MAY 10, 2016

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>> Hi. Welcome to the webcast, Looking Towards the Future, Using Person‑Centered Planning Tools Pre‑K through Adulthood.

My name's Teresa Cogar. I'm a training staff at the Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence.

During today's presentation I'd like to talk to you about the person‑centered process. I'd also like to introduce some tools you can use with individuals with ASD and intellectual disability to help you through that process.

I'd also like to talk to you about how to adapt those tools so that they're important to the person using those tools as they go through the process.

Currently our students have many open doors towards their future. It's important that as we take them through the person‑centered planning process that we keep those doors open.

Sometimes in education we get wrapped in all the things we have to do, the IEP's, transition planning, and oftentimes some of those doors close and we make decisions for our individuals instead of with them.

What if we could use the decision‑making process and look at all of the alternatives, all of the uncertainty in our student's life, looking at consequences, their interpersonal relationships, all of the complexity in their lives and really sit down with them and look at those on a personal level, looking at the ‑‑ looking with the people in their lives and saying how does this impact the people around them, how can we build a positive and possible future for them. We're looking at everything in their life and making a road for them to be successful.

And that's making decisions with them, looking at when things are happening in their life, who are the important people in their life, what is going on around them, how will that impact what happens next to them, where are they going in life, the relationships, their employment, what's happening to them in school, why is that so important to them and how is that going to impact them?

And not taking decisions for them. It's really important to understand that individuals with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities have the capacity and the capability. It's their right to make their own decisions and we should not make them for them. We should help make decisions with them.

Let me talk to you a little bit about what is person‑centered planning. It's a decision‑making process to plan for their future. You may think to yourself we already do that in schools. We have IEP meetings, transition planning meetings. What I'm going to talk to you about through the duration of this discussion is how we can make even those processes more person centered. It's going to take some time on our part and dedication, but it's well worth it for the individual in the long‑term for us to do so.

It's going to increase the individual's quality of lifelong term by developing a plan to support their hopes and dreams and passions. We must remember that all individuals, especially our individuals with autism spectrum disorder do have hopes and dreams and passions. It's our job to find out what those are and promote those throughout their educational career so they can become successful adults in society and in their community.

It brings together a support network of people to help support individuals to reach their desired outcomes. Whether that's friendships, to have a relationship, whether that's to have some sort of employment once they transition out of school. It's our job again to help bring ‑‑ to get the support network of people, not just the people within the school, but the people that are a part of their life outside of school help achieve those outcomes for them.

So it involves a dedicated team and I know so many of us in the schools are already dedicated to look at what we do for our students and, yes, it takes extra time and a lot of involvement on our part to make sure those teams come together.

And especially during planning meetings it takes a lot of effort on our part to get all those people to the table. The main person that needs to be at that table is the student. And I urge people who are out there, and there's a lot of people already doing this throughout the state, no matter the person's abilities ‑‑ and I like to use the word abilities rather than the deficit model, include them at the table even at their earliest age. I know even at Pre‑K we do have why you think individuals as early as four that we are including in meetings. If you don't feel it's appropriate at that age, at least you let them know you're talking about them. People understand more than we give them credit for. From early on let's make sure our individuals we're working with know we are talking about their future, we understand they have hopes and dreams, and that we want them to succeed. And that's very, very important.

Think about what you're currently doing in your school system. It's a paradigm shift for us to continue to include students in IEP meetings and transition, even though that's the law and it should be included. It's still somewhat a paradigm shift. We want to continue to shift that paradigm in encouraging people all across the state and outside of the state to include individuals in their own person‑centered plans and also as part of those meetings within the school.

And if you're already doing that, a big kudos to you because I know there are many places that are doing that and we encourage you and give you big kudos for that. Thank you.

It's really about changing mind sets, which is difficult. For a long time in school divisions we've had the mind‑set that children in special education students, we're going to have meetings and we're going to make decisions for them like I said before. So we really ‑‑ if the only truly failure is when we walk away we assume incompetence. And we have to presume competence for our individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with autism spectrum disorder. No matter what their cognitive functioning level is or their communication level is, whether they're nonverbal or verbal, we have to presume competence and include them in what we are doing and making sure that they understand what we are doing and that we're taking into consideration again their strengths, interests, preferences needs, hopes, and dreams.

