



**Options Counseling Across the Long Term Services  
and Supports Spectrum  
For Program Planners and Managers  
February 2011**

# Technical Assistance Exchange

## Introductions



### Technical Assistance Resources

- Weekly Electronic Newsletters
- Websites
- Resource Materials
- Examples from the Field
- Grantee Surveys

### Building a Grantee Community

- Teleconferences/Webinars
- Trainings
- National Meetings
- Online Forum

# Learning Objectives

- Learn about how options counseling fits into current public policy context.
- Explore and discuss design and implementation issues related to providing options counseling.
- Reflect on your own organizational capacity to implement options counseling in different contexts, through a variety of programs, integrated with a variety of core functions.
- Learn about some strategies and approaches other states have used to provide options counseling, train staff, and track outcomes.

# Foundations of Options Counseling

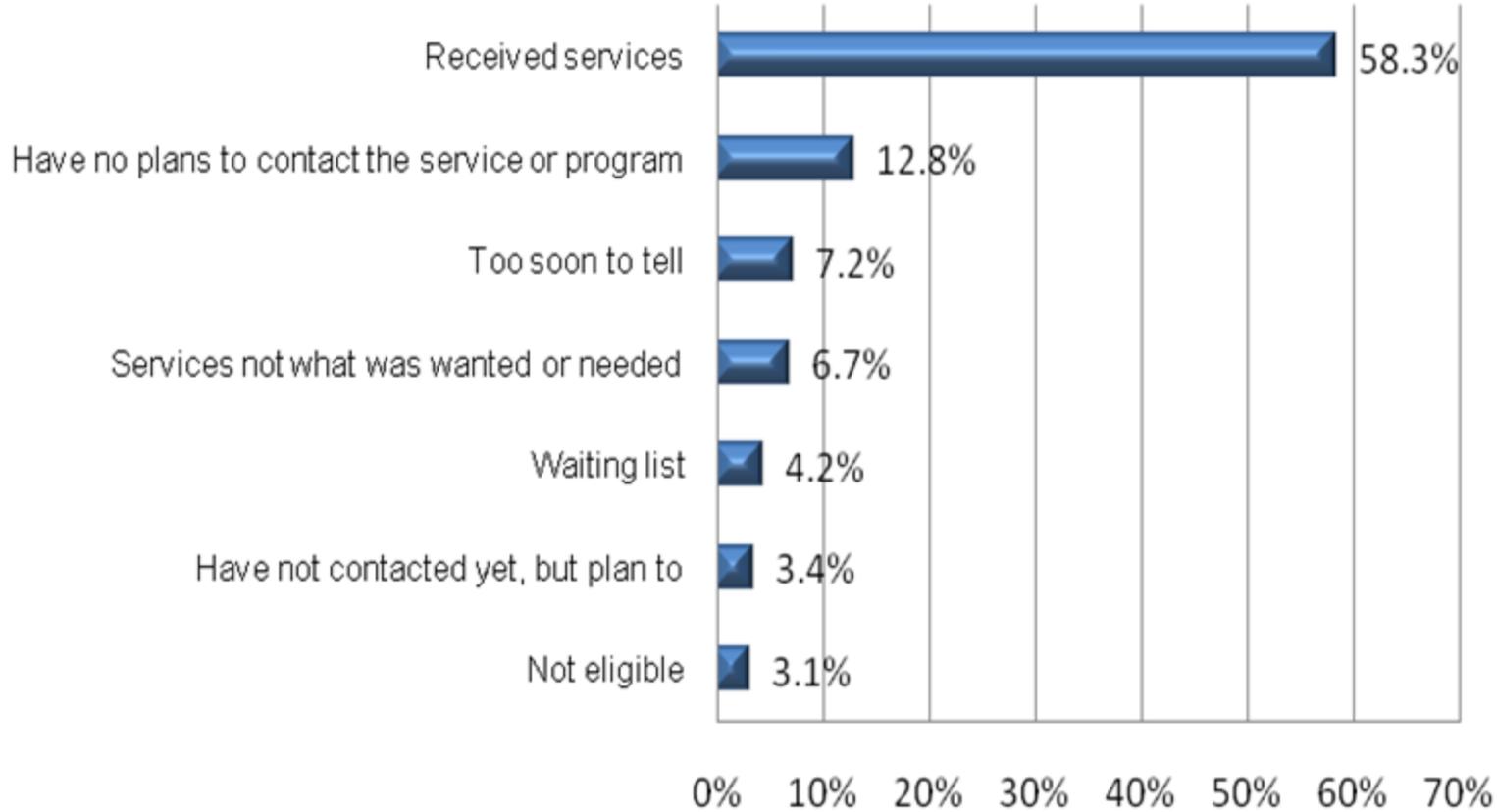
## Value of Options Counseling

- Families need *individualized* support *making decisions* about long-term services and supports and *following through* on their decisions
- Lots of information is available on-line and from different I&R providers, but it can be complex, contradictory, and confusing
- Institutional placements often occur without consideration of available community-based options
- Few people plan ahead for long term support needs

# Results from Wisconsin Evaluation

**“What happened? What didn’t?” 42% resulted in other than “service”**

## What was the result of the referral?



# Who Should be Offered Options Counseling?

## *Small Group Discussion*

**Have you ever sought out options counseling for yourself, a family member or a friend?**

**Think about what your experience – what was it like trying to access this assistance?**

# Public Policy Context

## National Trends Are Moving:

- **Toward Single-Entry-Point/No Wrong Door Systems**
  - Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- **Toward Participant-Direction**
  - Cash and Counseling
