



# North Carolina

## *Federal Vision for Person Centered Counseling*

The ACL/CMS/VHA vision is that each state will have a single statewide NWD System to LTSS which provides Person Centered Counseling (PCC) for all populations and all payers. There is an expectation that partnerships are forged with all formal disability systems in the state, including those serving people with I/DD. Person Centered Counseling (PCC) is the NWD System term for the activity of person centered planning which is an approach when working with individuals that is now being required in the LTSS System under multiple Medicaid regulations, including the Person-Centered Planning provisions in the recently issued Home and Community Based (HCBS) “Settings Rule.”<sup>1</sup> The HCBS Rule establishes clear expectations for person centered planning and recognizes it as foundational for the delivery of effective HCBS. The HCBS Rule is the result of several years of work within CMS, other agencies across the DHHS (including ACL), and multiple stakeholder groups across the country through the federal public rule making process. As such, it is a highly vetted statement on Person Centered Planning. This brief highlights **North Carolina’s promising practice to promote Person Centered Thinking® training throughout the long term services and supports (LTSS) system with a particular emphasis on the I/DD service system and the NWD Person Centered Counseling Program.**

## *North Carolina’s Successful NWD Promising Practice*

### **History**

Over many years, North Carolina has built a sustainable training network in person centered practices. In the early 1990’s, the State began training state developmental disability staff in person centered planning and practices (Essential Lifestyle Planning, Personal Futures Planning and Gentle Teaching)\*\*. In 1994, the state began training state staff (at the time) to become certified trainers in what was then known as Essential Lifestyle Planning. In 1999, the state funded the North Carolina Person Centered Practices Initiative. In 2006, the state began requiring person centered thinking training for large sectors of staff working in developmental disability and/or behavioral health services. Today there remains across the state, a strong, organized and active network of trainers and expertise in providing person centered practices across all disability sectors.

### **Person Centered Thinking and Planning in the I/DD Service System**

Like many states, North Carolina rules establish that all individuals with an I/DD diagnosis receiving services through the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SA) have a person centered plan. Although the state does not require “person centered planning” training, they do

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/01/16/2014-00487/medicaid-program-state-plan-home-and-community-based-services-5-year-period-for-waivers-provider>

## Acronyms

- ADRC = Aging and Disability Resource Center
- LTSS = Long Term Services and Supports
- NWD = No Wrong Door
- MH/DD/SA = Mental Health/Developmental Disability/Substance Addiction Services
- PCT = Person Centered Thinking

## Resources

**Click the links below for key resources on North Carolina's Promising Practices**

- ▶ [NC Community Resource Connections](#)
- ▶ [UNC Center for Aging and Research Educational Studies \(CARES\)](#)
- ▶ [The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices](#)
- ▶ [Developmental Disabilities Training Institute](#)
- ▶ [Gentle Teaching](#)

require twelve hours of “person centered thinking” training for anyone providing direct services under specific service definitions; and “plan writing” training is additionally required for anyone who has responsibility for writing the person centered plan. The simple difference between the person centered thinking training and person centered planning training is, person centered thinking lays the foundation for using the skills and tools within a planning process. Person centered planning training typically teaches participants how to facilitate and develop and actual plan.

When North Carolina first began requiring person centered thinking training in the MH/DD/SAS arena, the requirement was for a very specific model of training, “Person Centered Thinking”© (a 12-hour model developed by The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices; “the Learning Community”). Over time however, the state recognized there were other models and training modalities that could also help the state meet its need in training people around person centered services. The requirement now for para-professionals and professionals working in certain I/DD services is linked to specific service definitions; and that requirement is:

- ▶ Twelve hours of Person Centered Thinking training©
  - to be achieved by attending a 12-hour Learning Community version led by a certified trainer; the people they may be supporting: I/DD, behavioral health; aging; children’s mental health, end-of-life, etc.
  - Or, the 12-hour requirement may be achieved by participating in a previously-approved-by-the-state, older, 6-hour model of PCT, along with an additional 6 hours of training that meet MH/DD/SA mandated course requirements.

### PCP in the NWD System: Training for Options Counselors

Through the Jordan Institute for Families and the Center for Aging and Research Educational Studies (CARES) at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (UNC), the state has developed a multi-module on-line training that is required to certify NWD personnel as Options Counselors. All Community Resource Connections, (NC’s term for its ADRCs) are required to have at least one certified Options Counselor. The on-line training includes several modules devoted to learning about person centered practices and planning, in addition to covering topics specific to intellectual and developmental disabilities. Furthermore, all Options Counselors are required to participate in the 12-hour Learning Community version of person centered thinking training, conducted by a certified trainer.

### Areas of Intersection

Although the training initiatives above were developed separately, as the vision for No Wrong Door (NWD) is implemented in North Carolina expectations for implementing person centered practices may continue to cross all LTSS sectors. Below are a few emerging areas of intersection:

- ▶ **Access to Certified Trainers/Trainings** Over 20 certified PCT trainers are providing training to both employees in the MH/DD/SA sector as well as Options Counselors. Many of those trainers also have multiple certifications including other best practices and evidence based models of person

centered planning and practices such as Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP), Gentle Teaching, Motivational Interviewing, PATH, Respecting Choices Advance Care Planning, etc. There are six certified Learning Community mentor-trainers in state who are credentialed to train new trainers and offer an annual sanctioned trainers' update as required to maintain certification. Most certified trainers in North Carolina work for a provider-of-services organization. Some of those organization offer training not only to their employees, but others as well (sometimes for a fee). Statewide, the Developmental Disabilities Training Institute and the North Carolina Council of Community Programs routinely provide person centered thinking training to anyone working in LTSS.

- ▶ **Representation on Advisory Boards** Two of North Carolina's Community Resource Connections have engaged I/DD representation, including families and self-advocates through in advisory capacity.
- ▶ **Access to Training and Expertise Across All Populations** Regarding anyone who may request LTSS, the state is well poised to meet that need. Within the network of PCT mentors and trainers, there is expertise in training and supporting people across the disability services sector, including families, people with I/DD, behavioral health diagnoses, brain injury, aging and/or dementia, critical, chronic and life-ending illness, children and families, people with physical disabilities, people with dual and triple diagnoses, etc.
- ▶ **Person Centered Counseling** Given the current structure of services in the I/DD system, it is questionable whether a NWD Options Counselor (NC's title for individuals providing PCC) would be the person developing a mandated I/DD person centered plan. However, it is very possible that as part of person centered counseling follow up, the Options Counselor could be involved in an I/DD team meeting and/or could be an identified member of the planning team. Having PCP embedded across service settings (NWD front door functions of PCC and eligibility and public LTSS service programs) will help facilitate a seamless person centered process for individuals seeking support.

### **Identifying No Wrong Door Promising Practices**

No Wrong Door (NWD) Promising Practices are intended to highlight successful state programs providing a model from which NWD Systems can gather strategies and innovations that can augment their own work. A promising practice may be a research or evaluation project, policy analysis, data assessment, outreach initiative, or awareness effort. While Promising Practices are unique to each program, they do offer replicable components for diverse settings and share many common characteristics including the capacity to reach the population of focus, address the aspirations of individuals, and drive quality and impact methodology and measurement.