Dr. Beth mount, she's written several books. She wrote a person called person‑centered planning, finding directions for change using person‑centered change. This will be at the end of your PowerPoint presentation so you can get this book if you like. It's a great book. But Dr. Beth mount talks a lot about person‑centered versus system‑centered. So, again, in schools we are a system. That's totally understandable, but sometimes in our system we focus on labels. We emphasize deficits and needs instead of what are students' capabilities and gifts. We rely on professionals to make the judgments instead of bringing in more of the family and people who work directly with the individual outside of the school to help us build good descriptions of who those individuals really are. We also invest a lot in standardized testing and assessments and we also have a lot of ‑‑ generate a lot of written reports about our students. So lots of times when our students come to the table, their picture is ‑‑ their liable might be a student with ASD. Here's all of the things I need. Here's all the testing that says what I need, and so let's make some decision business me. And all of those things we do need in the school system. What we also need is, well, who is this individual? A person should always be a person first and not their label. Instead of an individual with autism, they should just be an individual. The label should always come second. What does that individual need as just an individual who has communication needs, social needs, who maybe has some behavioral needs. Just like anybody else we should see that person as a person and not as their label.

Spend time getting to know that person. Some of our individuals with autism, actually all of them I know, are some of the most amazing people that I know and they have more capabilities and gifts than I've ever thought of and that I have. So getting to know them, their capabilities and gifts and how we can use those instructionally and how we can use those to benefit them and their future, what that might look like for them in employment, in relationships, in social skills if they're ever in a TA program, if they're going to go out into the community, how we can use that even in school on our on our trips and in the lunch room and all the things we work on with school, it's really important to get to know the person, just like we would get to know any other individual.

Again, looking at the individual in the context of the family and community they live in. And I understand that sometimes those are a little harder relationships to have and we have to have boundaries within those relationships. But person‑centered planning is let's bring all the people to the table, not just the parent guard I can't know. If we have a grandparent or a neighbor who really knows an individual well, knows what reinforces them, knows they have this great gift, they're a great guitar player and every Sunday they play the guitar at church, let's know about that so maybe we can get that child involved in music, maybe we can foster that gift so some day that can be either leisure skill or even a career.

The importance of person‑centered planning, there's many things but it really again I think I've emphasized helps to focus on seeing the person as a total person and our students in special education go a long time, up to 22 years. So it's really important early on, and this is why I mentioned Pre‑K, that we get to see the person for who they are from the minute they walk into school at an early age by the time they leave us and really focus on that total person. As they're going through their time with us, things change and we take that person‑centered plan and continue to tweak it as they change and grow so we're growing with them and we see the total person as they grow through the years.

Person‑centered planning, the importance is to really recognize the desires. Even our desires, hopes, and dreams change; theirs will as well. We don't want to peg or put someone in the track of this is what they're going to do when they graduate or this is going to be our transition plan we're going to stick to this and nothing's going to change. All things change.

The person‑centered plan is what is happening to our student, what are their hopes and dreams, have they changed, and is it reasonable for them, is it reasonable for the people around them, just like anyone else and how are we going to help them get there?

And there's several ways to think about the individual's future.

Again, there's lots of things we have to think about with any individual student we're working with, but especially a student with autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disorder, there's lots of things we have to think about as we go through life and what is their quality of life going to be overall, especially when parents are caregivers have gone. Who's going to educate them, who's going to take care of them, are they able to express their want and their needs. What's working for them, what's not working for them? Are they able to have a quality of life that they want that's important to them?

Outcomes from person‑centered planning should be first and foremost that the individual really knows themselves. Again, we can foster that throughout the years by using some of these tools I'm going to show you in a moment, but really having them know themselves so they can advocate for themselves. The biggest thing we know in the disability world is really, really important for our individuals, especially on the spectrum, to be able to advocate for themselves. That way they're not in danger, that way they know, again, what do I want for me and how can I express that in a way that I won't put myself in harm's way, that I can do that in a way that's respectful to others, respectful to myself?

Being able to express what they want, they like, and what they don't like. Again, having that just better quality of life overall, to be able to have those employment. Do I want to work at Walmart? Do I want to go on to get a college degree? Many of students with autism spectrum disorder go on to college and so we should encourage that.

Relationships, boyfriend‑girlfriend, partner of life, are my relationships with my friends, coworkers, very important, and living arrangements. Again, what are living arrangements going to look for me down the road? Something that we should really be looking at not just at the high school level but maybe even just a little earlier, getting that person‑centered planning team ready for how to not only help that person understand what's going to happen but that team as well.

