

THE BEST of BOTH VOICES

Person Centred Thinking
and Advocacy

Julie Lunt and Jonathon Bassett



Acknowledgements

Julie and Jonathon would like to thank Julie Bray, Robert Graham, Phil Madden (for original idea and title), Jill Hart-Bensen, Helen Sanderson and members of the HFT steering group for their support, advice and encouragement in writing this booklet.

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The materials on Person Centered Thinking and Essential Lifestyle Planning were developed by The Learning Community for Person Centred Practices and are used with permission.

Julie Lunt is a training and development consultant with the development agency Helen Sanderson Associates. Much of her work is about person centred planning and thinking. She says, "I have been involved in advocacy for 13 years, speaking up for people and supporting self advocates to speak for themselves. I am using the approaches we have chosen in this book more and more in all aspects of my work. They are so effective in helping us to understand the people we support, so that they can get the lives they want. I wish I had known about them when I first became involved in advocacy. The approaches have also helped me think about my own dreams and aspirations which led me to becoming a full time consultant".

Jonathon Bassett is a trainer for the North West Listen to Me Group. He presents at international and national conferences, facilitates design days, and teaches person centred awareness and person centred thinking. Jonathon says, "The person centred planning helped my Mum and Nan who were worried about me travelling on the train. After my person centred planning review we looked at what was working and not working and we talked it over. Now they are OK about it. I also got my walking boots".

Introduction

In this booklet the approaches are used to help advocates to think about people in a person centred way. They are:

1. Involving the right people

Relationship circle

2. Learning together

What your partner is telling you and others

Dreaming

Important to and important for

3. Involving your partner

A decision making agreement

Involving people in their community

4. Making it happen

What's working and what's not working

The doughnut

These approaches can be used with anyone. People do not need to be able to use words to communicate

In this book Julie and Jonathon have used examples from their own lives to demonstrate the eight person centred tools, in four areas, in a clear and easy to use format. It will enable advocates to:

- Find out about their partner.
- Tell others about their partner.
- Make sure that things happen for their partner.

Advocates will find it useful to use them in their own lives to understand how they work with their advocacy partners.

Advocates work in partnership with someone by

- Putting the person at the centre.
- Listening and learning about what they want from their lives.
- Thinking about them.
- Doing things the way that they want at home and to help them be part of their community.
- Working with family, friends and professionals to make changes happen.

Advocates already work in a person centred way by

- Listening to their partner and making sure that other people pay attention to what they want to happen in their lives.
- Supporting them to speak for themselves.

- Making sure they are heard.
- Speaking up for them.
- Helping them to make choices.
- Ensuring they have information to make choices.
- Being independent from services.
- Getting the services they need.

The approaches can be used to make a plan based on the important things in someone's life - what is important to them, what they want from life, and how they can achieve it. Then everyone who knows them works towards making those things happen. This is called 'person centred planning'.

The government White Paper 'Valuing People' says that "all people with learning disabilities who want a person centred plan should have one".

