

Personal Outcomes:

*The
Framework for Services*



Region V Services

Personal Outcomes: Introduction

The term Personal Outcomes refers to the major expectations that we have in our lives. For the persons we serve, Personal Outcomes are what they expect from the services and supports they seek. For the staff person, Personal Outcomes is more about listening and exploration into what people want out of their lives. For all of us, the important things in our lives reflect the choices and decisions that we have made. In order for us to make meaningful choices three factors come into play:

The Experience needed for choice.

The Social Contact needed for choice.

The Creativity needed for choice.

Two thoughts we should always keep in mind:

It is not possible to work toward a personal outcome unless we know what is desired. Hence, the term “outcome” to define what we are talking about. We find out where we want to go and then plan to get there. It is more about the journey than the destination, but it is not a random journey, rather it is a well thought out journey that may at times take on a new direction as the person we support has new experiences which support new choices.

So, with that in mind, we must continuously *listen* for what is important to the person we are supporting because:

If we become focused on the plan to get there, and stop listening to the desire to reach the goal, then it becomes about us and the plan we developed and not about the person we are supporting.

For example, you have been looking at your decision to take a job at Region V Services. Now let's look at Region V Services. Our goal is to help people live full, meaningful and productive lives. Our process to reach that goal is to listen, on an **ongoing basis**, to what the people we support feel would constitute a full, meaningful and productive life.

So, the measure of how well we are listening is the number of people who are working at having the kind of life they desire.

The remainder of this guide addresses the universal themes that make an individual's life full, meaningful and productive. It is a guide for thinking about these issues in your own life and in the lives of the people you support.

Many of the people we serve do not communicate in traditional ways; that is they do not use words to communicate. We then need to rely on our **observation skills** noting how one reacts in a given situation to determine what is important to him or her. In addition, family, friends, and past and present staff can be a wealth of information regarding likes and dislikes, choices and involvement as well as communication patterns. Remember, you as a new staff person will soon be asked questions regarding the people you are supporting – Will you be able to answer AND explain why you answered the way you did? The big question will be: How well do you really **KNOW** the people you are supporting?

These Personal Outcomes Measures were designed by the Council on Quality and Leadership in Supports for People with Disabilities after years of interviews with people with disabilities, their families and non-disabled people about what would constitute a full and meaningful life. Think about what these mean to you in your life and in the lives of the people you support.



MEMO

Personal Outcomes Measures

Identity

- People choose personal goals.
- People choose where and with whom they live.
- People choose where they work.
- People have intimate relationships.
- People are satisfied with services.
- People are satisfied with their personal life situations.

Autonomy

- People choose their daily routine.
- People have time, space and opportunity for privacy.
- People decide when to share personal information.
- People use their environments.

Affiliation

- People live in integrated environments.
- People participate in the life of the community.
- People interact with other members of the community.
- People perform different social roles.
- People have friends.
- People are respected.

Attainment

- People choose services.
- People realize personal goals.

Safeguards

- People are connected to natural support networks.
- People are safe.

Rights

- People exercise rights.
- People are treated fairly.

Health and Wellness

- People have the best possible health.
- People are free from abuse and neglect.
- People experience continuity and security.

Identity

The foundation of all of the Personal Outcome Measures is on each person as a unique individual. This grounding begins with an exploration of the person's identity.

As individual people, we define who we are and who we want to become at various points in our lives. Our previous experiences, current expectations, opportunities, preferences, hopes and dreams for the future are essential parts of our identity. We express our identity through the choices we make; where we live, who we choose to live with, the intimate relationships we develop, the goals we set for ourselves, and our overall satisfaction with the direction of our lives. As the experiences we have cause us to grow and change, our view of ourselves changes. These changes are reflected in the new choices we make.

