

Tips for Addressing PCP for Individuals With Significant Disabilities

1. Start with a One Page profile

This gives a basic but good overview of a person. If the topics on this are hard to give answers to, then it gives you a starting point of things to focus on to help fulfill the person's life.

2. Ask the team to share their dreams

What do the people in the person's life want to see for them? What do you feel their dreams are? What would you like to see them learn this year? If they had a voice you could hear, do you think they would say they are happy? Are the things happening in their life happening for their quality of life or because it is easier on the support staff?

3. Consider the person's appearance

Are they given the opportunity to be represented the same way as peer in their age group. Look at their clothing options and hair. Are they styled for their age or for ease of the staff attending to their needs? Are they clean and well groomed (nails cut, face clean, clothes free of stains or food)?

4. Consider the immediate environment

How is the personal living space designed? Does it look like a home or room you would be proud to live in? Is it decorated to meet the person's interests or with some style? Is there things for the person to look at in their space aside from blank walls, do they have entertainment, comfort, and personalization? Does it smell pleasant?

5. Promote interaction

Is the person getting interaction? In many cases with those with significant needs, you will find they are placed in a way to where they can "observe" a group activity, but are not actually involved in the activity. Are they receiving the proper stimulation to be involved (would you be involved sitting on the outside looking in or would you simply take a nap)? For example, when "observing" chair exercises, is there someone to help them do what they can based on their range of motion? When "observing" a game, is there someone alongside the person to place the dice in their hands and let them be a part, or someone to help hold their cards so help them participate. Is someone helping explain what is going on in the documentary that is being watch or asking them questions, even if those questions are not answered. The key is not to just let them sit on the sidelines, but to immerse them in the activity so they are included.

6. Try Occupational Therapy

When appropriate, get a referral to OT. They often have great ideas and activities that can be done by staff with the person so they are actually doing things and not just sitting watching others do things.

7. Everyone has a voice

Above all, remember that EVERY person has a voice, even if we cannot hear it. EVERY person can learn, if given the proper support and stimulation. NO ONE living is completely unaware of things going on around them, speak encouragement, and positivity. Involve them in things especially THEIR meetings, they should never sit out. If a guardian suggests it, push back as much as you can.