Safety vs. Autonomy in Elders

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For every complex problem there is a simple solution – and it is wrong.

Oscar Wilde

"Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it."

From Winnie The Pooh, by A.A. Milne
Traditional Approach

Start with what's wrong with the person

• Assess issues of health and safety
• Focuses on staff efficiency
• Fits residents into programs rather than designing programs for residents

Person Centered planning is

• Finding out what is important to someone
• Learning about what health, safety and risk mean to the person and those who know and care about him/her
• Figuring out how to support him having a balance between happy and safe

Important TO
What is important to a person includes what helps him to be satisfied, content, comforted and happy

• People to be w/
• Things to do
• Places to go
• Routines
• Rhythm/pace of life
• Things to have
• What matters most to person—his/her definition of quality of life
Health and Safety
Dictate Lifestyle

All Choice,
No Responsibility

Balance

Important To

Important For

Important

Important for
Balancing Q of Care with Q of Life

Quality of Care  
Quality of Life

Foundational Practices

Meaningful lives require:

• control
• being known
• reciprocal relationships

Staff Directed

Resident is Considered

Resident Has Choice

Resident Directed

Low
Continuum of Person-Directedness

High

Adapted from model by Lewin Group.
Family Priorities

• Safety
• Location
• Costs
• Quality of care
• Respect

Safety

• the state of being "safe", the condition of being protected from harm or other non-desirable outcomes.

Safety – what do we mean?

• Safety as error reduction
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• Safety as liability/risk management

Safety – what do we mean?

• Safety as error reduction
• Safety as liability/risk management
• Safety as harm reduction

Safety – what do we mean?

• Safety as reduce errors
• Safety as liability/risk management
• Safety as harm reduction
• Safety as license to decide for others – what happens to autonomy?
“What if Maslow was wrong?”

Terri Harvath

Maslow’s Preconditions

• “There are certain conditions which are immediate prerequisites for the basic need satisfactions…”
  • Freedom to speak
  • Freedom to do what one wishes
  • Freedom to express one’s self

• “These preconditions are defended because without them the basic satisfactions are quite impossible…”
Ethical Principles

- Beneficence - to do good.
- Non-maleficence - to do no harm.
- Respect for Autonomy.
- Fairness.
- Truthfulness.
- Justice

Autonomy and Self Determination

- Autonomy – “self rule” – capacity to make informed choices
- A person who exercises autonomy acts:
  - Intentionally, w/ understanding, and without controlling influences that determine their action
  - Must be legal justification for curtailment of autonomy

Informed Choice

- Person has sufficient info
- Has capacity to make the decision
- Person is not coerced
- The choice is consistent over time
Decision Making— in absence of informed choice

• If no risk involved: least restrictive alternative

• If risk involved:
  • Substituted judgement
  • Best interest standard
  • Protective intervention

Values – what part do they play?

Provider responsibility

• Inclusion of quality of life in resident care and support

• Understand AND act on the fact that choice and autonomy are part of adulthood
Tips for designing plans

- What works in current plan and what doesn’t work
- What is the balance between important to and for
- Action planning

Key Elements of Person-Directed Living: tips for providers

- Knowing the Person
- Choice, Autonomy
- Relationships
Thank You!