny, or Someone Else Will.”</p>
	<p>Chester Finn is currently employed by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (NYS OPWDD). He has served three terms as National President for Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) and is also an advisor and former president for the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS).</p>