



The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems

Transcript from brief video of NCAPPS Person-Centered Advocacy and Leadership (PAL) Group member: Martha Barbone

You can read more about Martha on the [NCAPPS web page](#).

Hello, this is Martha Barbone coming to you from South of Boston, Massachusetts. This is a great time to be encouraging and assuring that person-centered practices are front and present. Person-centered practices are designed to assist people as they work in their desired life goals. Well, life has thrown a wrench in the works for many of us today.

In this period of physical distancing, we can still be practicing social connection. We still want to emphasize quality of life well being an informed choice. Many in our community may be feeling extra stress with all the talk about the virus outbreak now called COVID 19. We are in a position to support individuals around their fears, as well as the general fear in our communities. Encouraging people to discuss their fears is a great practice. Our discussions can provide accurate information and it can help others find accurate information from trusted sources. In this way people can decide what they need to do in order to minimize their risk. And it can also help put their minds at ease if they realize they're already taken necessary precautions. We can respond to fear with compassion and also offer constructive support. Fear can be a lifesaver that protects us from real danger and spurs us toward positive action. But it also has the power to deeply disturb and limit us. Worst of all, fear can erode our trust in ourselves in the goodness of others and in the joy of living.

Some specific person-centered practices may include making sure someone is getting the needed information in a way they can clearly understand it. This may include replacing medical terms with common everyday language, making sure information is accessible in the language of their choice, and offering information in spoken form written or by video if needed. Some people in our community may be faced with tough decisions and unable to have regular contact with their loved ones. There may be cultural values that increase the difficulty physical distancing presents. We can talk with people to understand the role values and culture play in their life and support them to brainstorm alternatives and also support them with the technology now being used to help connect people.

The actions we take can be person-centered, supporting someone to create meaningful activities in their day, and to encourage them to use all of their senses. Awareness of all five senses can help us be in the present moment, instead of losing ourselves to the what ifs, which can be circling around our brains, breathing exercises, mindfulness routines, coloring, cooking, and practicing other ways of being in the hearing now, are often helpful.

Finally, being present to listen. We don't have to always offer a quick solution when we can sit and listen. Listen to the fears. Listen to the frustration and listen to the heartache of separation. And also listen to the joy of connection. Stay well and stay connected.