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Planning for and Providing Community Participation Support in Community Settings
March 2026

Agenda

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- Overview: What Is The Purpose Of CPS?
- Person-Centered Planning For Community Participation
- Identifying Successful Community Locations Using Community Mapping
- Strategies For Planning For Successful Community Participation
- Question & Answer By ODP Staff
- Resources

Presenters

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Layout of The Presentation

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- This is intended to be an interactive, informative training webinar with audience participation.
- As ODP staff proceed through the slides, there will be opportunities for the audience to respond to questions through the question pane.
- ODP encourages attendees to submit strategies and helpful tips that may apply to the topics being presented.
- There will also be time at the end for ODP to answer questions about the presentation.

Everyday Lives: Values in Action

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Recommendation 11:

Increase Community Participation

- Being involved in community life creates opportunities for new experiences and interests, the potential to develop friendships and the ability to make a contribution to the community. An inter-dependent life, where people with and without disabilities are connected, enriches all of our lives.

Overview: What is the Purpose of Community Participation Support?

Core Components of CPS

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- **The intent of CPS is to provide opportunities and support for community inclusion along with building interest in and developing skills and potential for competitive integrated employment.**
- **The CPS service supports people to develop skills needed to seek employment in a competitive integrated job and provides opportunities to develop meaningful relationships and to become connected to the greater community in which they live.**
- **All these activities should be based on the strengths, interests, and preferences of each individual.**

Interests and Preferences

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- **Individual interests and preferences should be the starting point!**
  - Individuals may have limited past experiences participating in community activities to inform their current interests and preferences.
- **Therefore, it is critically important that:**
  - Individuals have opportunities to explore and try activities they previously have not had the opportunity to participate in.
  - Staff have awareness of resources and activities in their community that individuals could potentially engage in.

Relationships

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Why Community Relationships Matter

- Improve quality of life and self-worth
- Create a sense of belonging and inclusion
- Support personal goals and increase opportunities for independence

Building relationships in community settings is best achieved through:

- Person-centered planning,
- Intentional support, and
- Consistent opportunities.

Person-Centered Planning for Community Participation

Person-Centered Planning Ideas

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Consider the following questions to ensure CPS is person-centered:

- **Does the individual have a goal that requires being in the community?**
- **What challenges exist for this individual to access the community? -** *Behavioral? Communication? Physical? Emotional?*
  - **If there are challenges, what assistance does the individual need to pursue their goal of being involved in their community?**
- **What past community experiences did the individual enjoy?**
  - **Do they want to revisit any of things they enjoyed in the past?**
- **Are there past community experiences the individual did not enjoy?**
- **Are there locations they are already interested in, based on a preference or interest?**

What are other person-centered questions that are helpful to ask when thinking about future community participation?

Let’s Talk About Boris

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Boris

- **26 years old, Male**
- **Lives with family, attends church with family, has Cerebral Palsy and uses an adaptive wheelchair**
- **Attends CPS Facility (Chapter 2390) most of his CPS time**
- **Parents' goals for Boris: earn a paycheck to have his own funds, live independently**
- **Boris' goals: Have a girlfriend, have a job he enjoys, make friends with other people who like Lord of the Rings**

Planning for Boris

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- He goes to the PA Renaissance Fair every year.
- He is in a Saturday morning bowling league.
- He does want to move out of his parent's house someday.
- He wants a job, but he knows it is a big responsibility and doesn't feel like he knows what job he could do.
- He received services from OVR in the past.
- He goes to the movies with his brother several times per month.
- He says he wants to go into the community with his CPS provider. On the days he is supposed to go he often decides to stay at the vocational facility.
- His parents feel he is in the community enough when he is not receiving CPS.

Reflection Time

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- What additional information would you want to help plan activities for Boris?
- Is there anyone else who might have helpful information about Boris?
- What could be some reasons why Boris changes his mind about participating in the community activities?
- If CPS is helping Boris with his employment-related skills, are there types of businesses or locations that he might enjoy visiting with the CPS provider?

