

2024 REVISION: BUILDING A PERSON- CENTERED COMMUNITY



ABOUT

Since 2014, the Community Advancement Network's (CAN) Community Council (Council) has been studying the salient elements and key aspects of Person-Centered Care (PCC), the principles underlying it, and the practices that define it in the Austin community. The ultimate aim is to shine a light on the issue and create an actionable framework that defines and gives structure to the concepts. It is hoped that this framework will inform CAN members and the community as a whole on how best to adopt the principles and practices that will advance Austin's desire to be a Person-Centered Community in keeping with CAN's tenets of equity and opportunity. Based on a review of the framework by the CAN Community Council and on feedback from community stakeholders the framework was revised as follows.

1. We prioritize the safety and well-being of all children.

Why is this important? Children are our future and what happens to us in childhood can have major impacts on the trajectory of our lives and of our community. By ensuring the safety and well-being of all children, we ensure that children grow into adulthood having better health and life outcomes, helping to mitigate current challenges that could be exacerbated otherwise.

2. We provide a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for employees and the individuals and families we serve.

Why is this important? By providing a safe environment for employees and the families we serve, we increase employee morale and retention, and we create a safe environment for families to express their needs. It also helps organizations build rapport with families.

3. We commit to identifying and eliminating existing inequities, especially for traditionally underserved or marginalized individuals, groups, and communities.

Why is this important? In order to identify and eliminate inequities, we have to collect comprehensive data and then use the data to determine how to allocate resources to close gaps. Inequities may exist for members of different races, ethnicities, incomes, genders/gender identities, sexualities, abilities, and ages. Identifying where the disparities exist will help to focus efforts and resources.

4. We consider the impact that language and culture have on the effectiveness of programs and services.

Why is this important? Not being able to access services or information in one's native language can decrease program effectiveness and lead to adverse outcomes for these individuals. In addition, inadequate language services can create a sense of isolation for those individuals and create/increase distrust in the agency providing services.

5. We listen to our employees and the individuals and families we serve, and we give meaningful consideration to their input.

Why is this important? It is beneficial to individuals/communities being served to know that we subscribe to the philosophy that the agency will do "nothing about them without them." Services provided should include the input, feedback, and ideas of the families we serve.

6. We base services on the needs, resources, lives, and schedules of the individuals and families we serve.

Why is this important? An important part of being person-centered is meeting people “where they are.” That includes designing programs and systems that account for the schedules, needs and challenges of individuals and families being served to make accessing services more convenient and feasible for them. This requires a commitment to identifying and eliminating any barriers families may have to accessing services such as transportation, technology access, etc.

7. We build on a person’s strengths, resourcefulness and capabilities and ensure that they are in the driver’s seat of determining which services or assistance they receive.

Why is this important? A strengths-based approach can help identify approaches and interventions that may not be evident if we only consider options that are typically utilized in addressing a particular challenge. Individuals being served will feel respected knowing that we are taking a holistic approach and providing a comprehensive set of and will be better able to determine what is best for them and their family.

8. We help people find their voice so that they can advocate for themselves, their families and their community.

Why is this important? We must be proactive in informing the individuals and families we serve about important decision points and all options that are available to them as well as convey that they get to decide how things proceed. In addition, we should inform them that it is o.k. to take whatever time is needed for them to process this information in making a decision. If we model situations in this way, the individuals and families we serve may develop a comfort level in advocating for themselves on other matters.

Original Process

At the end of 2014, CAN leadership observed a major theme arising from the “State of the Safety Net” forums and Community Council discussion focused on community challenges: that in order to improve the delivery of services and service outcomes it was necessary to modify programs and services based on person-centered principles. In 2015 the CAN Community Council continued to learn from service providers about their person-centered service delivery strategies culminating in the October 2015 Building a Person-centered Community Summit. In 2016, the Community Council endeavored to extend (broaden and deepen) this understanding by hosting community presentations and conversations on effective practices in PCC care and applicability (inc. transferability, scalability, and sustainability) in building a person-centered community. This led to the publication of the original CAN framework for Building a Person-Centered Community.

Revision Process

In 2023, the CAN Community Council selected revising the Building a Person-Centered Community Report as its focus as the original report is more than 5 years old and the needs of the community may have changed and, in turn, service providers may have new strategies that the original framework did not reflect. The council developed 4 questions to explore the current PCC strategies used by service providers and their reflections on the original framework.

The four questions were:

1. How has your organization/ program utilized the strategies from the PCC framework?
2. What PCC strategies does your organization/ program utilize that isn't reflected in the framework?
3. Of the strategies listed in the framework, which one could we help your organization/ program implement?
4. How did COVID impact how you can focus on your service population? What kind of innovative strategies did you develop that you can continue using?

After hearing presentations during 2023 and 2024 from AGE of Central Texas, The ARC of the Capital Area, United Way Family Pathways/ 2- Gen, Black Parents and Families Collective, and Meals on Wheels Central Texas, we learned that presenters found our original framework to be comprehensive, but suggested we expand our

strategies to reflect the aging population and people with differing abilities as groups that also experience inequities. We also learned that the COVID-19 pandemic put organizations in a position to look at their approach to service delivery and develop innovative solutions to keep their programs running despite national limitations when it came to meeting in person. It highlighted organizations' ability to adapt and meet people where they were.

Intended Application of the Framework

The framework is structured so that local organizations and/or service providers may be able to assess their operations and service delivery using the outlined principles. The outcomes of the assessment should lead to changes in policies, procedures and programs that lead to operations and service delivery that are more person-centered as well as improved outcomes for clients.

The way that this framework can help us “Build a Person-Centered Community” is by having as many organizations in our community adopt these principles. When we can demonstrate that Austin-based organizations are committed to operating in a “person-centered” way, we will be able to achieve better outcomes. In doing so, it will become clear to people who live, work and visit our community that we are “a community of caring.” Building this identity will help everyone who is part of our community to feel that they are welcomed, they belong, and they are valued!

Organization and CAN CC Credits

2023 and 2024 CAN CC Members	CAN Staff
Donovon DePriest, 2023 Chair/ 2024 Past Chair Patricia Longoria, 2023 Vice Chair/ 2024 Chair Rachel Hampton, 2023 Past Chair Craig McNary, 2024 Vice Chair Kelly Crook Nancy Gilliam Nora Comstock Caroline Reynolds Sona Shah Ara Merjanian Pamela Garcia	Raul Alvarez, Executive Director Jelina Tunstill, Program and Operations Coordinator Carlos Soto, Research, Planning & Evaluation Coordinator