

## READING ROOM

You might also like to read the following:

[Person Centred Reviews in Preston](#)

# Person centred reviews



Helen Sanderson and Ruth Mathiesen

## Introduction

Many of us have been in reviews where people have not been listened to, things have not moved forward and there is little to inspire or motivate.

We believe that people should be in control of their own lives and at the centre of any meeting held to decide the services they receive.

In response we have developed a person centred review approach that is adapted from Essential Lifestyle Planning (Smull and Sanderson 2001)

It is a powerful approach that fosters a spirit of willingness to participate; supports positive and productive review outcomes and helps people go away feeling their contribution is valued.

It has been successfully used in transition and service user plan reviews and is flexible enough to be used in other meetings although it may be necessary to take additional steps to address specific or legislative requirements.

This guide to the core components of a person centred review and have contains real examples (names have been changed).

## The aim of a person centred review is to

Identify and discuss what people like and admire about the person; what is important to the person (now and for the future); and what help and support the person needs.

Identify and discuss what is working and not working from different perspectives (the persons, the staff/schools, the families, and others)

Agree actions that will :

- ⊙ support the person to get what is important to them now and for the future
- ⊙ continue what is working and change what is not working
- ⊙ build on the person centred information and build into a person centred plan

## Headings used in a person centred review

- ⊙ Who contributed to the review
- ⊙ What we like and admire about (the person)
- ⊙ What is important to (the person) now
- ⊙ What is important to (the person) for the future
- ⊙ What support and help (the person) needs to stay healthy and safe
- ⊙ Questions to answer/issues we are struggling with
- ⊙ What is working and not working from different perspectives
- ⊙ Action Plan

## Before the review

### a) Supporting the focus person to prepare

It is not surprising that the more preparation that you do, the better the result! There are two areas to support the focus person - thinking about what to share at the meeting and how the meeting should go.

There are various booklets that supporters can use with the person to think about how they want the meeting to go. These include 'Our Plan for Planning' and 'My Meeting' and they cover who could come, how to make it a comfortable and welcoming meeting, and how the person wants to share their information.

Supporting the focus person to think about their life, and be prepared and supported to share this, is key to person centred reviews. Any method that



makes it easy for people to offer information should be encouraged, for example, brief sentences, drawings, symbols and photographs.

Colin bought some pictures that he had done with his teacher to his meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, Sue supported Colin to stick these onto the wall.

There are established ways of helping people to think about their life that can be used to prepare specifically for a person centred review. Trans-active is an example of an innovative way that young people can think about and describe their life with peer support and by presenting their information on computers. In Multimedia Profiling, a person centred review is a way of reporting on the 'catalogue' describing the person's life. Another, paper based approach where the person records information about their life is called 'Listen to Me', and many schools, self advocacy groups and organisations have developed similar processes. Where someone has a person centred plan already, then this is a great opportunity to share this, and work together on actions

### **b) Supporting families to prepare for the review**

Families have different experiences of reviews, some of which include a very passive role or hearing reports. We need to explain to families what will happen at the meeting and give them the opportunity to think about the headings and the contribution that they want to make.

One father prepared for his daughters review by drawing pictures that symbolised what he liked and admired about his daughter. At the review meeting he copied the pictures onto the paper as part of his contribution.

Families can also prepare specifically for the meeting, as Thomas's family did.

Thomas is a young man with significant learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties who lives in Wales. Mark helped Thomas and his family prepare for his annual review and transition meeting by inviting together the people who knew him best, including family and friends. Using poster sized paper and recording what was said in simple languages and pictures, they helped him map out

- ⊙ What people like and admire about him - his positive characteristics
- ⊙ What is important to him, what he is good at and enjoys
- ⊙ Some ideas for the future based on his qualities, skills and interests

This was then reduced to A4 size using the computer and presented at the annual review meeting.