So we really need to think about what our students need, especially our students on the autism spectrum. I had the luxury of working for the on determine project for many years and we would travel around the state and I'm going to show you some tools from that project in just a moment. I'm going to share with you the Web site at the end, but I want to encourage you to always think about what your students need. As we were traveling this state and we were presenting tools, we would present tools and oftentimes people from the crowd would say, well this won't work for my student, my student has intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder, and I thought to myself, but it will.

One day I said to my friend who's the director of the project also, John McKnott, I said these will work for these individuals. We need to add pictures, objects, we need to add those things because this is the way that they learn, this is the way they communicate, this is the way they respond to things. So he granted me permission and we made it happen. So we started presenting these things across the state and it really took off. So many of you are probably using these in your schools already and the reason I mention these person‑centered planning tools is because self determination is one of the keys to person‑centered planning. You have to have problem solving skills, you have to have self advocacy skills, you have to have the ability to make decisions. So these tools are just a piece of how to make something person centered and I'm going to explain to you a little bit later how we're going to incorporate these person‑centered tools into the system that we already have as the school system.

So, again, just thinking about how do our students learn, many, not all, of our students with autism are visual learners. Very kinesthetic. Again, adapting the tools I'm going to show you using pictures object, making them tactile so they can tape the board maker or the real picture off of the tool and handing it to something, it's very important to them.

How do they communicate? Again, not all of our students are verbal, but it doesn't mean they don't know what's going on and it doesn't mean they don't have hopes, dreams, desires, interests, and preferences. It's our job to make sure we have a tool and a way to communicate with them and they have a way to communicate with us.

So we need to respond accordingly. How do she they respond? The tools I'm going to show you are a way for them as well as us as well. It's a way for them to communicate. Again it's a way to communicate those strengths, interests, and preferences, needs.

Again, we really need to think about, especially with people on the spectrum, who are the important people in their life. People on the spectrum really do form strong bonds that are useful. It's those people they form the strongest bonds we need to be in touch with because they know those students and individuals the best and so when we find out who are those important people in their life and what awesome capabilities they have and what they learn from them we can really have a person centered plan. I'm going to talk to you about some person centered tools. The good day plan, the one‑pager the goal setting are all from the I'm Determined project. And MAPS and PATHS, talk to you a bit about those, are tools that have been around in the person‑centered planning world for a long time.

Let's briefly talk about the good day plan. Again, this is kind of good day for me when I have lunch, when I get to talk to my friends, and when I get my Starbucks coffee.

So this is what the good day plan looks like originally when you go on the I'm Determined site. I'll briefly give you that site. Like I said, it's going to be at the end of the PowerPoint. WWW.I'm Determined.org.

This is what it looks like originally and this is what we were going around and showing people and I said this is great. You can write, draw on this, you can do whatever, okay? So it's what happens on a good day. Does it happen now? What needs to happen to make it a good day, and who with can help me. So, again, very person centered because we're asking the student, or the individual, what happens to you, instead of us saying this is what happens to you on a good day. And at the beginning of teaching this tool you might have to help that student.

Remember our students with ASD do have some issues with problem solving. They might not know if you ask them what happens on a good day, remember it's those problem‑solving questions that they do have difficulty with. You might have to help them understand that process at first. Once that process starts rolling, we want them to start to come to their own answers. Does it happen now? Here's where you can write anything. You can write yes, no, you can write sometimes, always.

What happens to make at that good day? This is where the problem solving really comes in and they be who can help me.

So in the person centered planning world, my friend Mack McFarr, she works at TTAC in blacksburg of Virginia tech ‑‑ or sorry, she works at Radford. Sorry Mac. We came to the decision that some of our students, that was a little difficult for. So we had to go to a person centered tool which is called what's important to me and for me. We had to take a step back. This does come from the person‑centered planning world. We put it on the template and decided what happens on a good day, what's important to me and what's important for me.

So what might be important to me is listening to my music. What might be important for me is taking my medicine. Helping students differentiate versus what's important to me versus what's important for me.