Identity becomes clear when we can answer questions such as: ***How do I see myself? How do others see me? How do I want to be seen? What do I want in the future?*** Service and support providers are challenged to learn about people as individuals and encourage them to explore their own concept of who they are and how they would like people to see them. Our task, then, is to **understand and respect their personal choices and preferences** along with the changes they make as they grow, and to assist people in pursuing those basic choices that allow for **self-expression**. To do this we must always listen and assist people in having the experiences that allow them to grow and make choices.

MEMO

People express their identities when they:

- Choose personal goals.
- Choose where and with whom to live
- Choose where they work
- Have intimate relationships
- Are *satisfied* with services
- Are *satisfied* with their personal life situations

People Choose Personal Goals

Personal goals are those plans, hopes and dreams that get us up in the morning and guide our action throughout the day. Others can see what is important to us by the kinds of goals we set for ourselves. I want to work as an ... I'd like to learn to ... I want a drivers license, I want my own apartment. I'd like to take a trip to ..., are all examples of goals we may set. Although most of us do not write down our personal goals, we are all working to accomplish something. This is basic to all of us.

The goals we choose to work for are **directly related to the experiences we have had** in our lives either directly or indirectly. By the same token, they change as we continue to grow and learn. Your role in supporting people is to listen to what is important to them and provide experiences that will lead to more options and choices.

People Choose Where and with Whom to Live

Home is the place where we find comfort, support, pleasure, and privacy. Choosing the place where we live and the people we live with are fundamental to our satisfaction with our lives. When we are unhappy with our living situations it affects other areas of our lives. Anyone who has ever lived in a college dorm or other congregate setting can attest to the difficulties that arise when people are unhappy about sharing living space with others whom they find difficult. Your role in supporting people is to once again listen to what they are saying either directly or indirectly through their actions about with whom and where they might like to live. Once again experience either directly or indirectly is the best way to let people know about the options that are available and the responsibilities that go with any particular choice.

People Choose Where They Work

Work provides a source of income, and opportunity to meet other people, a sense of accomplishment, and self-esteem. Even when we are not engaged in activities for which we are paid, we choose to participate in activities that provide the same experiences. The types of experiences we choose depends on the other kinds of experiences we have. We must **never prejudge** a person's desire to have a particular job as being unrealistic. Rather, our job is to **provide** the individual with the experiences and the technological assistance they need to make an informed decision.

People Have Intimate Relationships

Intimate relationships are the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of our lives that develop when people care and feel deeply about each other. Intimate relationships mean that people are committed to one another, trust each other and know that they will not be rejected by the other person. The intimate relationships that we develop are based on the experiences we have had with people. We must work to give people the opportunity to have experiences that will lead them to make choices about the type of intimacy they desire and the people with whom they can develop intimacy.

People Are Satisfied with Services

The services we seek as we go about our lives are a reflection of how we would like to be perceived by others and it is the experiences that people have which lead them to know what they can expect from the different services they might wish to access. Satisfaction does not mean getting everything we want. Satisfaction is the way we measure how well services and supports match needs and expectations. It is the key to quality. People communicate their level of satisfaction level by both verbal and behavioral means. Dissatisfaction often happens when there is a gap between expectations and what is actually happening. We need to actively solicit people's opinions about services and supports. Since the **absence of a complaint does not mean a person is satisfied**, we also need to pursue other options when we see or hear something that might indicate dissatisfaction.

People Are Satisfied with Their Personal Life Situations

Satisfaction with life produces a general feeling of well being and hope for the future. When we are satisfied we enjoy our lives and have something to look forward to. Feelings of satisfaction increase when we have greater control over decisions and feel that our choices are respected. In instances when it may be difficult to understand what people are communicating about satisfaction, it is important to remember that people are not satisfied when they are angry or troubled on an ongoing basis. Low expectations and a sense of helplessness are also symptoms of dissatisfaction. We need to be actively involved in challenging people and providing them with experiences which will add to their overall satisfaction.

Autonomy

Autonomy is the way we define and control our surroundings and the events that are closest to us – our physical environment, daily schedule, our needs for privacy, and control over privileged and personal information. Autonomy is about personal control over life events. Autonomy begins with our ability to define personally important issues and express preferences.