*Before the meeting, the facilitator needs to learn how the person wants to be at the centre of their meeting, how they have been supported to contribute, who has been invited, and how the person will be supported in the meeting.*

Some families have begun to lead the development of a person centred plan by using the 'Families Leading Planning' pack. The review meeting is an ideal way of sharing this plan, adding other's contribution and enlisting other people in supporting the changes that the person and their family want.

### **c) Supporting other people to prepare for the review**

Professionals may be used to attending reviews and reading reports. It is therefore helpful to share the process of the meeting, or at least the headings that will be used with professionals beforehand, so that they can consider their contribution. We must be clear that this is not an opportunity to write reports under new headings, but to bring their knowledge and contribute to creating a shared understanding together.

### **d) Preparation by the facilitator**

Before the meeting, the facilitator needs to learn how the person wants to be at the centre of their meeting, how they have been supported to contribute, who has been invited, and how the person will be supported in the meeting.

In one of the early meetings that I facilitated, I had assumed that we would share supporting the young person in the meeting. As soon as she came in, she ran over to her Mum, beamed, and promptly sat on her lap. SHE was very clear about how she wanted to be supported in the meeting, but it made it very difficult for her Mum to fully participate. Next time I will think more about how the person needs to be supported in a way that means that the family can take part fully too.

## **The headings used in a person centred reviews**

### **Who is here?**

This poster lists who attended the review, and is completed at the beginning of the review.

### **What people like and admire about the person**

This list should reflect things what we might like or admire about anyone of roughly the same age and include their gifts, abilities, strengths and personal qualities.

It should not include things that we only say about people with disabilities or is faint praise. Clinical descriptions such as `expresses anger appropriately` or `can eat independently` are not acceptable.

Examples:



- ⊙ Sue has an incredible memory
- ⊙ Brian has an infectious laugh and a great sense of humour
- ⊙ Bill is a great thinker
- ⊙ Naz is a good listener
- ⊙ Andy is very patient
- ⊙ Pauline is generous with hugs
- ⊙ Claire is a groovy dancer
- ⊙ Paul is a handsome hunk
- ⊙ John is dapper

### Important to the person now (from their perspective)

This list should only include:

- ⊙ What the person perceives as being important to him or her.
- ⊙ Those things that the person tells us are important (with words or behaviour).

It must not include:

- ⊙ What is important to others,
- ⊙ What people think should be important to the person.

For example, Tina a 5 year old with severe disabilities said I must have my food pureed. What Tina told us with her behaviour was that she hated to choke or cough when eating. However, it is very important to her health that her food be pureed.

So having her food pureed was listed under 'support Tina needs to stay healthy and safe' and not to cough or choke when eating was listed under 'most important to Tina now'

Information is generally related to the following areas so it may be useful to offer sub-headings

Examples:

in relationships with others and their interactions:

- ⊙ To live with Andy, Ellie, Laura and Kate
- ⊙ Seeing my favourite dinner lady



- ⊙ Not being supported by people who are overbearing, loud aggressive and in my face
- ⊙ People must take time to listen to me when I talk to them and not argue with me or nag. I may ask for your opinion – if I don't, then don't offer it.
- ⊙ Not being let down – people should let me know if they are going to be late
- ⊙ To speak to my sister Boo and Clare every week on the phone
- ⊙ Speak to Niki once a month on the phone and see her three or four times a year for a weekend
- ⊙ People must not answer questions for me as I can make my own decisions

in things to do, things to have:

- ⊙ A watch that works
- ⊙ A strong chair as I sit down heavily!
- ⊙ To watch all episodes of Coronations Street and Eastenders (including the omnibus)
- ⊙ To wear colourful patterned socks and hair bands every day
- ⊙ To keep the study reasonably tidy - so that I know where everything is, even if they are in piles rather than files
- ⊙ To eat out every other week (Indian, or at The Nose or The Lead Station) and a pizza from Pizza Express every month
- ⊙ To watch football on TV whenever possible, especially when Manchester United are playing
- ⊙ Nails polished in a fashionable colour every week

in rhythm or pace of life:

- ⊙ not to get up as soon as she has sat down
- ⊙ not to be rushed in anything
- ⊙ Getting up at my own pace – about two hours before I need to leave for work, and having a camomile herbal tea whilst still in my dressing gown
- ⊙ Not to have every weekend booked up

in positive rituals or routines:



- ⌚ Someone I trust being there for me to talk to for about half an hour when I come back from the day centre
- ⌚ To have at least one cup of coffee (with milk and two sweeteners) as soon as I am up in the morning, before getting dressed.
- ⌚ To always sit in the front seat of the car
- ⌚ Having a bath every other day, at night
- ⌚ A long walk every day
- ⌚ Staying up late and watching TV until I drop off at the weekend
- ⌚ I must have a sleep after my dinner in my room

things to avoid:

- ⌚ Parrots at all times
- ⌚ hot weather (anything over 70 degrees)
- ⌚ fights and arguments of any kind

### Important to the person for the future (from their perspective)

This list aims to capture the person's hopes, dreams and aspirations for the future. Great reviews identify what opportunities the person might like to have or try and what skills they would like to develop. The list (and its underlying themes) should be explored at the end of the meeting and commitment gained to help people achieve them.

Examples:

- ⌚ To go out and meet friends without my family
- ⌚ To go abroad on holiday- somewhere warm and not too hot
- ⌚ To go to college and do a gardening course – then find a job
- ⌚ I want to be a train driver
- ⌚ To live in a flat with blue carpets and curtains
- ⌚ To look after animals especially cats
- ⌚ Find a husband and have children

What support and help the person needs to stay healthy and safe



The list should describe what is important for the person to stay healthy and safe and identify what others need to know or do:

- ⌚ so that the person has what is important to him or her; and will stay healthy and safe.
- ⌚ It should not include things that the person can do for himself or herself.

Depending on the situation it may be helpful to introduce sub headings For example, 'characteristics of people who support me', 'support with communication'

Keep in mind that vital issues of health (or safety) may not be important to the person. Where this is the case they should be listed under "what support and help the person needs to stay healthy and safe" and not under 'what is important to the person'.

Where there are issues of health that are sensitive and/or very personal there needs to be a judgement about how much detail to include in the notes. Good review notes may identify that certain information is only available to people who need to know. Where the person is sensitive about an issue that needs to be widely known, such as a seizure disorder not fully controlled by medication, people at the meeting must work out with the person the most respectful way of sharing the information. This should be with the permission of the person, wherever possible.

Examples:

- ⌚ Remind Karen to take her tablets if she is about to eat
- ⌚ John needs support with safety in the kitchen and keeping his money secure
- ⌚ Gina is frightened of motorbikes
- ⌚ Tommy eats his lunch on a stay warm plate, with a grey bite reflex spoon
- ⌚ I must be supported to exercise or my arthritis will get worse
- ⌚ Lucy will 'vote with her feet' very often as this is the easiest way for her to express her dislike of a situation is to leave. She must always have the chance to leave a room, return home or get some extra space so she does not feel trapped.
- ⌚ Peter feels physically unsafe around another tenant and is concerned he may get hit again
- ⌚ Always acknowledge what Peter is saying or doing. NEVER ignore him.



- ⌚ Duncan will often take what you say literally and may find metaphors, sarcasm or jokes hard to understand.
- ⌚ Make sure that Michael always knows in advance where he is going, how, when and how long for and what he will need to take with him
- ⌚ Understand that I manage my time well, but it has natural peaks and troughs of productivity. I must know that I am trusted to complete my work.
- ⌚ Don't ask me to do anything without giving me a deadline

### Issues to work out/questions to answer (unresolved issues)

People should list things to work out and questions to be answered. It may include issues that people have very different views on; where there is not enough information; or other people who need to be involved. These are addressed during the action planning stage.