Here's one that is differentiating. You can see it has pictures. Very important in the world of autism is checklists. Write when something's finished, I need to check it off. If I had my hot cocoa, what happens on a good day, I had my hot cocoa. Does it happen now? Once in a while. What needs to happen to make it a good day. So basically what needs to make it happen every day. I need to put a hot cocoa packet in the must go by the microwave each night before I go to bed. That's that problem solving. Imagine this if you are in school and you're having an issue with a student and you're just trying to get them through the day and you wanted to make it about the person. So here's where we start to bring person‑centered planning into our school system when we say, hey, we want to help you get through the day. This is about you. This is not about our forms, our ‑‑ it is about our proceeds, but it this just isn't about a form filling out saying you had a bad day and we hope you come back tomorrow and you get it together. This is about let's make it person centered, let's make it about you. You have trouble on the bus and you need headphones. Every day when you come to school you're having problems getting off the bus. So instead of you're having problems every day on the bus, let's take it to the person, let's find out what is going on with you. Let's talk to the bus driver. Let's talk to mom to figure out what happened before and let's actually put it on a piece of paper on a plan so that every day the individual with autism was very individual. Who needs to see that, who needs to be reminded of that. Can have a successful day because it's in front of them. Remember, our individuals with autism, we're feeding them all of these things we're trying the auditory process auditorially. It floods their brain and I've heard many individuals with autism say if you say something to me I have to stop and process it and then I have to think about it again. The individual and adapting it in a way that make sense, is key is to making it person centered so it makes sense when they're planning.

Who could help me, we have mom, case manager, again, the goal at the end is always to be the individual and that's ‑‑ if it's not the individual at first, that's okay. We want whatever support system is there to be there.

Here's just another one. You can see at the beginning they have a couple visuals. Again, with some kind of like a task analysis underneath, what happens on a good day, I put my coat in my locker, I use the bathroom, I clock in on time. Does it happen now? There's a thumbs down. Another great way to communicate. It doesn't always have to be words. Again, how does that individual with autism communicate? What do they understand? What do they respond to? Again, these can be Velcroed icons on the sheet where they can then hand it to you.

Remember, it's not just a communication tool for you to give to them, it's also for them to communicate to you as well. And then you can see they talk about setting the timer would help and then who could help me? Dad. So just some things on that one.

I'm sorry, before I go on to the next one, I do want to just mention that each of these tools that I'm showing you, there's a whole video on the I'm Determined site about these different rating tools, and it's called different rating, for instance, this is a good day plan. So if you go on the WW.I'm Determined site and you go under good day plan, there will be a video ‑‑ there's many videos, but there's a video called different rating the good day plan. What I want to you see under there is there's how we also differentiate the tools using objects, using board maker pictures and other variety of ways, how these tools were used. When I say Pre‑K through adulthood, you may be wondering how do I use this with Pre‑K? It might just start with one column. We often to say to people you don't have to present this whole thing at one time. You just might say what happens on a good day? And you might have that little coat icon object on that ‑‑ in that square. You might present it to the kid. And then you might have does it happen now? You might have a thumbs up. But you're teaching the child what makes them a good day. You're using the person as the center of what their world is about and you're teaching them what is important for them, what's important to them and how their world is going to be successful, but you're making them the center of what is going to happen to make them successful.

This is just an example of the one‑pager. Again, I know lots of people in Virginia are using these tools and I know that the state is so appreciative of that because it's really changing lives and it's really changing lives of people with autism spectrum disorder.

The one‑pager, this is just an example of some things that you can ‑‑ maybe some questions, examples of what you might put underneath. It says my strengths, my interests, my preferences, my needs. The great thing about these templates, for instance, you can change the titles. If you wanted to change my interests to something else, you could. Sometimes under my needs they put my accommodations. So the one‑pager has been a great way to use in the present level of performance in the IEP. I'm going to talk about that a little later. But you can actually change the titles of some of these things to meet the student's needs if you'd like. But again, always promote it in a positive way, always about what capabilities, gifts, strengths, preferences.

So I wanted to show you an example of one I actually made about myself. My strengths are that I'm a visual learner, that I'm very good about appointments and reminders. I'm very good about remembering on June 30th I'm actually going, you know, to see someone I have an appointment with. I'm very good at remembering those things. My interests are listening to music. I also write music and I love to play instruments. My preferences are I actually live in a very wooded area three hours from here but I really do like coming to the city. I like working in the city, I like going to Washington, D.C., to jazz clubs to listen to music. My needs are I need a lot of sleep now that I'm getting older. Again, you saw friends in my good day plan. Here's kind of another reiteration of this. I really need to be around my friends. It's really important. I'm a people person and I like being with my friends. And I need my computer when I'm not at work. And I need help with computer needs. So it's just something I put together. These are board maker pictures. You can put line drawings in here, right? You could put real pictures in here. You could put objects in here. So the ‑‑ again, the limits ‑‑ it's actually limitless. So I really want you to ‑‑ as educators and people who serve individuals on this spectrum, we are creative thinkers. We think outside the box. I want us to continue to do that as we think of these tools.