Identifying Successful Community Locations Using Community Mapping

Community Mapping Review

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- **A Community Map is a tool or plan to identify where, what and who are within the individual's community. It is a way to identify places where the individual can get involved in new groups and activities alongside other community members and make new relationships.**
- **The community map is not about buildings; it is about identifying places where:**
  - **–people gather, and**
  - **–new friendships and relationships can be formed.**

Who will the individual meet there and how can they contribute?

Community Mapping Continued

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- **A Community Map can be:**
  - A physical Map (of the local community or area where the individual wants to go)
  - Technology-based
  - A Drawing
  - A List
  - A Scrapbook

IT IS NOT ABOUT THE FORMAT YOU USE!

IT IS ABOUT IDENTIFYING THE INFORMATION IN A WAY THAT WORKS BEST FOR:

- THE INDIVIDUAL, AND
- THE TEAM

What are some successful examples of community mapping?

Defining Community

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- **“Community” means being part of a group who have common interests and goals. A strong community is one that is meaningful, inclusive, and builds valued roles.**

- **Community participation should be based on local resources available in the individual’s home area (e.g., libraries, churches, farmers’ markets, community centers, township events, service organizations).**

- **Staff will support individuals to access community locations where they can be valued members.**

Community Settings

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The Setting Should:

- **Be integrated**
  - Used by the general public
  - Not exclusively or primarily used by people with disabilities.
- **Offer opportunities for interaction with the community**
  - Individuals must have the chance to engage with people without disabilities (not just staff or other CPS participants).
  - There should be opportunities for interactions with various community members.
- **Be chosen by the Individual**
  - The individual has input and choice about the type of activity and location.

Community Settings Continued

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Examples of Successful CPS Community Settings:

- A public library where the person attends a book club or free class
- A YMCA, a local gym, or a community center where the person joins an exercise class
- A local café where the person attends and/or participates in weekly poetry events
- A volunteer site (food bank, animal rescue, state park, local arts council)
- A local trail maintenance and hiking club
- Farmer's markets, museums, art classes where they go routinely to work on outcomes
- Develop new opportunities!

Community Checklist Topics

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- Inclusive & Integrated
- Person-centered
- Skill Building
- Community Contribution
- Safety & Accessibility
- Relationship Building
- Variety & Growth

Community Checklist 1 of 4

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Inclusive & Integrated

- ❑ Is the location open to the general public?
- ❑ Will the person interact with people who are not paid staff or other individuals with disabilities?

Person-Centered

- ❑ Does the location reflect the individual's interests and goals in their ISP?
- ❑ Is the activity meaningful and chosen by the person (not just staff convenience)?

Community Checklist 2 of 4

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Skill-Building

- ❑ Does the location provide opportunities to learn or practice skills (social, daily living, vocational)?
- ❑ Can the person take on valued roles (volunteer, student, club member, team participant)?

Community Contribution

- ❑ Does the activity help the person give back or be recognized as a contributing community member?

Community Checklist 3 of 4

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Safety & Accessibility

- ❑ Is the location safe and appropriate for the person's needs?
- ❑ Is it accessible (mobility, sensory, communication)?

Relationship-Building

- ❑ Will the person have chances to meet and connect with community members?
- ❑ Can relationships (friendships, acquaintances, coworkers, neighbors) develop here?

Community Checklist 4 of 4

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Variety & Growth

- ❑ Does this location expand the person's experiences (not just repeat the same places)?
- ❑ Will it help them try new things and grow in independence over time?

Other

- ❑ What other topics would be helpful to have included in a checklist?

Community Mapping Activity

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1) Choose an outcome for your CPS services

2) Choose how you would use community mapping:

- online/digital/technology
- physical map
- a list
- scrapbook/journal/drawing
- A different method – please share!

3) What are places in your community where you could learn more about and/or work on your outcome? How would your community map help?

4) What checklist items would you focus on for your outcome?

Strategies for Planning for Successful Community Participation

Strategies 1 of 5

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1. Start with What Matters to The Individual

- Explore Personal Interests: Use conversations, visual prompts, or interest inventories to uncover what they enjoy or are curious about.
- Align Community Activities: Match outings to their interests—like visiting a local pet shelter for an animal lover.