When we make decisions about whom we invite into our space, or when to tell others to leave us alone we experience autonomy. This also gives us the right to decide what information to share with others and who should be allowed to see the information we have given. The key to autonomy is that **we are in control** of the various aspects of our lives, the environment we inhabit, the things we do throughout the day, and what others know about us.

Autonomy means we can fully use and access the places where we live, work, and engage in other activities. We exercise independence and control over the space around us, with any modifications and adaptations needed.

MEMO

People experience autonomy when they:

- *Choose their daily routine.*
- *Have time, space and opportunity for privacy*
- *Decide when to share personal information*
- *Use their environments*

People Choose Their Daily Routine

Our daily schedule of activities reflects our personal preferences and priorities – the things we like or need to do, the way we like to do them, and the times of day we get them done. Some people like to get up early in the morning, while others would rather sleep late, when they can. Some people skip breakfast and eat a big meal in the middle of the day; others prefer a hearty breakfast to start the day and still others prefer to snack all day. Some of us like to have jobs that start early in the day and some would rather have a night job.

We all have our own routines for the day and we generally become fairly crabby when those routines are upset and, although we adjust for the most part for temporary disruptions, we do what we can to get back to what makes us feel comfortable. Being able to make these decisions is **basic to exercising personal control. Listening to what people tell us about their needs is integral to all of the services we provide.**

People Have Time, Space, and Opportunity for Privacy

Privacy means we are **free from unwanted intrusion**. We decide when we want to be left alone and what we want to do. We may need private space and time when talking on the telephone, reading mail, and being with family and friends. Each person has different requirements for privacy, and we must be responsive to those needs in the people we support. This is of particular concern when you are required to support a person with his or her personal hygiene and health needs. Sensitivity and attention to respectful interactions is essential. Always ensure that assistance with a person's personal hygiene needs reflect personal preference and sensitivity to the dignity of the person.

People Decide When to Share Personal Information

Whenever people are involved with services and supports, records and other kinds of information are kept to help the organization do its job. Those records and the information contained in them is personal and confidential. It is important for people to know what information is kept and to be able to see it whenever they want.

By the same token, people have the right to decide when and how their information is shared with others. In the casual conversations between staff, we may not be aware we are informally sharing personal information without permission. As you progress through the staff development program at Region V Services you will have the opportunity to learn more about confidentiality and what is expected. All people involved in services, whether the recipient or the provider, need to be knowledgeable about confidentiality laws.

People Use Their Environments

Our environment includes the places where we live, work and spend time. when we have full access and use of those environments, we can take advantage of a variety of experiences and activities. We are also able to choose what we will do and when.

Equipment, technology, and computer advancements are making dramatic changes in the control people have in their environments. Modifications to the environment increase a person's control independence. As an organization we can make necessary modifications and adaptations directly or help people access the resources they need in the community.

Affiliation

Affiliation describes **our connections to other people**. Each of us chooses who we want to spend time with, where and when we get together and what we do. These relationships add dimension to our lives. They expand our experiences and **enrich how other people view and interact** with us.

The experiences we have in the community provides us with the opportunity to meet people and develop relationships with them. These opportunities and experiences give us a sense of belonging and connection. When we join in the life of the community, we learn new roles, develop new relationships, build alliances and discover new possibilities.

As support providers we listen and learn from each person about the level and type of community involvement he or she desires and provide supports to bring that about. We respect the choices that people make.

MEMO

People develop affiliations when they:

- *Live in integrated environments.*
- *Participate in the life of the community*
- *Interact with other members of the community*
- *Perform different social roles*
- *Have friends*
- *Are respected*

People Live in Integrated Environments

Living and working in the community keeps us from feeling isolated and separate. We as support providers need to ensure that the people we support carry out their daily activities in typical settings by others in the community. Integration in community environments enhances a person's opportunities for learning and we know that all **people learn from their experiences**. It is important that people with disabilities live, work and recreate in same environments that people without disabilities carry out these activities. Carrying out their activities in an integrated environment should not be dependent on having certain knowledge or the capability of performing certain behaviors. These skills and behaviors are best taught in an integrated environment. Integration provides exposure to, and acceptance of, the wide diversity in people, including racial and ethnic background, religious expression, and mental and/or physical disability.