Again, if this is too overwhelming for an individual, start with one thing. Start with my strengths. Build that individual up and think about ‑‑ again, think about the person. Just start hooker are your strengths and every day go through that with them, here are your strengths. Then start with, hey, here are your strengths and your interests.

We don't have to do the whole thing at one time. We can start building it up because the whole part of a person centered plan is to build that person and build the total focus around that person so they know who they are by the time they exit our services so that when they are in adulthood and they actually do person‑centered planning, we've given them a heads‑up, we've given them a gain, we've given them the ability to already know who they are so they don't have to figure that out later.

Here's a great one. You can see there's real pictures in here and there's always some ‑‑ there's a thumbs‑up in here. I love this one because this is from Joe. Joe says here's what I'd like to do. You can see how the titles have been changed. Use what works for you and the individual you work with. I like to recycle. I like to deliver paper. If you think about our students with autism, this is a classic one, right? We're going to get these kind of answers and I really love this.

Accommodations at work, hey, verbal praise. This is really important because when you make it a person‑centered plan and you're thinking about what works for the individual, hey, verbal praise works for me, or, hey, I like a high five or I like when you take me out into the community and we go for a walk in the park. Those things are really, really important. If that individual can't say it to you, the importance about the person‑centered planning is having that team of people who know that individual who will be able to say it to you about that individual. So those things can still be put on this plan and that's why it's important to get that team around you who knows that individual.

Accommodations my augmentive communication system. Things I want in the future. To graduate. To attend senior breakfasts. To attend prom. So some things that maybe individuals didn't know about Joe but because Joe had a team around him who did know those things about him we were able to put it down on paper.

Goal setting. Everyone does goal setting. But, again, we're talking about the no just at the IEP or transition time. We're talking about early on in kindergarten. Which what is a goal I want to do. Maybe I just want to sit in circle time today. Maybe just sing a song with my group today. So that's going to be the goal. Maybe I want to go on a CBI trip and in order to do that I need to have calm hands and listen to directions and follow the teacher. So you have ‑‑ or make a picture icons. If you look at the differentiated video that's actually one of the examples that I gave.

You can think outside of the box and those goals and what those students need and you use it as a teaching tool for students with autism. Again, if you ask them what a goal is, may they come up with it right away? No. It's our job to help them understand what goal setting is, how you can get there, what he thinks this you into he had to do to get there.

So hence the goal setting template. In the middle you put what that goal is.

Right there in the middle of this you can print these off from the Web site and what I always used to do is laminate them, slap some Velcro in the middle of there and put a board maker icon or a picture or object and put that in the middle. So my goal is like I said to go on a CBI trip and that picture would go in the middle.

The rays are what are the outcomes going to be. It could be I make friends, I get to go out in the community. You don't have to fill every arrow. It could just be a couple of things. But teaching students what are the outcomes, what are the great and positive things that could happen for you and the people around you because you got to go on that community‑based trip.

And then what do I need to get there, and those are the steps. And, again, along the bottom I just put three board maker, and it was calm hands, following the teacher, et cetera.

Here's one. Again, comes from my friend Donna Radford, and her daughter, she wanted to move out. This is when we talk about the person‑centered plan. They had done a plan and said to themselves, well, she's just going to live with us and the daughter was like, well, I really don't want to live at home. And it was kind of a shocker. But they worked through it. They said if you want to move out we need to goal set and do some things. This is how they adapted this. I love this. They put the icons as you can see in the middle. She was a reader. They used words as well. You could see one of her goals of moving out, one of the outcomes she hoped to get was a man. So, again, very volunteering jobs but very real‑life things. These are things we really have to listen to, consider, be aware of, and respect about our individuals with disabilities, because they are like you and I. They still have the same wants and needs and desires. And so we have to take them seriously. And knowing these things, knowing that roommates, hobbies, a man, there's some other instructional pieces that go in there. So we have to talk about safety and sexual safety and all of those kinds of things and so keep working on that.

But what do I need to get there? So they adapted this by making boxes. Okay, so you want roommates? Here's a checklist. Remember, teaching individuals with autism, let's make a checklist of things you have to do in order to have those roommates. And the same with some of the other outcomes as well.

So, again, the great thing is this is very person centered because this tool was very much adapted for this individual alone and it was all about her wants, needs, and desires. So I think this is a great way to show the person‑centered piece.