  - Veteran Directed HCBS
  - CLASS Act
- **Toward More Attention to Transitions**
  - Money Follows the Person Demonstration
  - Evidence-Based Care Transitions

# Public Policy Context

## AoA's National Options Counseling Standards Development 2010-2012

- Group of states, experts, and stakeholders contributing through regular meetings
- Identify how options counseling intersects with all types of core functions
- Establishing core competencies for options counselors
- Developing a comprehensive set of minimum national standards for options counseling.

# Foundations of Options Counseling

## Defining Options Counseling

Options Counseling is an interactive decision-support process whereby individuals, family members, caregivers, and /or significant others are supported in their deliberations to make informed long-term support choices in the context of the individual's preferences, strengths, needed services, values, and individual circumstances.



# Foundations of Options Counseling

## AoA Vision for Options Counseling 2011

- The Options Counseling process facilitates person-centered, streamlined access to supports and includes the following components at the direction of the individual:
  - gathering information about his or her current situation;
  - providing information on and educating about long term support options;
  - weighing pros/cons and potential implications of various options;
  - facilitating enrollment in participant directed services;
  - assisting with enrollment in publicly funded services;
  - assisting in connecting to privately purchased and/or informal supports;
  - collaborating to develop a long term support plan; and
  - following-up with the individual.
- Individuals/families preferably receive Options Counseling from one counselor over time but it may be collaboratively provided by more than one person or agency.

# Design Considerations

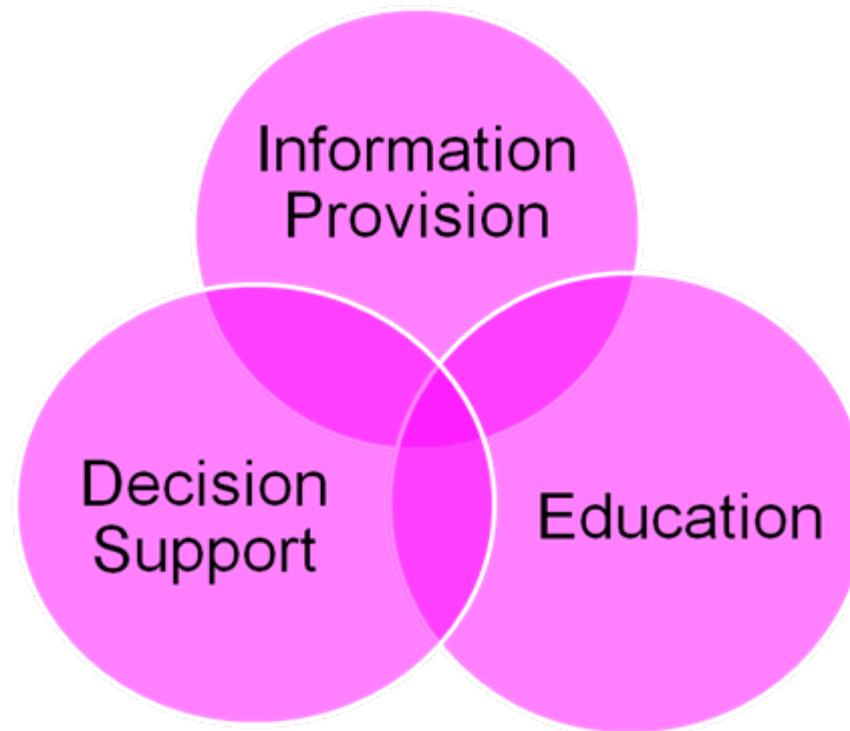
## Focus of Today's Discussion

- What is involved in options counseling?
- Who should be offered options counseling?
- What should trigger options counseling?
- Who will provide it?