People Participate in the Life of the Community

The community offers a rich array of activities and experiences where we find and develop interests, take care of our personal needs, and enjoy leisure activities. Think about the places you go throughout the day, the things you do to make your life more enjoyable that would not be possible if you did not live in a community. The people we support in a community setting need to have the **same options** everyone else does for access to the places and events that community offers. Those who have had little experience with community participation need to be introduced to the variety of offerings available.

People Interact with other Members of the Community

Being in the community brings us into contact with other people. Some of our contacts may be casual such as greeting a neighbor, chatting with a store clerk, or talking with someone on the bus. Others may be more formal such as telling the doctor our symptoms, ordering a meal or depositing and withdrawing money from the bank. Every interaction is an opportunity to learn about others and improve our interaction skills.

People with disabilities should have the same experience of interacting in the community with a variety of other people as do people without disabilities. There should be opportunities to spend time casually with people who are not connected with Region V Services as well as opportunities to transact their business in the community. Opportunities and support for these types of interactions reduce feelings of isolation and create a connection to the community and the people who live there.

People Perform Different Social Roles

The roles we fill in life (child, parent, nephew, spouse, worker, volunteer, church member, collector, neighbor, customer, etc.) express what is important to us. They define the expectations we have for ourselves and that others have for us. They provide

us with the opportunity to learn the behaviors and responsibilities that are associated with each role we play.

Often due to real disability and/or perceived limitations, people lack opportunity to fill various social roles. Without support, people may be severely limited in the variety of roles they can choose to assume. Supports should assist people to overcome barriers by providing access to opportunity, information, technology, and skill development.

People Have Friends

Friends are people who choose to be with us and who we choose to be with. Friendships are mutual; they are based on a two-way relationship between people who have chosen to spend time with each other. While casual contacts with outer community members and relationships with paid staff are important, they do not replace true friendships.

Personal relationships bring variety and richness to our lives. Friends can be a significant source of comfort and support during difficult times. They bring us companionship and share our joy in the best of times. Friends are the people we confide in and share special events with. The supports we provide should never interfere with a person's ability to have and develop friendships. We need to support people in forming and maintaining friendships with neighbors, coworkers, and peers including people who do not have disabilities.

People Are Respected

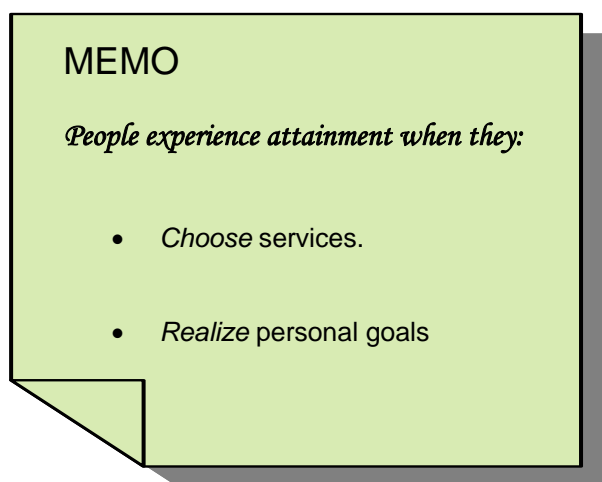
Respect is how we show our regard for each other. Respect indicates that we believe someone is a valued person. It is demonstrated in how we interact with people. Self-respect develops from a sense that others respect us which in turn helps us to be more demanding of respect. Supports must always be sensitive to this relationship. Interactions that promote respect do not draw undue attention to a person's disability or differences.