So let's just talk a little bit about MAPS. I couldn't do a person‑centered planning presentation without mentioning MAPS, which is making action plans, which was created by Marsha forest and jack Pearpoint from inclusion press. And they really were the creators of this person‑centered philosophy. And they have wonderful materials and you'll see there's a lot of similarities to the things that determined project uses. MAPS are great things, tools that you can use at your fingerprints tomorrow, just like the I'm Determined tools. For instance, they have a working and what's not working. So again, you can sit down with the individual and you can say what's working for you and what's not working for you and really find out from the individual what is ‑‑ you might be surprised by their answers. And be prepared for those because some of those might be something instructionally, might not be working for them in your classroom.

Remember, especially with students with ASD, it might be the lights are too strong for me or there's a smell in the back of the classroom that I smell every day, could we work on getting rid of that or could we put a different smell in place or there's ‑‑ remember our students with ASD have different things that happen to them that may not happen to other individuals. So that could affect how their behavior, it could affect what they're doing instructionally, how they're engaged in a task. To really sit down and engage with them and find out what's going on is very important.

You saw the important to and for not for in what I'm presented to the I'm Determined tool. This is very ‑‑ in the adult services world, if you're watching from the adult services world, this something you do all the time. This is on the ISP. This is something that I see pretty regularly. This is what you start with. What's important to the individual and what's important for the individual as you go through.

What's great about MAPS is there are all kinds of MAPS. There's a your story map where you find out what the story is of the individual from their birth to wherever they're at right now in their life. There's actually a nightmare map as well. This individual put my nightmare is to be lonely with no support. Again, you have ready to hear what these individuals are going to communicate to you, whether that's verbally or nonverbally, correct? Something we just always need to be thinking about, because, remember, it's not just our verbal students who are going to be engaged in these person‑centered planning process; it's going to be students and individuals who are nonverbal as well. So whether they're communicating through us through a device, through sign, through pictures, through whatever that means is we have to be able to be prepared for that.

There's dreams. There's a relationship map where you draw the person in the middle and you draw the important people around them in their life. There's so many maps. And you can find them through Marsha forest and Jack Pearpoint or in the Dr. mount book that's going to be at the end of the PowerPoint.

The whole point with MAPS is you can bring them together and see that total ‑‑ again, person‑centered piece is seeing that total picture of the individual so that I can know, oh, this is so‑and‑so's nightmares but this is also their dreams. So I can start to put a picture. I can start to plan instructionally better for them. I can start to plan what our next IEP meeting is going to look like because I know a little bit more about them. So I know this is where we really need to focus on for our behavioral goal. This is where we really need to focus on for our social skills goal or this is where we need to focus on for this goal because now I have a better picture about them. It's just not about the system and what we have as our curriculum, which we need to follow, but it's also about what the student, what their real needs are. It's individualized education plan for a reason. So that's why we need to look at the person first and what their needs are so that we can incorporate that into what we're doing in the system.

Planning alternatives, PATH is planning alternative tomorrow with hope created by Marsha forest and jack Pearpoint. PATH is something done a lot in the adult services world. You really should be trained to be a PATH facilitator. But I want to mention it to you because it is a great way. PATHs have been done in schools. There's people all over the state who do know how to do PATHs and have been called into school systems, especially when there's a little harder cases and we're trying to get families together on the same page so we can put a successful plan in place for individuals who are going to graduate, go out into the community and we're trying to plan a better quality of life for them. But it's a great thing, especially for students with autism, because again it's a graphic facilitation of what your future's going to be. It's highly effective because it puts those supports and services in place and it develops that plan for your future. You set a goal and then as part of the journey, the path is a journey, you set actions and achieve those goals and record them.

So let's take a look at just kind of what Marsha and Jack put in place as their template. The star at the top is the long‑term goals and ideas and the outcomes.

