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National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems: Summary of Year Four Technical Assistance Activities

Introduction

The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) provides technical assistance to State agencies, Tribes, and Territories to advance person-centered thinking, planning, and practices that support people with disabilities and older adults with long-term service and support needs. NCAPPS launched in the spring of 2019 with a cohort of fifteen States. In 2021, a second cohort of nine States and one Territory was selected to receive 100 hours of technical assistance per year for two years; five of these States had also participated in Cohort 1.

In Year Four (the federal fiscal year that runs from October 2021 to September 2022), the second cohort Teams developed technical assistance goals and objectives with support from NCAPPS and national subject matter experts. In this brief, we describe the common themes among the Year Four activities and provide a concise summary of each Team's activities to enhance person-centered thinking, planning, and practice.

NCAPPS Year Four Technical Assistance Teams

Newly joined: Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Puerto Rico, Virginia

Continuing from Cohort 1: Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, North Dakota, Utah

Common Themes

In the fourth year of technical assistance, NCAPPS Teams focused on five primary areas: stakeholder engagement, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, staff competencies, definitions and operationalization of person-centered practice, and cross-system alignment.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was a major theme in Teams' technical assistance goals in Year Four. All ten Teams continued to develop and improve strategies for engaging with stakeholders. Delaware and Iowa have been participating in Asset Mapping processes to identify how they engage with stakeholders, and they are exploring opportunities to connect with more culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse stakeholders; for both States, the completion of the Asset Mapping process will result in the creation of stakeholder engagement plans to ensure sustainability. Through this technical assistance, NCAPPS and Collective Insight are updating the Toolkit for Asset Mapping to make it a more culturally competent resource and to better incorporate principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. North Dakota has been creating an internal stakeholder engagement toolkit that will serve as a companion to the NCAPPS resource Engaging People Who Receive Services: A Best Practice Guide; this toolkit will assist staff in putting the principles of stakeholder engagement into

practice in their day-to-day work. NCAPPS is also supporting the State to create training content on person-centered planning for both internal and external stakeholders. Utah has been developing a strategy to engage stakeholders in reviewing and providing feedback on a measurement protocol for person-centered outcomes.

Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

All ten Teams recognize the importance of understanding the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of stakeholders and how those backgrounds may influence stakeholders' views of person-centered practices. Through technical assistance, all Teams are exploring ways to enhance cultural and linguistic responsiveness in person-centered practices. Delaware has conducted a state environmental scan to understand the broader demographics of the state and the available supports and services that are targeted toward aging Delawareans and those with physical disabilities. Virginia is working to enhance equity and recovery leadership components using an Appreciative Inquiry approach. North Dakota continues to work with New American populations and tribal nations to better understand their perspectives on person-centeredness.

Staff Competencies and Workforce Development

Another common theme in Year Four technical assistance goals: developing a workforce that is skilled in person-centered practices. Iowa, Georgia, Kentucky, and North Dakota are using the NCAPPS resource Five Competency Domains for Staff Who Facilitate Person-Centered Planning to crosswalk current staff trainings with the desired person-centered competencies. This process will assist the States to understand the competencies staff are currently being trained on as well as to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. Utah is implementing a train-the-trainer program to ensure Independent Living Center staff are skilled in person-centered planning approaches for people with brain injury. Kentucky is developing core competencies that can and will be used agencywide for case management/service coordinator/resource facilitator positions.

Definitions and Operationalization of Person-Centered Practice

Many of the Teams have begun or continue to work toward developing and operationalizing standard definitions of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice. Iowa is developing a glossary of terms used by partner agencies to create a shared understanding of vocabulary and to support the alignment of stakeholder engagement efforts. North Dakota has finalized its person-centered definition and is now working to operationalize and disseminate it. Kentucky's person-centered standards are meant to operationalize person-centered responses to people who receive services and have been used to structure all of the State's technical assistance work this year.

Cross-System Alignment

Many Teams are focused on how to coordinate and collaborate across systems and ensure alignment with person-centered values and principles. Alaska is building a

Journey Map of current eligibility processes and identifying where there is misalignment with person-centered values and the agency's "Shared Vision." (The Journey Map is a visualization tool that will chart out the eligibility processes from start to finish to assist the Team in identifying areas for improvement.) Virginia is planning to conduct a Recovery Inventory, a survey of all recovery-related services and supports in Virginia, to further collaboration across system stakeholders. Utah is collaborating with its Vocational Rehabilitation agency and the State's Board of Education to align person-centered supports for transition age youth. Delaware and Iowa are working to enhance cross-system consistency through their No Wrong Door systems, which serve as "one-stop" coordinated entry points into the long-term service and support system for anyone seeking those services, regardless of age, income, or disability. Kentucky is determining how to use its core case management competencies across systems to give case managers a shared system of person-centered values and knowledge. And Colorado is working to expand its protection systems to people with a range of disabilities and support needs.