In order to promote personal dignity and respect our supports must reflect **concern for enhancing the status and competency** of the people we support. The opinions and preferences of people are included in the planning and decision making process. It means listening and responding to the person's needs with the same promptness and urgency that anyone would expect.

Positive regard and respect is demonstrated by meaningful work and activities, privacy and advocacy. People are challenged by the service activities and encouraged to try new things. When expectations for achievement are high and supports are not intrusive and demeaning, a person is viewed as capable, which fosters respect from others.

Attainment

Personal outcomes help us understand one's dreams, choices, personal surroundings and community participation and inclusion. Attainment looks at how people define success. This can be in either personal terms or can reflect commitment to a group of people, an association, a cause, or even a sense of community. Attainment is a sense of accomplishment – “Yes! This is what I've worked for/wanted,” “Yes, I really feel a part of this group/club – they listen to me and ask me to help.” Individual motivation comes from successful accomplishment.



People Choose Services

Services exist to help us get what we want and need. Our ability to choose where we shop or do business means that we are more likely to get what we want and need. In the human services arena, people receiving services and supports are entitled to the same level of choice. Options should match what is available to others in the community. We provide people with assistance to explore and understand options by helping them to gather information, discuss benefits and drawbacks of different services and actually visiting the service settings to meet the people who work there. Services and interventions offer the support and assistance that a person has requested in order to realize his or her personal goals. **Services and supports are provided to bring about the achievement of individualized outcomes.**

People Realize Personal Goals

Achieving goals gives us a sense of accomplishment and enhances our personal image. Once we have identified the goals a person has chosen we can provide support and training to target the skills people need to achieve the goals they set for themselves. We must also assist people by providing the experiences and technical support that will facilitate their realization of personal goals.

Foundations

This last section talks of outcomes that deal with the unconditional requirements for any service and support arrangement; safeguards, rights, and health and wellness. These can be formal (paid staff in organized settings) or informal (friends and peer supports in community settings). The following foundation outcomes require staff policies and procedures for support, and are measured by looking at whether the organization has defined them with each individual.

Safeguards

Safeguards help us to feel secure and safe. They have to do with the people around us – staff, family and friends who are concerned with our well-being. They help us make sure we have adequate housing and meals, and that we work and play in healthy and safe environments. Knowing that others are acting on our behalf helps us feel strong and protected.

In service and support organizations, health and safety codes, building ordinances, and other licensing requirements are defined. Complying with these will promote, but not guarantee safety. The organization must also understand each person's capabilities and concerns to further safeguard people's lives.

Rights

People with disabilities have the **same rights as all other citizens**. People identify which rights are most important to them and organizations assist each person to fully exercise his or her rights. We need to begin with information, education and discovery of how each individual identifies rights for him or herself. If one is interested in community, TV, people and meetings, voting could well be a right to be fully exercised. If one enjoys time alone; privacy and having his or her own house key could well be rights important to him or her.

Health and Wellness

Health and wellness includes the outcomes of best possible health, freedom from abuse and neglect and continuity and security for people. Services and supports address physical and mental health care needs (regular checkups, follow ups, medication, etc.) to enable all to have the best possible health. Situations of abuse and neglect are unacceptable. Agencies take action to prevent and respond to any allegations of abuse and neglect, mistreatment or exploitation.

Another aspect of personal well being is the impact of change. Services and supports should promote continuity and security for people. Whether a work or residence move or a staff change may be approaching, the individual should be informed and included in the upcoming change as much as possible. This eases uncertainty and fosters security. We all want to be included in aspects that may change our current situations – people in services are no different.

MEMO

People develop affiliations when they:

- *Exercise rights.*
- *Are treated fairly*

People experience safeguards when they are:

- *Connected to natural support networks*
- *Safe*

People experience health and wellness when they:

- *Have the best possible health*
- *Are free from abuse and neglect*
- *Experience continuity and security*

People Are Connected to Natural Support Networks

Connection to a natural support network of family and very close friends provides a sense of **security and safety** for all of us. These supports cannot be manufactured or created. They can only be nurtured as they grow and evolve over time. Families provide lifelong support and a safety net for many people. Lifelong relationships with non-family members are also part of the support network. As service providers we need to facilitate continuity in people's existing relationships and build the capacity of potential support networks, consistent with their choices and preferences.

