



"The People Company"

Serving Persons with Special Needs Since 1998

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From the Director's Desk ~

AmeriServe International works diligently to create lifestyles of purpose and value for people with significant challenges. For over 3 years we have explored new and different ways to "get the job done". We have been successful in making significant changes in the lives of almost everyone we have chosen to serve. The key is to find what is important to people. This gives us the "hook" that pulls them toward a life that they would choose to live. That "hook" is inherent in the personal network planning process and is the thing that distinguishes AmeriServe International as the "People Company".

Tom Hoff

The Connector

Choice ~ Respect ~ Participation ~ Presence

February 2008

AmeriServe International, Inc.

Making life better tomorrow because of what is done today.

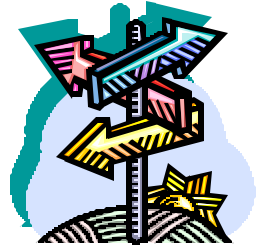
Catch Phrases with a "Catch"

Often we find ourselves using catch phrases like "thinking outside of the box," "forward thinking," and "proactive." All these phrases mean that we could or should be doing something that may be different from what we actually are doing. We call what we are doing a name that describes what we would like to do, but really aren't. It is a little like calling an apple an artichoke and hoping that no one notices the difference until after they have eaten it.

"Person centered planning" is one of these phrases. It means that we should or could be taking actions that would result in real life changes based on the desires of the person. It most often focuses on

what "they" need to do and learn and gives much less time and credence to what experiences are needed to really have a lifestyle that they and/or we would want to live. The result may be a lifestyle that is referred to in comparative terms. "That's pretty good for John. After all, we were lucky to get him to do anything."

We often address person centered planning in words that sound person centered by using first person pronouns, etc. In the end we need to ask, Will the outcome of the process address the reality of developing a life worth living? Will the person have a lifestyle they would want to live? Where does the person want to be? Where could they be if they had the experience and information to make a real



choice? What would they do if given experience to make real choices? Person centered planning versus "person centered doing" is the difference between catch phrases and the real work that takes significant effort and time. Person centered doing is the only thing that makes a real lifestyle change.

Each of us creates a life story as we live a life that is full of our experiences. These experiences give us the power to determine, through choice, how we want

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What We Do

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

Habilitation, Respite, Consumer Directed Attendant Care, Group homes

Day Treatment

Adult Day Habilitation and Community Integration Services

Residential Support

Supported Community Living, Specialized Living Arrangements

See Sign-up sheet
at your work location.

ASI Monthly Elective Education

Training provided by
American Institute of Management.

Teamwork That Works

Friday, February 15th 12:00 - 3:00pm
Thursday, February 21st 3:30 - 6:30pm

Teams that work together can out-perform groups that are merely together working. To have an effective workforce everyone must know their part in the scheme of things. Everyone must know their role. This session will give you knowledge necessary to help develop your team so you can have a championship season.

Attend the session to:

- Learn the basic principles of teamwork and the advantages over traditional work groups.
- Identify shared responsibilities.
- Understand the importance of your relationship with others in your team.
- Discover the four stages of team development
- Create a set of Guiding Principles

Positive Teaching Techniques

Friday, March 14 12:00-3:00pm
Thursday, March 20 3:30-6:30pm

This session focuses again on the skills needed to reward, refine and shape behavior to enhance personal satisfaction, and home and community interaction. Practical, hands-on instruction will reinforce the concepts behind the learning making the results useful immediately after the conference.

Attend the session to:

- State four values of positive teaching and positive behavior support
- Understand how your attitudes and values shape the nature of your interactions with persons you support
- Demonstrate understanding of the Ignore/Interrupt; Redirect; Reward process
- State and demonstrate 5 types of prompts
- Define and demonstrate shaping and chaining techniques

Birthdays – Times Three!

Friends of support George, Ron and Mike in their home helped celebrate their birthdays by sponsoring a party January 18th at the new Planning Center. These three men all have birthdays within three weeks of each other, so one big party was held.