State Activities

Alaska *(New)*

Lead agency: Alaska Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)

Population: Physical disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, transition age youth, children

The Alaska Team pursued three goals in 2021, its first year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal was to define and reach agreement on key terms relevant to person-centered systems—to further a shared understanding and dialogue between SDS staff and leadership, providers, families, and people who receive services. Next, the Team began identifying available person-centered training resources to gain commitment from leadership to support and establish expectations of SDS staff at all levels to make use of such training and educational opportunities. Finally, the Team reviewed the extent to which current eligibility processes align with person-centered values and identified ways that such processes can be amended to better embody the agency's Shared Vision (developed by Alaskan stakeholders in 2016). The Team is also committed to ensuring meaningful access to services for the racially and culturally diverse population of Alaska, especially considering current limitations regarding cultural relevance and linguistic accessibility.

Colorado *(Continuing)*

Lead agency: Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

Population: Physical disabilities, brain injury, mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, older adults with long-term needs

The Colorado Team pursued three goals in its fourth year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal was to identify ways to expand opportunities for self-determination throughout the state beyond formal self-direction programs, including taking tangible steps to expand self-determination and adopt a supported decision-making (SDM) framework. This will allow Colorado to support choice and control more broadly by implementing a pilot and training activities. Technical assistance on this goal resulted in two national resources: How to Expand Supported Decision-Making and Increase Informed Choices and a Human Services Provider Agency Toolkit for Self-Determination. The Team developed its plan to implement a pilot of self-determination and SDM. It determined avenues for sharing self-determination and SDM materials, developed through previous activities, across populations and as broadly as possible. The Team also finalized training for expanding self-determination and using SDM across long-term services and supports (LTSS)

populations. Under its second goal, the Team explored opportunities to expand human rights and protections broadly to LTSS populations by determining avenues to expand human rights committees and ombudsmen programs across populations. Finally, the Team began a self-assessment process, using the NCAPPS Person-Centered Practices Self-Assessment, to create action plans to further existing goals and to determine next steps for strategic action plans.

Delaware *(New)*

Lead agency: Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD)

Population: Physical disabilities, older adults with long-term needs (No Wrong Door population)

The Delaware Team pursued two goals in 2021, its first year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal was to develop a strategic plan to address key needs around diversity, equity, and inclusion and further the capacity of DSAAPD to facilitate access to and delivery of culturally and linguistically competent, person-centered, equitable services. Second, the Team is identifying existing assets to support stakeholder engagement and methods to increase connection with culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse communities. The Team is also developing a stakeholder engagement plan, to further develop a shared understanding of person-centeredness with stakeholders at large, and is currently undertaking an Asset Mapping process to identify how current stakeholders are presently engaged and how the State can utilize existing assets to further their efforts around person-centered practices.

Georgia *(Continuing)*

Lead agency: Georgia Division of Aging Services (DAS) and Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission (BSITFC)

Population: Physical disabilities, brain injury, mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, transition age youth, older adults with long-term needs, children, spinal cord injury

The Georgia Team is pursuing five goals in its fourth year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal is to develop a process for gathering broad stakeholder input into the operational definition of "person-centered care." Second, the Team is developing a process to measure and evaluate the extent to which partners meet the operational definition of person-centered care. Third, the Team is establishing a systemwide training mechanism to ensure the competence of staff delivering person-centered care. Fourth, DAS is collaborating with BSITFC to develop a Resource Facilitation Program. Finally, the Team is creating a plan to expand consumer-directed/participant-directed services across multiple systems.

Iowa *(New)*

Lead agency: Department on Aging

Population: Older adults with long-term needs (No Wrong Door population)

The Iowa Team pursued four goals in 2021, its first year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal was to identify assets to support stakeholder engagement, align engagement efforts across agencies, and develop methods to increase connections with culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse communities. The Team completed an [Asset Mapping](#) process to identify how current stakeholders are presently engaged and how the State can utilize existing assets to further their efforts around person-centered practices. Building on the Asset Map, the Team is creating an Engagement Plan to identify strategies and best practices for engaging with stakeholders. Second, the Team will create a crosswalk of agency trainings on person-centered planning to understand what competencies staff are currently being trained on and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. Third, they have been exploring how to utilize National Core Indicators (NCI) data and additional person-centered outcome indicators to enhance the State's monitoring of person-centered plans. Finally, the Team has developed a logic model outlining the State's goals and efforts as they relate to person-centered practices and planning.