# What is Options Counseling?

## Decision Support

**Information + Education + Personal Experience = Knowledge**



# What is Involved in Options Counseling?

## Common elements in state options counseling protocols

- Assessing individual/ family needs
- Connecting individuals with service providers and empowering them to make connections
- Helping individuals weigh pros and cons in deciding course of action (decision support)
- Counseling with individual and support network throughout process

Source: From 2008 survey of Georgia, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Indiana

# What is Involved in Options Counseling?

## State Example: Wisconsin Reporting Definitions

**Provided Information & Assistance** includes: listening to the inquirer, assessing his or her needs, helping the inquirer to connect with service providers or gain information to meet the identified needs (e.g., provided assistance locating transportation services, chore services, employment and training options, provided linkages to elder abuse and adults at risk system, referred for benefit counseling

**Provided Options Counseling** - Options counseling is an interactive decision support process whereby consumers are assisted to evaluate and weigh their long-term care service options (e.g., assistance evaluating housing options, assistance sorting through home care and personal care options, helping a person to decide to move or stay in their current residence

Source: Wisconsin ADRC Activity Reporting Available at  
<http://dhs.wi.gov/ltcare/pdf/ADRCActivityReportingDefinitions.pdf>

# What is Involved in Options Counseling?

## State Example: Wisconsin Reporting Definitions cont.

**Provided Short-Term Service Coordination** - ADRC staff member served as the “coordinator” of services and the main contact person on behalf of an individual for agencies and others providing services that the individual has chosen. The complexity, diversity and/or quantity of needs and providers necessitate coordination that the individual can not perform and there is no one else who can do so.

**Provided Enrollment Consultation** - ADRC assisted an individual who is found eligible for publicly funded long-term care in selecting and enrolling in a publicly funded long-term care program (e.g., Family Care, Partnership, IRIS).

Source: Wisconsin ADRC Activity Reporting Available at  
<http://dhs.wi.gov/ltcare/pdf/ADRCActivityReportingDefinitions.pdf>

# What is Involved in Options Counseling?

## Six Core Competencies of Options Counseling

1. **Determining the need for OC**
2. **Assessing needs, values and preferences**
3. **Understanding and educating about public and private sector resources**
4. **Facilitating self-direction / determination**
5. **Encouraging future orientation**
6. **Following-up**

  
**ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**

# Who Should be Offered Options Counseling?

## Family Circumstances/Situations

- Individuals with immediate or short-term service needs
- Individuals thinking about long-term service options
- Individuals considering a move
- Individuals in transition from one care setting to another
- Family caregiver needing help to continue providing care
- Long distance caregivers with concerns about the increased frailty or care needs of a family member
- Families with a child with a disability is transitioning from a school-based system to the adult service system
- Individuals who want to revise their existing long-term service plan (public or privately funded)

# What Should Trigger Options Counseling?

## *Individual Activity and Discussion*

**Draw a simple map of the service flow in your organization.**

- ◆ **What are the ways that people first come into contact with your organization?**
- ◆ **What types of functions and services might they be offered?**
- ◆ **At what points are people filtered out (service ends) and filtered in (additional services provided)?**

# What Should Trigger Options Counseling?

## Possible Service Flow Triggers

- Request for I&R/A
- Request for assistance making decisions
- Request for SHIP counseling
- Situation referred to Adult Protective Services
- Hospital discharge
- During an assessment of need
- Application started for publicly funded benefits
- Application submitted, waiting for determination
- During service planning and/or individual budgeting
- After application is denied
- After admission to an institution
- During transition from institution

# What Should Trigger Options Counseling?

## *Quick Poll*

**Raise your hand if your state has formal legislation, pre-admission screening or other formal way to guarantee options counseling is available to consumers.**

**Raise your hand if your organization provides options counseling to individuals who are NOT eligible for public programs?**