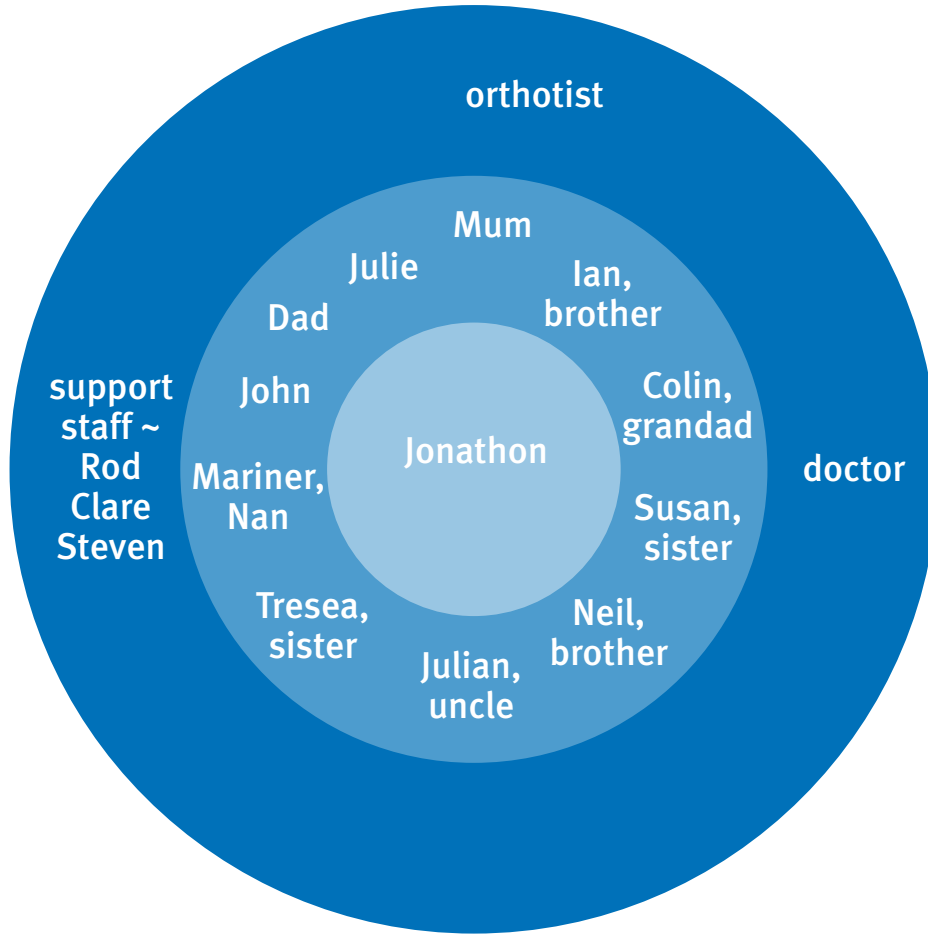
1. Involving the right people



Relationship circle

Advocates need to listen to their partner and other people who know them to find out who is important in their lives. A good way to do this is to draw a relationship circle. The circle will give a picture of how close the people are to the person.

Relationship circle



As you get to know who the important people are, write or use graphics to record their names in the circle. The closer they are to the person the more important they are. If you are asking other people who know and love the person, then ask several people to get full picture. For example, a day centre supporter may not know about Auntie Molly, who has known Jayne since she was a baby, who frequently visits at home and always makes her laugh. Auntie Molly could easily get left out.

The advocate can use this circle to:

- Learn who is important to their partner.
- Find out more about their partner by asking the right people.
- Tell others which people should be at meetings about their partner.
- See if there are any important issues around relationships.
- Identify which relationships can be strengthened or supported.

2. Learning together



What your partner is telling you and others



Listening to your partner is the first stage in being person centred.

Our behaviour is a very powerful way of communicating how we feel. It can be more powerful than what we say as we often guard the words we use but what we do is more instinctive.

The advocate may ask people who know and love the person what they do in certain situations and what they think it means. She should ask several people to check out all the possible meanings. It may take some time to find the right meanings. They may write several possibilities on the chart (see communication chart below) before they are sure which is the right meaning.



The advocate will need to work closely with the people who know and love the person to build an accurate picture of their partner.

Communication chart

When this is happening	Jonathon does this	We think it means	And we should do this
Jonathon is reading.	Sticks out his tongue.	He is concentrating.	Leave him alone.
When this is happening	Julie does this	We think it means	And we should do this
Sitting quietly.	Bites the inside of her mouth.	She is worried about something.	Ask if she is ok but do not push it if she says she is fine.

The best way to complete the communication chart is to fill in the second column first. This is the behaviour which may tell you something important about the person. They may not be consciously aware of trying to tell you something. In the first column write down the situations when the person shows this behaviour.

In the third column write down all the possible meanings of the behaviour by asking the people who know the person well. In the fourth column write down the best ways of supporting the person when they show this behaviour, again asking people who know them well.

It may quickly become clear what the behaviour means and what should be done to support the person or it may take a little while to get to the right answer for someone. When you think you have it right, complete a new chart which can be made available to everyone who spends time with the person.

The advocate can use the communication chart to:

- Understand more clearly what their partner is saying through their actions.
- Make sure others understand.
- Provide a brief easy to understand guide to what someone may be saying through their actions.

Dreaming

Most of us have dreams about how we would like our lives to be in the future. Some people take active steps to work towards these dreams and have firm beliefs that one day they will achieve them. For others achieving the dream is not so important but they enjoy thinking about it. We may keep our dreams to ourselves or tell people we love or trust about them.

Dreams are important. They may give us drive and something to aim for. Having a dream as a possibility gives us part of our reason for living.



Listening carefully to and asking questions about a person's dream will enable the advocate to understand the importance of a dream. It may not be achieving the dream that is the only goal for their partner. It may be important to achieve part of it, or something like it.

