

OUTCOMES

Everyone deserves to have a life they find meaningful and fulfilling.

What are Outcomes?

Outcomes are changes a person wants to achieve in their life.

They are the ultimate result or impact of services and supports or what the person gains from the services in which they participate.

Outcomes directly relate to what is important *to* the person and balance what is important *for* the person.

“This planning process, and the resulting person-centered service plan, will assist the individual in achieving personally defined outcomes in the most integrated community setting, ensure delivery of services in a manner that reflects personal preferences and choices, and contribute to the assurance of health and welfare.”

Fact sheets: Home and Community Based Services Jan. 10, 2014

Tips for Discovering Outcomes

Dig deeper when people tell you what outcomes they are interested in exploring. Say things like, "Tell me more about that" and "What is it about it that interests you?" This will help uncover the true desires of the person.

Be on the lookout for "important tos" and "important fors" that haven't been discovered yet. These make great outcomes.

Outcomes should build on or enhance people's strengths.

Important To

What makes the person happy?
What is the person interested in doing?

Important For

What health considerations are needed?
What does the person need to stay safe?

What is Working and Not Working?

What is the reality of how things are now
versus where the person wants them to be?

Tips for Writing Outcomes

Write outcomes in simple, everyday language.

Use "I" statements if you're certain the person said it or would say it the same way.

Outcomes should include "what" the person wants to accomplish and "why" they want to accomplish it.

Use phrases such as "so that" or "in order to".

If the outcome wouldn't make sense for a person without developmental disabilities, don't include it.

Common Questions and Concerns

That's not an outcome.

Any outcome that helps a person gain life experience and supports them to be valued in their community is worth exploring.

We separate our outcomes into two categories: "important to" and "important for". Is that OK?

Yes, but ensure that each outcome considers the balance of both. Outcomes that only address health and safety are not likely to be achieved, unless connected to something important to the person. There are many tasks in our lives that we know are important for us, such as paying our bills. No one likes paying bills, but we love our families and want them to stay warm. Without a connection to something important *to* the person, you're likely to end up with power struggles and outcomes that aren't accomplished.

What happens when an outcome isn't achieved?

If someone isn't making progress toward their outcome, this is a great opportunity to have a conversation. What's getting in the way? Is it not what the person thought it would be? Maybe the outcome is fine, but actions steps need to change. Whatever the reason, this is an opportunity for the person and their team to learn.

How many outcomes should each person have in their plan?

There is no required number. However, the number of outcomes should make sense related to the amount of services a person receives. You'll also want to consider the amount of time it will take to accomplish the outcome.

What if the person doesn't want any outcomes? They are happy with everything and want things to stay the same.

Many people with developmental disabilities have not had the opportunity to know what is possible. Outcomes are about supporting people to live meaningful lives. That doesn't mean their whole life must change tomorrow; it's likely they wouldn't be successful. It does mean that we must find ways to help the person move forward at a pace that makes sense to them.

Should an outcome follow the span dates?

It depends on the outcome. Bottom line: Be realistic about how long something will take to accomplish. Not everything takes a year (or more). If someone want to accomplish having a Fourth of July cookout with their friends and their span starts in January, that shouldn't take a whole year. On the other hand, if someone wants to earn their bachelor's degree, it will likely take more than a year.

Do all services need to be tied to an outcome?

No. Each outcome must have service(s) connected to it, but not every service is connected to an outcome. Services not connected to an outcome should still be found somewhere in the plan document.

Supports, support considerations, implementation strategies, action steps, oh my! What do they all mean?

These terms are used to describe *how* a person wants to be supported or *how* their team will work together to accomplish an outcome. The words used in plans vary as there is no prescribed language. The language used is a local decision.