



A Quick Check-up: Do We Walk the Walk?

It's been almost 30 years now, since we all began to question traditional assumptions about quality services and supports. Fortunately, it seems that these days there is a general belief that individualized and personalized is the way to go. And, we've seen a lot of progress. Most people can speak about person-centeredness with ease these days. Still, the question is lingering for most leaders: "We can talk the talk, but do we walk the walk?"

In an effort to support your introspection in this area, we have developed this short quiz. We value your commitment and recognize that your time is valuable. While the work is serious, we also want to provide a lighter touch. We hope that you can use this short quiz to look in a mirror and recognize areas for growth. We wanted to provide a lighter touch, so while it may be tempting to pick the silliest answer, but we hope that you will apply an objective eye and answer as honestly as you can.

This quiz is intended to be:

- **Short – should take no more than 15 - 20 minutes to complete**
- **Whimsical yet respectful**
- **Scorable but not a test**
- **Accessible – limited use of jargon, no need for actual data**

This can be used on your own or with other decision makers in your organization as a way to begin discussions about quality initiatives and strategic planning.

So, please enjoy yourself and we sincerely hope that you have some "aha" moments.



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Consider this...



Your HR Director has proposed that your organization present at a national conference on the exemplary Human Resource practices at your organization. You visit the Conference web site and learn that the theme of the Conference is “Fulfilling Dreams – One Person at a Time”. You know that there are lots of good things about your agency’s practices, but in a moment of clarity you decide to explore further before approving the request. You ask yourself the questions “Do we really expect our staff and other resources to help people fulfill their dreams? Do we equip them? Is it really happening?”

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Section I

*Choose the answer that **most accurately** describes your organization.*

1. Staffing and other resources are allocated based on:

- Each person’s goals and priorities. YEA!, but it’s chaotic sometimes.
- Organizational Schedule. We run like clockwork.
- Staff Convenience. We take care of each other.
- Professional Assessment. So we can make sure everyone gets exactly what they need.
- Whoever Shows Up. We can’t afford to be choosy, ...can we?

2. Who makes final decisions on hiring, firing staff?

- Supervisor. We promised them they would be in charge.
- People we serve. If it’s not a good fit, we’ll lose them soon enough.
- Directors. Who’s running this show anyway?
- Parents. Things go much more smoothly when families are content.
(Check here instead if your organization supports only children)
- Human Resources. Of course, they are the experts!

3. Development of individualized and personalized services:

- Drains staff. It is soooooo hard!
- Motivates staff / adds to job satisfaction. There’s never a dull moment.
- Improves staff recruitment and retention. We can promise variety and excitement.
- Requires more staff. We’re just spread way too thin otherwise.
- Gives staff a sense of being part of helping improve quality of life. How cool is it to see people taking charge and growing!

4. Our workforce balances what's important to individuals with risk management.

- All of the time. We are really smart cookies!
- Most of the time. Sometimes we goof up, but mistakes are okay as long as we learn.
- Sometimes. We usually err on the side of caution with the toughies.
- It depends. If the staff are really good, if families agree, if there is not a policy that forbids it, if we have a doctors order, etc., etc.
- Hardly ever. Our job is to stay out of the papers!

*Choose **all answers** that apply to your organization.*

5. Direct support professionals contribute to the organization by:

- Participating in plan development for the people they support.
- Making decisions about how we allocate our resources.
- Serving on the Board.
- Serving on committees.
- Running organizations.
- Attending national conferences.
- Planning a holiday party.
- Evaluating their peers.

6. We are able to respond and support people to achieve their goals despite workforce challenges because we:

- Provide transportation.
- Recognize staff who are creative in their approaches.
- Offer financial incentives to staff.
- Provide leadership development.
- Measure job satisfaction related to success with supporting people to achieve goals.

A Question to make you go Hmmmmm.....

7. What is your organization doing to focus staff on helping people fulfill their dreams?

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Scoring Section I

Count the number of checks in each color in the above six questions.	Total brown answers:	_____	X	=	_____
	Total yellow answers:	_____	X	=	_____
	Total blue answers:	_____	X	=	_____
	Total red answers:	_____	X	=	_____
	Fill in the red blanks to the right, and your score will be calculated for you!	Total purple answers:	_____	X	=
Total green answers:		_____	X	=	_____
	Total points you scored in Section I:	_____			

Totals possible points in Section I: 65

Consider this...



You were recently at a meeting with the other directors in your state. After a particularly depressing conversation about all the rules and regulations, funding cuts, bad press, etc., you impulsively proclaimed that your organization isn't ruled by those external forces. When pressed for a further explanation, you (somewhat less forcefully) asserted that by staying focused on your mission and vision, you are able to creatively respond to anything that comes along. Your mission is to "Enable and Empower People to Live the Lives they Design". Upon further reflection, you wonder, "Are we really that creative? What would being truly focused on and responsive to people look like?"

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Section II

*Choose the answer that **most accurately** describes your organization.*

1. Our organization looks outside the field to seek solutions to the issues we face.

- When pigs fly.
- Duh! All the time.
- As often as we can and when we have time.
- When funding runs out.
- Not unless we educate the community first.