People Are Safe

Feeling safe and free from danger concerns all of us. Threats to personal safety come from a variety of sources. Personal safety may be threatened by physical surroundings, other people or lack of supports. Ensure that people who have depended on others to identify and respond to emergencies have support and special equipment in order to anticipate, recognize and take care of their safety needs. We need to address all safety concerns, even when the person may not fully recognize the hazards and dangers. This could include situations in which the person may cause harm to him or herself or others.

Normal environments, of course, contain a reasonable amount of risk. Overprotection prevents people from learning. However, we never require people to face major decisions with significant risk without first having the opportunity to make decisions with less significant risk. By learning through real life experiences that evolve from less significant to more significant consequences, people learn to make progressively complex decisions in a responsible manner.

People Exercise Rights

For many of use exercising rights is a natural part of our daily lives. There are the obvious rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution – freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, right to vote; but think too about the personal freedoms you enjoy, withdrawing money from your bank account, deciding to go for a walk or staying home alone, having a private place to make a phone call or read you mail, locking your door with your own key. Most of us would not tolerate intrusion into these freedoms.

People with disabilities have the same rights as all others. We need to listen to what people are telling us about which rights are most important to them and work at assisting them to exercise those rights.

People Are Treated Fairly

Within any society, community or group of people, there are situations where total freedom to act, do or decide is not possible. Limitations may occur as a result of laws, community or group norms and the needs of other people. When limitations are imposed, we expect that we will have the opportunity to be heard fairly and impartially.

People have the right to fully expect that they will be informed of options; give consent to proposed actions; have their personal concerns considered important; have a fair and impartial hearing in disputes. At Region V Services people are heard through the team process as well as through the Program Ethics Committee. Any and all restrictions on their rights cannot be implemented without a hearing through these processes.

People Have the Best Possible Health

The definition of best possible health varies from person to person. Some of us might describe good health as freedom from a serious illness. Others may be concerned about their weight or smoking. Some people may want to reduce the use of a particular medication. Whatever our personal definitions might be, feeling healthy helps us to achieve other goals in life.

The effectiveness of services in addressing the person's best possible health situation means that the services have maintained the person's health status as planned by the person and the health care professional. For some it may be a measurement of prevention, for others the management of the rate of progression of a condition, and still others may be concerned with the continued stability of a chronic condition. We must assist people to stay informed about their health and medications as well as to have access to appropriate medical intervention.

People Are Free From Abuse and Neglect

Treating people with dignity and respect requires that they are free from abuse and neglect. Many actions or failures to act may constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse includes verbal, physical, sexual, and psychological aspects. Neglect occurs in areas such as lack of basic sustenance, failure to provide needed services and failure to provide or maintain necessary adaptive equipment, for example communication devices that are not in working order, electric wheel chairs that are turned off, etc. Abuse is defined and measured according to the person's experience of the action. Some actions that may not be legally defined as abuse or neglect may be experienced negatively by the person and are therefore treated with the same seriousness. All allegations of abuse and neglect are addressed regardless of the source. Any action or non-action that staff feels constitutes abuse or neglect must be reported to the supervisor or director.

People Experience Continuity and Security

Change is a fact of life. We cannot always control change, but the frequency and type of change we experience can contribute to our happiness or discontent with life. Having a disability is frequently associated with dependence on human service organizations for shelter, food, clothing, work, transportation, and other forms of support. This dependence on the organization often links changes in people's lives to changes in agency administration, staffing, funding or political leadership. The rationale for changes in programs and services should come from issues related to the person as

much as possible and when not possible we must recognize the emotional impact of the change on the person and assist him or her in working through it.