You can see that step two is by this time what we're going to do next year. So maybe have a student ‑‑ maybe just have a short‑term goal of driving. So you put the steps in place. So, for instance, No. 6 is putting the strategies in place for that progress towards striving. Then you go through the first steps, the action, the goals, who are you going to help, who are you going to enroll to help you with those things and No. 3 where are you currently. Maybe not driving at all. Maybe you've never even taken the driver's test. So would enroll Driver's Ed instructor, maybe also help from your parents, et cetera, et cetera. But the great part is you actually draw that out and you talk about it and you include the person. So we're not just talking about this at some transition plan meeting and we say, oh, we like driving, maybe you can't drive or do you have the capability to drive, maybe driving isn't for you right now, we really talk about it and we say, hey, is this something that's really going to happen? If it is, we've got to map it out and say here's who's going to help you, here's the checklist of what's going to happen and by when. And where we're going to record these along the way and you're going to be accountable and we're going to help you be accountable but you are accountable as well. And that's part of what's important about person‑centered planning. It's been really successful with transition because we can have a meeting before the meeting. And I know, again, that takes time. I understand that, I really do, but time up front is worth it so that we're not sitting at those meetings, the IEP meetings and transition meetings going over things. We've already built and established relationships with folks and the individual. We've already established those relationships and already decided who the student is, what their needs are, what their capabilities are. Hey, you are capable of doing this. So let's really sit down and map out a plan. We did a PATH and decided hearsay things we're going to do so here's what we put in the transition plan. Or here we did some MAPS and we decided here's what you're really afraid of but here's what you're capable of. So we're going to put this as part of the IEP or in the transition plan. This is how we take person centered and we make it work in the system. And I understand this is a very, very brief overview, but I just want to encourage us of thinking of taking person centered, listening more to the individual and what their true needs are and really incorporating that into what we do.

During the person‑centered meeting, if you have a meeting outside of an IEP, so this is me really saying this is a meeting outside of an IEP meeting or a transition meeting. This is a meeting where you say, again, you have a dedicated team and maybe you've done some MAPS, maybe even looked at some of the I'm Determined tools and you just talked about them with a dedicated team of individuals and you're just getting to know the person and their team outside of the meeting, outside of the school meetings.

What assistive technology might that individual need during the meeting? Do they need an iPad? Do they need the audit com device, textbook? Remember we're talking about individuals with autism who have communications needs. Do they need a notebook? What do they need? What type of prompts may they need during the meeting. Remember not all of our individuals with autism are going to speak up. Do they need the prompt to say so‑and‑so, what would you like to contribute to the meeting or now it's your turn to speak about this, what would you like to say about this? Just like any good educator would we need to continue to remember to include them in the meeting by including those prompts.

Is there a visual agenda? A lot of times we go into meetings and we forget the individuals who are in the meeting may need that visual agenda to follow along with us. And a lot of members of the meeting might benefit from it as well. And have they practiced ahead of time? Remember, our students with autism, sometimes they need additional time or practice to say what they want and to say it where they feel comfortable. So sometimes practicing those pieces that they want to say is really beneficial to them.

Again, looking at the assistive technology piece, I already mentioned iPads and AUD devices.

Here's an visual of a visual agenda. Just knowing who the participants are, again, you can get a piece of paper and write an agenda on it and maybe just put who their participants are and what's going to happen that day or maybe you draw pictures. Again, just a visual representation of what's going to happen so everybody's on the same page in that meeting.

Again, I've spoken a little bit about this throughout the presentation, but how do we incorporate the tools I've talked to you about today into the system center world, which is the schools? Again, IEP planning, the one‑pager especially is a great way to incorporate a student's strengths and preferences into that present level of performance. Actually, in a lot of counties across the state we've had special education departments actually include that as part of their present level of performance. So when anyone gets that right off the bat they know something about that student and it actually includes a student picture. We've also had counties take video of that student along with that template and send it to teachers as well. So that's really fascinating. It has worked really well. Again, you establish ‑‑ again, very person centered. You establish relationship with that student right off the bat. You know something positive about them and it's about the person. FBA BIP meetings, functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plans, we've had people all across the state take the good day plan and actually use that to be a part of their functional behavior assessment meetings. They've sat down with the students and said, okay, here's the problem behaviors that we're finding. So how could we deter that, what do you think would help make it better for you? They used the good day plan. Again, being person centered, again, it's not about the form. We do have to fill out the forms in the system. We do have to go through the process, but we're including the person, making it person centered. It is about them. It's about them. And the interventions aren't going to work unless we know what works for them. So it has to be person centered. Transition planning should be all about the person. We should be having as many meetings before the meeting that we have before transition planning to understand what works for the person and what we want their employment to look like, their living to look like, and we have to bring all those players to the table, those outside agencies. We should be having conversations before we get to the table about that. Having those person‑centered planning meetings is really, really important in doing that.

Parent conference night, again, I think about the younger folks, those Pre‑K kindergartners earlier elementary folks, the IP planning is good but also those parent conference and those parent nights are a great way to bring the one‑pager of what's working, what's important to me, for me to the conference and saying I did this with your child and here's what I find out about them. And then the parent can say, oh, that's great. Here's something else that you should know. And just showing off the individual and that you're taking interests in their child and you're really making their quality of life in school person centered and that you're taking interest in them of what's not only what's going on in school but what's going to happen to them after school as well.