**Raise your hand if you think options counseling might support institutional transition/Money Follows the Person initiatives?**

**Raise your hand if you think options counseling might help individuals succeed in participant-directed programs?**

# Who Provides Options Counseling?

## Four Different Staffing Structures to Consider

1. I&R/A specialists/front-line staff trained to provide OC to individuals who needs it
2. Staff providing HCBS waiver case management or support brokerage provide OC to individuals considering options before and after enrollment into program
3. Specialized staff
  - Dedicated options counselors do nothing else, or possibly perform other limited functions like application assistance, LOC assessment, eligibility determination
  - Transition coaches, transition coordinators, independent living skills counselors provide OC
4. All staff: all functions are provided by staff with options counseling skills, using the options counseling approach

# Who Provides Options Counseling?

## *Small Group Discussion*

**Considering the consumer's experience, what are the advantages and disadvantages of these four options?  
Are there other options to consider?**

# Tracking and Evaluation

## Possible Measures

### Staff level

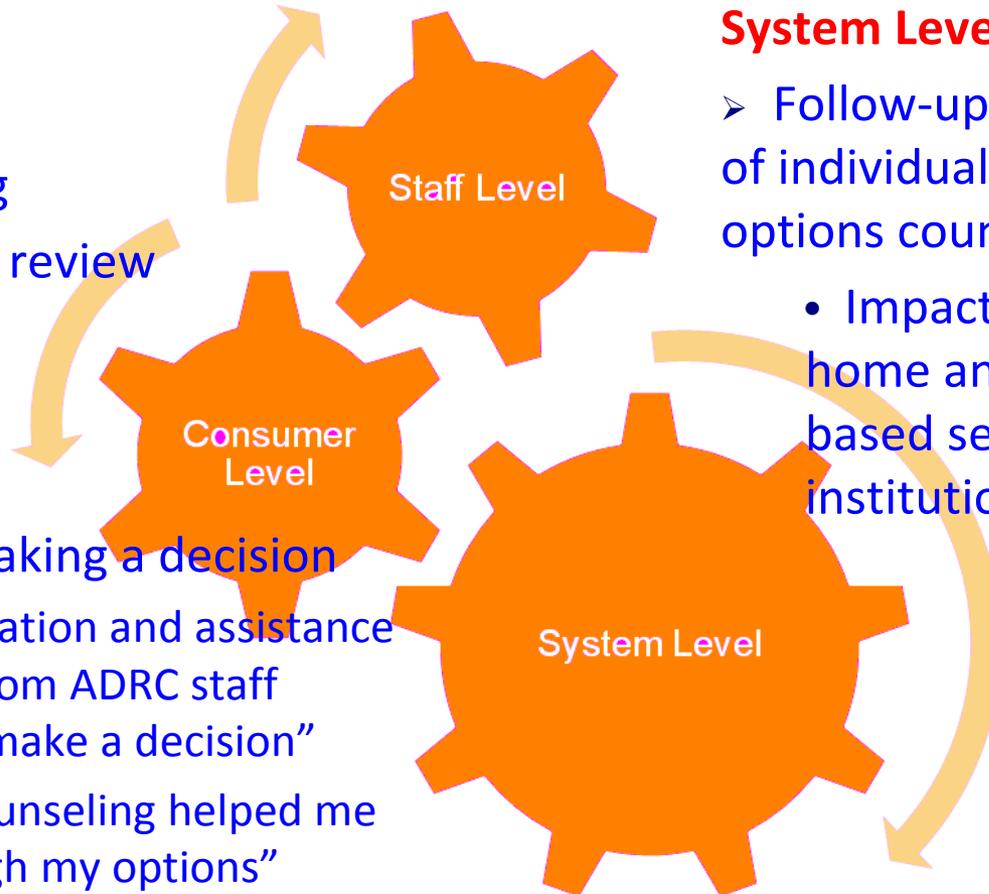
- Call listening
- Secret Shopping
- Documentation review
- Peer Review

### Consumer Level

- Assistance in making a decision
  - “The information and assistance I received from ADRC staff helped me make a decision”
  - “Options counseling helped me think through my options”

### System Level

- Follow-up on the outcomes of individuals who received options counseling
  - Impact on the use of home and community based services vs. institutional services



# Wrap-Up

## Questions and Discussion

**Any questions?**

**What do you need to think more about?**