Approximately 35 friends and family members enjoyed a delicious birthday supper consisting of sloppy joes, potato casserole, punch, cake and ice cream.

During the evening the guests socialized with each other and were drawn to the table favors. Toward the end of the party everyone had a great time popping the balloons in various ways. Lots of laughing and clapping was involved!

As each guest left the party, George helped hand out a treat bag as a remembrance of the special occasion. **Happy Birthday and best wishes to George, Ron and Mike!**



Catch Phrases with a “Catch” cont’d

the rest of our life to be. Person centered planning that does not incorporate real action focused on creation of a life story is a veiled attempt by those doing the planning to feel good about what they have done.

We get struck in the box of strict interpretation of the purpose for which supports services are being planned. Our need to provide a “program of habilitation” drives us to attempt to find things for which progress toward “goals” can be easily tracked. This allows us to say we are making progress and being effective, and we feel good. However, when we find ourselves inside this box of program, a real lifestyle may exist beyond its confines “outside of the box.”

Inside the box of program, lifestyle is something that is perceived as having a set of prerequisite skills that must be present to “earn” a lifestyle of choice. It has been often subjected to the opinions and criteria placed on people with disabilities by those without them. If abilities, or lack thereof, were the determining factor in one’s participation in community living, many of us would not be allowed to participate in the things we do now. I know for a fact that if there was an assessment and criteria for vocal abilities, the majority of our congregation would not be allowed to sing in church. I personally mumble

through the hymns. Yet, you don’t see a group of “professionals” specifically designing a “program” for staying on key or, for those that can’t sing, to use their “quiet voice” in church!!

These thoughts have come about over time through my own life story. At one time I actually had used an “Independent Living Checklist” to assess whether a person could or should live independently and what they would “need to learn” in order to be able to do so. I took it and am proud to say that by the criteria established, I am not “eligible” to live independently. Thank goodness no one gave me that checklist before I was able to establish a support network of family and friends, otherwise I would not be allowed to write this article or sing in church.

The reality of living in a community comes to fruition when we have become part of the community in which we live. Abilities play a role in the type and amount of assistance required, but are not the determining factor in what, when, where or with whom. Given experience, learning will take place. Supports designed to establish skills are most effective when provided in the context of real life. A lifestyle of choice, purpose, and value comes about when we have created a life story through

experiences. Those experiences empower us to make real determinations as to what we want and need in our life. This process also gives those who support us the information they need to do the right things for the right reasons at the right time and in the right way.

Forward thinking is how we plan to go about giving people experiences. Connecting with others and assuming roles of purpose and value in our community is what makes us part of it. What is the use of living in a community in which we do not have a role or participate? Isolation can be more intense in the community than in larger congregate setting (institutions) if people are not provided opportunities and support for connecting and having a role.

We all have had support in building our community around us. Over time, our roles developed through our presence, associations and experience. Building community requires purposeful actions that connect people with others person-to-person. Community connection planning for those that require significant support is a particularly challenging undertaking. This effort is the most distinguishing factor between person centered thinking and person centered doing.

Building community around people with significant challenges by purposeful action designed to create lifestyles of choice, purpose, and value. This philosophy and our Personal Network Planning process provide the means to be proactive in our approach. It provides a means to plan and conduct purposeful actions that help create life stories for those who are challenged to create their own.

This is what makes us “The People Company.”

Support Options

1. In-home Support—training to increase self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills within the home and community.
2. Day Treatment— specialized sensory-motor, cognitive, communicative, social, interaction and behavioral support.
3. Residential— designed to maximize consumer successes through the use of rehabilitative therapies, special developmental skills, participative enhancement, and sensory-motor development in the group home or specialized living setting.

Call for more information today!



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Making a Difference

AmeriServe International, Inc. carefully selects all personnel to ensure that they possess beliefs, experiences, skills, and knowledge that will assist persons with special needs in exercising a quality of life of their choice. If you or someone you know is interested in doing the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons, at the right times, we are looking for the right people.

Please call **712-322-0272** to find out how you can make a difference.



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