Just quickly I've talked a little bit about this but, you know, I think having ‑‑ being person centered, again, I know there's lots of schools out there that are person centered that say, yes, we do care about the individuals and we are taking strides to be more about the individual and really taking time to build better relationships with all individuals, especially individuals with autism that we ‑‑ understanding their needs better, but you can really build a better relationship with the student. Again, especially with our students with autism, knowing their strengths and their interests, I had a student who was fascinated by fans and he was in elementary school and he would run to every door in the elementary school building that had a fan. And so finally me and a lot of teachers didn't really like that. So finally one day I had went to a few Touchers and said do you mind if we stop by your classroom sometimes and check on the fan. So I also talked to the individual and said on these days we're going to stop by these classrooms and we're going to check and see if the fan is working, we're going to say hello and then we're going to talk out and we talked about what times we were going to do that in the morning. It wasn't easy at first, but throughout that time, the teachers that we stopped in those classrooms and the administrator finally understood what I was doing. I was building relationship with the teachers and with the students and in an ability to understand that my student with autism wasn't weird or didn't understand what was going on because he had this fascination with fans, that it was really about who he was. This individual could take apart a fan and put it back together better than anybody I knew. And this individual was in the first grade. He knew more about fans ‑‑ he knew everything about a fan, every part about a fan. As reinforcement a lot of time we would get on the computer and he would look at fans. Instructionally we included fans in a lot of things we did. I'd love to know where he is now because I'd always say that he would be the best salesman at Lowe's in the fan section. I truly mean it. This was his passion. Those things are very important. For our students with autism, that's being person centered. I know with his strengths it was definitely his interests. Knowing that he could do that with fans means I could translate that to other thing. If you could take apart a fan what else mechanically could he do. What else could I put him in a math class or a science class so he could understand those things and I could be a better teacher for him? So not only did I strengthen my relationship; I strengthened my relationship with administrators. And administrators can build relationships with our students by understanding those things as well. We can understand ‑‑ administrators can better strengthen and understand relationships with parents and guardians if we have those person‑centered meetings outside of our regular school meetings. And you can have your instructional time back. You can have students have their instructional time back because they're not in your office because they went around and looked at fans. We realized that was something they needed. We gave it to them a few times a week and incorporated it into their instruction. We made it about them.

Again, benefits from the staff are really the same. Again, those individualized instructional interventions, yes, we had a curriculum, yes, we followed it, yes we did the IEP goals but I definitely used his love and his preference and interest of fans in a lot of things that we did. And it just bettered his quality of life in school. For him it made him enjoy coming into school better. It made ‑‑ again, I would love to know where he's at because hopefully he has a job somewhere working on fans or selling fans or doing something mechanically, because that was his ‑‑ one of his major strengths.

And for students it's really all about the student or the individual. It's, again, building and improving relationships with pierce and the school staff. Getting to know that, again, it's not just that individual with autism who has these unusual interests or strengths; it's about that total person. It's about knowing who they are and that they do have amazing capabilities and gifts and how can we use that to their benefit?

It's about improving their behavioral outcomes again and it's about setting short and long‑term goals and ultimately it's just about improving their quality of life: If we give them the communication tools, adapt things, the learning style, the way they learn, the way they communicate and we give it back to them we will improve their quality of life, but if we say they're nonverbal, they don't have the cognitive ability to do this, then we're doing them a disservice. Please know all of the individuals, no matter where they are on the spectrum, have the ability and the capacity to learn, to communicate and have the right, better quality of life especially when we make it person centered.

>> This is a quote from Ben Franklin and I like. Tell me and I'll forget. Teach me and I'll remember. Involve me and I'll learn.

I thank you again for joining me today. This is something I'm very passionate about.

For more information, again, I've probably mentioned I'm Determined a million times now, but it's a very important project and I just can't tell you enough about the wonderful people that work on that project and the work that they do. Please contact them. Please visit that Web site.

Also, you can go to inclusion.com. On the left is the person‑centered planning book I was talking to you about. Beth mound. I love the way it's detailed and just very ‑‑ the ability to be able to read it quickly. It tells you some great ways to do maps with individuals and build a profile so you've got a good way of looking at the individual. Then of course MAPS and PATHS by Jack Pearpoint. So that's really important.

Again, please contact me if there's anything you'd like to know more about. Today was a brief, brief overview but I really appreciate your time. Again, my name is Teresa Cogar. I'm here at VCU ACE. Thanks so much for your time.

Thank you.