Examples:

- ⌚ How do we improve the quality of information being passed between school, home and short break staff?
- ⌚ Ongoing difficulties with seating – this needs reviewing
- ⌚ Long term care after leaving school
- ⌚ Lack of transport means problems getting to the social club

### What is working/not working from different perspectives

This heading records what is working and not working from the person's perspective and from the perspective of others.

Examples:

What is working (makes sense)

- ⌚ Paul enjoys his short breaks and has made new friends. He loves going to discos and receiving certificates for his school work.
- ⌚ Paul's family are happy with the new transport arrangements
- ⌚ Paul's teacher says his motivation and effort are excellent. He has made progress in using his communication book and learnt how to send e-mails to his friends.

What's not working (doesn't make sense)



- ⌚ Paul finds travelling in the mini bus very stressful and uncomfortable
- ⌚ Paul's family feel he is isolated from friends and family and would like to offer him new social opportunities
- ⌚ Paul's community nurse thinks that he misses out on outings because of the inflexibility of his feeding routine.

## Action plan

The action plan outlines who is going to do what to help people move toward the life that they want and stay healthy and safe. It often describes what needs to be maintained as well as what will be changed.

This is usually agreed at the end of the review meeting and is developed from:

- ⌚ Comparing the person's life now to what is important to them.
- ⌚ Discussing **what is and is not working** in the person's life, and setting actions to change what does not make sense and maintain what does make sense.

Considering and addressing the issues and questions .

Exploring comments or phrases (e.g respect, dignity) that give an idea of what is important but need clarifying and agreeing actions where necessary.

The same issue or item may appear under several headings and it is important to check if this indicates a priority for discussion.

It is very important to discuss health issues that the meeting needs to know or do something about. For many people this is where the balance between happy and safe/healthy is explored.

Any action plan that does not address significant issues of health is not acceptable. One of the errors that people make is to get so caught up in the positive aspects of the meeting that they do not address issues of health, especially if they, or the person, are uncomfortable with the particular issues. The challenge is to look at health through the eyes of the person as well as through the perceptions of the disability system and find a balance that works for both.



Actions should be specific and identify who is responsible for implementation and by when.

At this point people may also want to consider how the information can be developed into a full person centred plan

### Examples

- ⌚ Explore direct payments for Jean and family
- ⌚ Social Worker, tomorrow
- ⌚ Explore provision of communication equipment for use at home and school - teacher, by the end of the month
- ⌚ Find out what social activities (scouts, youth club, football) go on locally in the evening – Connexions worker and dad , next week
- ⌚ Make sure George continues to talk to his sister on the phone every weekend – mum and George
- ⌚ Discuss Fiona's health needs (mobility, stamina, eyesight) with the nurse – key worker and mum, next week
- ⌚ Referral to the wheelchair service for re-assessment
- ⌚ Mum , next week
- ⌚ Explore the possibility of a gardening course and allotment- Dennis, key worker and dad

### Conclusion

Used in this logical order we have found this process to be highly effective way of helping people to listen, learn and engage with each other.

The success of the meeting relies on everyone's preparation, participation and the skills of the facilitator. It is therefore crucial that facilitators receive appropriate training and support. However, it is vital to remember that however successful and person centred the meeting is, if every effort is not made to complete the actions then it is an unacceptable breach of trust. Neither a good meeting, nor a plan are the outcomes we are seeking - it is positive change for the person.

An exciting consequence of using person centred reviews is that people are asking for positive and flexible outcomes that challenge current patterns of provision. Is important that this is shared with the people who can act on this, through implementation groups, Partnership Boards, or senior managers, and that facilitators also provide information about direct payments and individualised funding. Through person centred reviews we can offer people the opportunities to take the information that has been gathered and develop this into a person centred plan. This could be the basis of a costed support plan, job description for workers, individual



service contracts and other opportunities for people to take more control over their lives. Simply changing the way we do reviews, could lead to change at many levels!