2. How much pain/discomfort can you tolerate in responding to individual needs?

- Pain? Discomfort? More like adventure! What an adrenaline rush!
- It hurts, but nothing ventured, nothing gained, right? It's only temporary.
- What doesn't kill us makes us stronger. Some things you just have to do.
- We try to avoid it. We'd never keep the doors open if we had to endure too much pain or discomfort.
- We know what we're doing; we've been at this long enough that we don't experience any real pain. We're pretty comfortable with things as they are.

Choose *all answers* that apply to your organization.

3. Our organization assesses satisfaction with services by/through:

- Spending time with people at the point of services.
- Suggestion box.
- Number of complaints.
- Discussion groups.
- Open forums.
- Third party evaluation.
- Interviews.
- Informants/grapevine.
- Asking managers.

4. Our organization:

- Listens and learns.
- Takes action.
- Evaluates results.
- Implements creative solutions.
- Bends and stretches rules.
- Follows regulations at all times.

A Question to make you go Hmmmm.....

5. How creative is your organization at overcoming barriers affecting people's goals?

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Scoring Section II

Count the number of checks in each color in the above six questions.

Total brown answers: _____ X = _____
Total yellow answers: _____ X = _____
Total blue answers: _____ X = _____
Total red answers: _____ X = _____
Total purple answers: _____ X = _____
Total green answers: _____ X = _____

Fill in the red blanks to the right, and your score will be calculated for you!

Total points you scored in Section II: _____

Totals possible points in Section II: 65

Consider this...



At last year's Board Retreat, a new member asked what "Person-Directed Planning" was all about. You have since sent her your organization's planning tools and policy, given her a reading list, invited her to attend a planning meeting, and your Service Coordination Director has met with her two times. She now wants to know what this means for her role on the Board. Furthermore, she asked some very hard questions. "Is this planning process and "person-centered services" more than forms and policy and procedure? Does it permeate the leadership and culture of the organization?"

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Section III

*Choose the answer that **most accurately** describes your organization.*

1. Being able to focus what is important to each person is most dependent upon:

- Our internal values. We only hire people who "get it".
- Staff commitment, leadership. If we set the expectations and provide the tools, only those who really believe will hang in there.
- Staff funding. Money talks!
- People's wants vs. family wants. If we buck the family, they'll pull the person out of services. What good would that do? We do the best we can.
- Qualified staff. Service Coordinators are the experts. There's got to be training out there!
- Community acceptance. As long as we have NIMBY (not in my back yard), we'll never get it completely right.

2. Our Board of Directors balances what's important to individuals with risk management.

- They do it.
- They don't do it.
- This is impossible to answer!
- Depends on the day/time of year!

3. Developing individualized services and supports is something we do:

- As a special project. We are always looking for grant money.
- When someone asks for it. The people that are really interested in it speak up for themselves.
- For everyone – people served and staff. We are all in this together!
- As part of our strategic plan. We hope to get there someday.
- As required by regulation. When the funders support it, then we'll do it.

4. How involved are self-advocates in governance?

- Completely. We don't make a move without them.
- Not at all — it's not their role. Most of this governance stuff wouldn't really interest them anyway.
- As much as is appropriate. We take their opinions into consideration.
- We are supporting people to have meaningful involvement. We haven't got it figured out yet, but we're trying!
- What about confidentiality? Some things might be too sensitive.

*Choose **all answers** that apply to your organization.*

5. We manifest respect for people by:

- Developing flexible schedules according to preference.
- Supporting people to manage their own money.
- Involving people in the hiring of their staff.
- Supporting people to choose services.
- Providing communication/language training.
- Not having separate restrooms.
- Providing transportation/access.
- Following through on promises.
- Supporting people with their personal appearance.
- Providing real job preparation.
- Supporting people to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.
- Supporting people to answer their own phone, handle their own mail.
- Insisting on real jobs for all people – gainful employment.
- Accepting **only** respectful treatment for all people; people supported and direct support professionals.

6. Self advocates contribute to leadership of the organization by:

- Creating their own plans.
- Allocating our resources.
- Serving on the Board.
- Serving on committees.
- Running organizations.
- Attending national conferences.
- Planning a holiday party.
- Evaluating staff.

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Scoring Section III

Count the number of checks in each color in the above six questions.

Fill in the red blanks to the right, and your score will be calculated for you!

Total brown answers: _____ X = _____
 Total yellow answers: _____ X = _____
 Total blue answers: _____ X = _____
 Total red answers: _____ X = _____
 Total purple answers: _____ X = _____
 Total green answers: _____ X = _____
 Total violet answers: _____ X = _____
 Total teal answers: _____ X = _____

Total points you scored in Section III: _____

Totals possible points in Section III: 135

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Are you walking the walk?

Total number of points you scored: _____

Total possible points Sections I – III: 265

15 – 60	Just Talking
61 – 130	Talking and Walking
131 – 200	Walking the Talk
201 – 265	No longer walking, you are driving!