Jonathon dreams about commanding a World War 2 submarine from watching war films and games. He laughed when asked if he thought it would happen but said he would like to be on a submarine. So his Grandad said he would take him to Portsmouth to see the naval ships. He would love to go and see Lord Nelson's ship, as he collects models and books about the military vehicles.



It is Julie's dream to live in an eco-house. A home which uses materials that do not use up world resources or damage the environment. She cannot do this now, but she usually chooses to buy products which reduce harm to the environment, recycles products, and is careful in the amount of energy she uses. Sometimes eco friendly products are too expensive or she prefers something else. She feels it is ok to do this now and again.

The advocate can:

- Help their partner to express their dreams and work towards them or the parts of the dream that are important.
- Ensure others do not diminish the importance of their partner's dream or their ability in achieving it.

Important to and important for

What's important to someone?

These are the things which make us happy and fulfilled.
What matters in how we live our life is very individual.

For Jonathon, this is being in touch with his family and friends every week and seeing his grandparents most weekends. He goes out with them and particularly likes to go for a meal. Going walking in the Lake District is also important. Every year they go to Castleton to see the lights. He says, "If these things didn't happen I would NOT be very happy. I like being around my Nan and going up to mum in Wales".





It is 'important to' Julie to have enough time to get ready in the morning. This means getting up an hour before she needs to leave for work. If she is leaving early it is important that all her clothes are laid out the night before so she can put them on straight away, also her work bags are packed and in the car. If she doesn't have enough time in the mornings to get ready she becomes stressed and often forgets things. This can upset her for the rest of the day.

These are the things which are 'important to' us. It doesn't matter what other people think about it.

What's important for someone?



There are other things in all of our lives which need to be there to keep us healthy or safe. We need also need support from the people around us who may advise us about looking after our selves. These are 'important for' us.

It is important for Jonathon to take his medicine for acne every night before bed. He says, "If I didn't take it I would be all spotty again and that is not nice".

It is important for Julie to have friends and family around when she is having a bad time. She says, “It is important that my friends and family listen; they don’t have to advise me. I just need to know they understand”.

We need a balance between what is ‘important to’ us and what is ‘important for’ us.

We should only provide the ‘important for’ things in a way which makes sense according to that ‘important to’.

Jonathon says, “I love to buy computer games but it is important for me to wait until they come down in price so I can afford them. The staff support me with this by helping me manage my money”.

In this way the staff are paying attention to what is ‘important to’ him which is buying computer games. They believe that Jonathon could get into debt if he bought as many games as he would like. Therefore it is ‘important for’ him that they advise and support him to understand how much money he has and how he can save to buy the



games. They know that buying games is more important to him than buying other things.



Julie says, “Chocolate is ‘important to’ me as I enjoy eating it. It is also ‘important to’ to me look good in my clothes. If I put on too much weight my clothes don’t fit and I feel unhappy. It is ‘important for’ me to watch how much chocolate I eat. I balance my love of chocolate and not getting too fat by eating chocolate only a couple of times a week. When I do I buy my favourite which is Green and Blacks Almond bar”. Julie has recognised that to be happy and healthy she needs to pay attention to what is ‘important to’ and ‘important for’ her. She has made a personal decision to limit how much chocolate she eats but does not cut it out altogether. In choosing to eat her favourite bar she makes doing something that is ‘important to’ her even more special.

How to find out

Advocates should listen to their partner or others who know them well to find out what is important to them. They may have a person centred plan they want to show. The

advocate may get the best answers by chatting to them in everyday conversations rather than asking the question “What is important to you?”. Advocates need to avoid questions that:

- Need only a yes or no answer, e.g. Do you like bowling?
- Have a built in answer, e.g. Wouldn't you like to live in a new house?



Possible questions to ask might be:

- What makes a really good day for you?
- What makes you laugh?
- What makes you angry?
- If you could have a magic wand to make a wish come true what would it be?
- What do you like doing on holiday or your birthday?
- What would the best support be like for you?
- If your house was burning down what would you save?

From what advocates have learned they can:

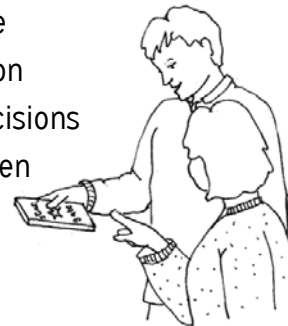
- Support their partner to make sure that decisions are made about them because people believe that it is 'important FOR' them and reflects what is 'important TO' them.
- Make sure that plans for their partner's future comes from what is 'important to' them.
- Think through a situation before deciding what should happen next.
- Make sure actions are put in place to change their partner's lifestyle, if their existing lifestyle does not reflect what is 'important to' them.