2. Empower Through Choice and Control Offer Options:

- Provide choices of where to go and what to do.
- Let Them Lead: Let the individual decide the pace, timing, or activity when possible.

Strategies 2 of 5

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3. Create Positive First Experiences:

- Low Pressure Outings: Start with quiet, accessible, familiar, or enjoyable places.
- Staff Support: Use consistent, trusted staff who know how to reduce anxiety and support communication or behavioral needs.

4. Build Community into the Routine:

- Make It Predictable: Use schedules, calendars, or visual aids to help individuals understand when they'll be going out.
- Establish Rituals: Weekly visits to a farmer's market or volunteering every Tuesday can provide a sense of structure and familiarity.

Strategies 3 of 5

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5. Use Peers as Motivators:

- Group Outings: Encourage outings with peers who are already engaged in the community.
- Peer Modeling: Seeing others enjoy time in the community can reduce fear and build curiosity.
- Peer Discussions: Devote time to allowing peers to talk about outings.

Strategies 4 of 5

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6. Tie Outings to Purpose:

- Real-Life Tasks: Turn outings into skill-building (budgeting at the grocery store).
- Volunteer Roles: Offer meaningful, repetitive opportunities like helping at a food pantry or animal shelter.
- Employment Exploration: Interest inventories.

7. Address Individual Barriers:

- Behavioral Supports: BSP if fear, anxiety, or resistance is a challenge.
- Sensory Considerations: Adjust environments or times (visiting places during quieter hours).

Strategies 5 of 5

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8. Celebrate Success and Growth:

- Recognize Small Wins: Celebrate even brief outings or trying something new.
- Visual Progress Tracking: Use charts, photos, or stories to highlight achievements.
- Build on Strengths: Expand from small successes to broader community involvement.

9. Engage Families and Teams:

- Educate Families: Help families understand the value of community inclusion and how they can support it.
- Integrate Goals: Make community involvement a priority in ISP goals and team meetings.

What strategies work for you?

Example: Community Service Note

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Boris participated in a planned community outing to his local Walmart as part of his ISP goals to build confidence with interacting with others and increase community engagement in a location where he wants to work. Prior to leaving, staff reviewed Boris' outcomes for Walmart by practicing initiating conversations with others. At Walmart, staff supported Boris in locating items in different departments (toiletries, snacks, and cleaning supplies) to become familiar with the store and meet some of the Walmart staff. With verbal prompting, Boris initiated conversation with a store employee and another customer in the electronics section while looking through the movie collection. After leaving the store, staff asked Boris what he thought of the outing to Walmart. Boris said that he was glad he went and wants to go back to ask the Walmart staff in the electronics section when they will have the upcoming Lord of the Rings movie to buy.

Reflection Questions

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- How do you ensure community participation leads to interactions that can develop into relationships with community members?
- What are ways you can fade support as people become more comfortable and familiar in certain community settings?
- Is the individual being provided opportunities to return to places where they can continue to have natural social contact?
- How can different types of relationships (e.g., acquaintance, friend, mentor) be recognized and supported?

Ways to Support Outcomes 1 of 2

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Support	Examples
Budgeting & Money Skills	Help the individual make a shopping list within a budget, read price tags, compare prices, use coupons, and count money at checkout.
Social Skills & Communication	Support interactions with store staff or customers, practice polite conversation, asking for help, and responding to greetings.
Decision Making & Planning	Assist in choosing between similar products, making healthy choices, or evaluating needs vs. wants.
Navigation & Mobility	Help the person navigate aisles, find departments, use maps or signs, and operate a shopping cart safely.

Ways to Support Outcomes 2 of 2

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Support	Examples
Safety Awareness	Reinforce safety skills such as staying together, being aware of surroundings, managing sensory challenges, and handling unexpected situations.
Self-Advocacy	Encourage the person to speak up if they need help, return an item, or ask questions about products.
Technology Use	Support use of phone apps for shopping lists, budgeting, or using a debit card reader.

Q&A

Resources (Clickable Links)

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- MyODP CPS Resource Page
- CPS Question & Answer Document Version 4
- MyODP Training Resource Center - CPS Training Modules
- ISP Manual (2026)