Kentucky *(Continuing)*

Lead agency: Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL)

Population: Physical disabilities, brain injury, intellectual and developmental disabilities, older adults with long-term needs

The Kentucky Team pursued two goals in its fourth year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal was to develop a comprehensive understanding of system navigation processes and related policies and develop recommendations for increasing alignment with the person-centered standards it developed in Year 3, streamlining processes and procedures, reducing duplication of effort, and linking programs and departments. The Team is also working on developing core competencies that will be used agencywide for case management/service coordinator/resource facilitator positions that are aligned to the person-centered standards and the goals outlined in the Journey Mapping process and strategizing how to implement the core competencies.

North Dakota *(Continuing)*

Lead agency: North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS)

Population: Physical disabilities, brain injury, mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, transition age youth, older adults with long-term needs, children

The North Dakota Team pursued three goals in its fourth year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal was to create a toolkit based on Engaging People Who Receive Services: A Best Practice Guide (developed in Year 3) and to establish trainings on the toolkit to engage culturally and linguistically diverse service user and family communities to inform systems change efforts. Along with the toolkit, the Team is in the process of planning for another person-centered practices summit to raise awareness about self-direction and generate buy-in across multiple stakeholder groups. The Team finalized an agencywide definition for person-centered thinking, planning, and practice and is in the process of implementing and operationalizing the definition across DHS. All DHS Divisions and Departments are in the process of completing the NCAPPS Person-Centered Practices Self-Assessment which will result in individualized action plans to increase person-centered practices for each division.

Puerto Rico *(New)*

Lead agency: Puerto Rico División de Servicios a las Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual (DSPDI)

Population: Mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities

The Puerto Rico Team pursued four goals in 2021, its first year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal is to promote culturally competent person-centered practice in the service delivery system by reviewing and updating their policies and procedures, along with their electronic planning software. In the coming year, the Team will develop training content to strengthen the applicability of person-centered principles in service delivery. The Team will develop a service plan monitoring process that includes a data collection strategy to demonstrate effectiveness. Finally, the Team will develop measures or indicators that demonstrate the presence of person-centered practices in employment goals.

Utah *(Continuing)*

Lead agency: Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD)

Population: Physical disabilities, brain injury, intellectual and developmental disabilities, transition age youth, older adults with long-term needs

The Utah Team pursued four goals in its fourth year of technical assistance. The Team's first goal was to continue enhancing person-centered practices in all areas of the system through stakeholder engagement and revision of planning standards and procedures to ensure that person-centered thinking and planning are translated into practice. The Team hosted a successful webinar workshop series that engaged families on the DSPD waitlist on how person-centered tools can be a resource while they are waiting for services. Alongside their stakeholders, DSPD has been developing a person-centered planning handbook for people in services and a measurement protocol for tracking person-centered outcomes. Second, DSPD and the Utah Brain

Injury Council (UBIC) are implementing a train-the-trainer model to promote person-centered practices in services for people with a brain injury in the State. They have identified three Utah Centers on Independent Living (UCILs) to train and are in the process of creating tip sheets for using person-centered tools specific to people with brain injury. Third, the Team is working to ensure that youth with disabilities will be meaningfully engaged in person-centered planning and that the youth's various service plans will be aligned through collaboration and coordination between the various agencies that support them. The Team has created a working document that describes each person or agency and their role and responsibilities in supporting youth to transition successfully to adult services or employment. Finally, the New Choices Waiver (NCW) team is revising and strengthening person-centered practices, policies, and procedures for older adults being supported through the Home and Community-Based Services NCW through increased stakeholder engagement, improved quality standards, and additional training for case managers and providers. They have established a workgroup of Case Management Agencies to identify areas of improvement and provide insight into more person-centered approaches.

Virginia *(New)*

Lead agency: Office of Recovery Services (ORS), Department of Behavioral Health Developmental Services (DBHDS)

Population: Mental health, substance use disorders

The Virginia Team focused on one major goal in its first year of technical assistance: to partner with stakeholders to create, disseminate, and generate buy-in for a Recovery SOAR change framework—a strengths-based framework that focuses on strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results—beginning with a depiction of how current stakeholder groups and initiatives are aligned to improve the State's behavioral health system. The Team met with the Virginia Recovery Initiative (VRI) and Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS) network stakeholder groups to understand key components of Appreciative Inquiry, Equity and Recovery to create level setting to begin the work of the developing the Recovery SOAR change framework.

About NCAPPS

The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) is an initiative from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to help States, Tribes, and Territories implement person-centered practices. It is administered by the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) and overseen by a group of national experts with lived experience (people with personal, first-hand experience of using long-term services and supports).

NCAPPS partners with a host of national associations to deliver knowledgeable and targeted technical assistance.

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