3. Involving your partner



A decision making agreement

We usually know what is best for us and have the right to make our own decisions. Sometimes we all look for help in making decisions. It is important for people to have as much control as possible in their own life. A decision making agreement is a good way of writing down decisions that are important to a person and what should happen when making those decisions.



Decision making agreement

Important decisions Jonathon's life	How I must be involved	Who makes the final decision
Paying for my Stargate DVDs.	Staff and Nan tell me how I can save up for them and put money away regularly for me. They need to tell me how much I can afford.	Me.
Important decisions Julie's life	How I must be involved	Who makes the final decision
Planning a holiday with my parents and my brother's family.	I need to be kept up-to- date about how the plans are going and when I need to send the payment for the holiday.	My family decide where to go and some possible dates. I decide when it is to fit around my work.



The decision making agreement can make it clear:

- When the person can make their own decisions.
- Who should support them if they need help.

- Who should help with which decisions.
- Anybody who may make decisions on the person's behalf.
- How they should continue to involve you in those decisions.

The advocate can use the decision making agreement:

- When there are risks that their partner is not involved in making their own decisions.
- To help their partner think about decisions and who should be involved.

Involving people in their community

Each of us has a variety of roles within our own communities which say who we are, and make us feel included, important or needed.





People who use services are often excluded from having active roles in their communities. The advocate can support their partner to explore 'who they are' and help others to find ways of building valued roles for them in their community.

Chart 4

The things that interest Jonathon are	Places where he could do these things are	Roles he could have are
Ballroom, Latin and American line dancing.	Dance club, at home with Nan, Blackpool Ballroom, parties, evening class.	Learner, exam taker, winner of medals, partner, friend, cook at Christmas party, organiser, teacher.
The things that interest Julie are	Places where she could do these things are	Roles she could have are
Gardening.	At home, allotment, gardening club, evening class.	Worker, advisor, committee member, seed collector, offering plants, minute taker.

The advocate would need to think about:

- What would need to happen to enable a person to achieve some of these roles?
- What support would they need from others and would they need any particular equipment?

The advocate can use Chart 4 to:

- Explore creative opportunities for their partner to be more involved in their community.
- Make sure others take action to support their partner to have valued roles in their community.

4. Making it Happen



What's working and what's not working

Writing down what is working and not working in someone's life helps everyone to understand more clearly what needs to change. It also makes sure that the things that are going well continue to happen.

In meetings about a person, the 'what's working/what's not working sheet' is put on a wall. Every one writes in their

own section. They should not write in others sections. This allows everyone to see that something could be working very well for a member of staff or family member but it is not working for the person.

If the person is not able to say or write for themselves then the others at the meeting may write for them by making their 'best guesses'. This means putting themselves in the person's shoes and writing down what they truly believe the person would say. It must not be giving their own view as if it was in the person's words.

Working/not working

What's working (Jonathon's perspective)	What's not working
Stargate DVDs. Dancing.	Not seeing his mum as often as I would like.
What's working (Support staff's perspective)	What's not working
Jonathon takes his medicine when reminded.	Jonathon not cleaning his room.

What's working
(Julie's perspective)

I have a job that I love and get the chance to meet lots of people.

What's not working

I often have to travel long distances as part of my work as a trainer.

What's working
(Support staff's perspective)

Julie rings Alec and Ellen, her son and daughter when she wants to know how they are. She doesn't hassle them about ringing home.

What's not working

Julie's parents don't see her very often because she is always busy.



Jonathon is not very fond of cleaning his room but when he has done it, he is pleased with the result. He doesn't mind the staff reminding him to do it as long as they do not nag. The staff agreed to remind him when it gets to a certain state.

Julie now tries to pop in and see her Mum and Dad if she is working in Wales.

She has decided to move to a small town which nearer to the area where she does a lot of training. She will also be much nearer to Ellen her daughter.



The advocate can use what's working and not working to:

- Get a picture of how things are right now.
- Understand what needs to change for their partner.
- Make sure others understand what needs to change.
- Recognise that others may say that things are working well but for the person this is not the case.



They may use this approach in meetings or by talking to their partner and others who know them well.

The doughnut

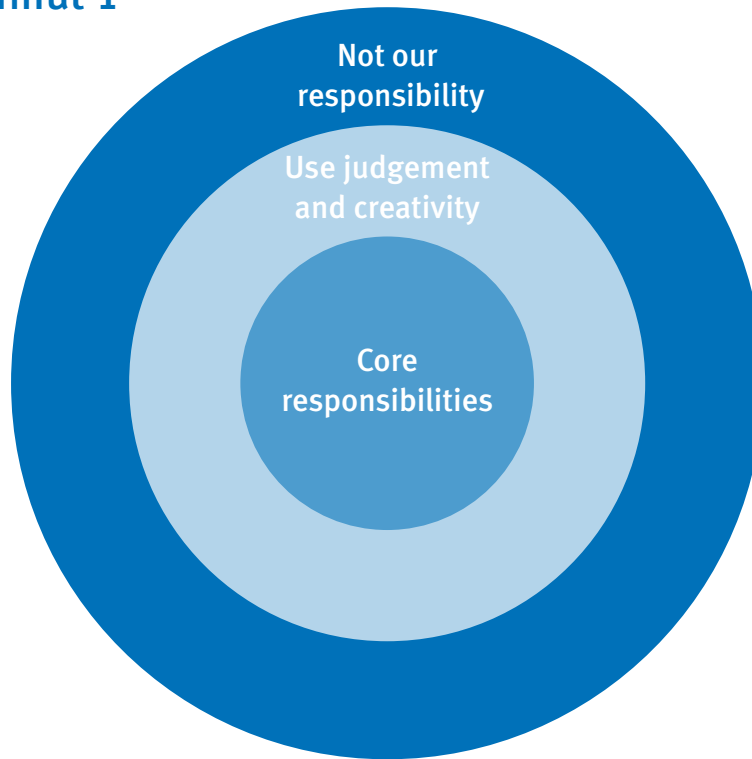
The doughnut helps people who are supporting the person to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.

It helps people supporting the person, not only to see what they must do (core responsibilities), but where they can try things (judgement and creativity) and what is not their responsibility. To understand this tool we have used rings like a doughnut, but when you are using it, columns help.

When people know their core responsibilities they can be more creative in trying new things without worrying that they will be doing something wrong.



Doughnut 1



When using a doughnut begin by thinking about what is important to and for the person as these things will affect the core responsibilities. It will also help with thinking about how people can be more creative when what is important to the person is not happening in their life.



A core responsibility may include helping the person to be aware of the possible consequences of a situation. The advocate or others may use judgement and creativity to decide the best way to understand the consequences but ultimately what the person decides is up to them. In some situations the person is not able to fully understand consequences of a situation. The decision making agreement may help, to think about who would support the person make a decision.

Doughnut 2

Staff supporting Jonathon with his money

Core responsibilities	Judgement and creativity	Not our responsibility
Advising about money by talking to Jonathon about what would happen if he spent all his money on a computer game.	The way they tell him.	What he decides to spend his money on.

GP taking care of Julie's balance problems

Core responsibilities	Judgement and creativity	Not our responsibility
Explain the treatment options so that she understands.	Suggest alternative therapies which may help.	If she decides to do activities which make her dizzy and her condition worse.
Prescribe medication if appropriate.	Choosing the best medication.	If she decides not to take medication.

The doughnut will help the advocate to:

- Understand the core responsibilities in supporting someone successfully.
- Understand how they or others can try new things with their partner without fear.
- Make sure that their partner is getting the service they need.
- Make sure judgement and creativity is used to think about what is important to their partner and enabling them to make choices.
- Understand when organisational changes are made that affect roles and responsibilities.

Training in using person centred approaches

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The decision making agreement, dreaming and community tools were developed by Simon Duffy, John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint and Beth Mount.

Books which will tell you more about using these approaches

Essential lifestyle planning for everyone, Michael Smull and Helen Sanderson (2005). The Learning Community for Essential Lifestyle Planning.

Keys to citizenship, Simon Duffy. Paradigm Consultancy and Development Agency Ltd. (2003).

Life building - opening windows to change, Dr Beth Mount. Capacity Works (1995).

Person centred planning with MAPS and PATH, John O'Brien and Jack Pearpoint. Inclusion Press (2002).

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Other important information

Mental Capacity Act (2005)

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For the first time this sets out clear expectations that people with learning disabilities must be helped to make choices.

“Advocates need to know about person centred planning. I think this book will help them do that.”

Nicola Smith
Co-Director, Learning Disabilities