



The purpose of the Arrowhead Regional Quality Council is to work collaboratively with regional stakeholders and partners to monitor and improve the quality of services, person-centered outcomes and overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

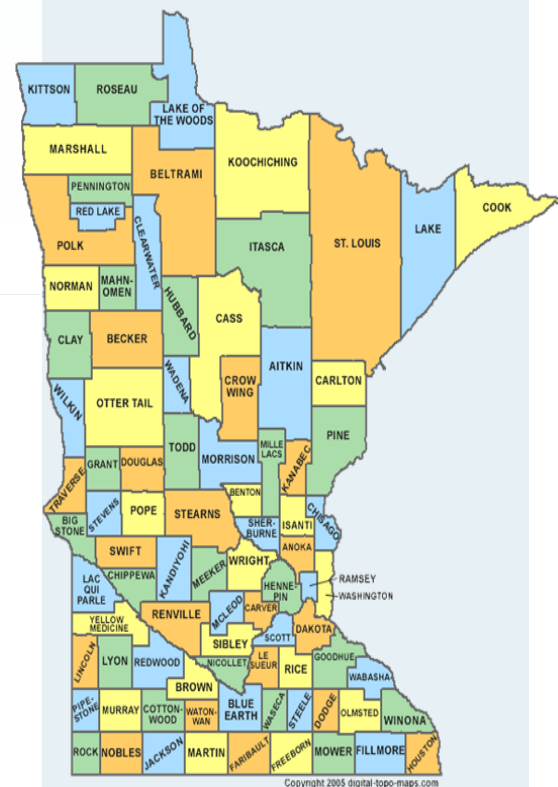
People with disabilities will provide input that is used to promote best practices and address service gaps, resulting in informed choice, improved quality of life, and community inclusion.

## Focus Group Data: Best Practices and Barriers to Person-Centered Planning and Informed Decision-Making

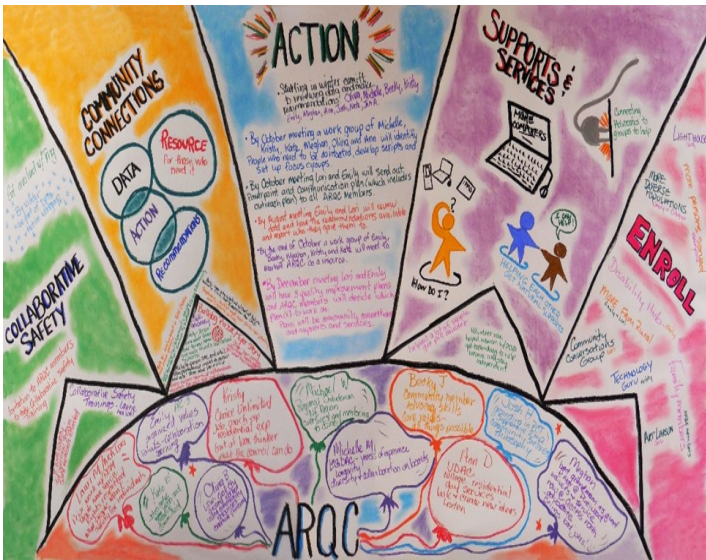
### Quality Improvement Efforts

The Arrowhead RQC facilitated focus groups with people with disabilities to learn from them about their experiences with person-centered planning and informed decision-making. This handout represents individuals views on best practices and barriers to having quality services and supports.

The Arrowhead RQC is currently using this information to provide education and awareness to stakeholder groups in Carlton, St. Louis, Cook and Lake Counties.



## Person-Centered Planning



### Best Practices:

- Early preparation
- Being listened to
- Good pace and communication
- Support for virtual meetings
- Using visual aids
- Having natural supports
- Using tools
- Individuals running their meeting and choosing who attends
- Choosing own guardian
- Being able to modify plans when life changes occur
- Hitting pause on my plan when needed

About 50% of individuals have not heard or learned about person-centered planning concepts and some were able to give short descriptions about what they thought it meant.

- Most individuals never experienced the process of doing a PATH or Map
- Most goals were related to health and safety

## Person-Centered Planning

### Barriers:

- When team members come up with goals
- Being new to services and unsure of what my rights are
- Difficulty using virtual platforms and poor internet connection
- No exploration—new ideas shut down
- Poor team communication—especially during pandemic
- Need for services but don't qualify for certain ones even though I would benefit from them
- Not listening to the person at the center of the plan
- Those who completed person-centered plans with their teams have not reviewed them regularly as a group
- Staff are at times, too busy with paperwork to really listen to me and help me plan
- Team meetings are short; 1 hour is not enough time to talk and plan for my goals
- Meetings that don't focus on the person that wants/needs to do the planning



## Informed Decision-Making

### Best Practices:

- Meeting frequently and discussing decision-making as a team
- Weekly check-ins
- Having natural supports and not solely relying on guardianship
- Having an advocate attend my meetings to help support me with informed decision-making
- Talking about options
- Guardians who help with paperwork and understanding forms
- Discussing pros and cons together
- Having a choice in who is your guardian

Do you feel like your team listens to you?

About 40% of individuals said that their team listens to them fully.

About 10% of individuals said that their team listens to them most of the time.

About 50% of individuals said that their team listens to them only some of the time or not at all.

How much control do you feel that you have when it comes to planning and decision-making?

About 40% of individuals said they felt they had full control. About 60% of individuals said they felt they had little to some control.

### Trends Reported:

- Most individuals had not heard of alternatives to guardianship or have little information about Supported Decision-Making
- Individuals felt that meeting twice per year was not enough time for planning
- Individuals who reported feeling like they have a say in who their guardian is and who is on their support team express more positive thoughts and feel they have a stronger voice

## Informed Decision-Making

### Barriers:

- Individuals expressed that they wish they had more contact or check-ins with their guardian. Most wished for once-a-week check-ins. With Covid and social distancing, depression and isolation seem to be a concern, thus the desire for more contact from guardians.
- Covid-19 is making it more difficult for meetings with guardians as they are conducted on Zoom or other virtual platforms
- Not enough family support when an individual is their own guardian
- Guardians are not very personable – blunt and only contact individuals when there needs to be a financial conversation
- Team members who don't use plain language
- Guardians live far away and that gets in the way of some decisions being made timely (ex: I need my guardians with me to get a passport)
- Sometimes, not all of the team members are on the same page
- Not a lot of natural supports
- My housemates and staff affect my decision-making
- Difficulty communicating so others make decisions for me
- The agency is not allowing individuals to go out in the community; results is such less control over decision-making

## Resources and Information

### **Center for Excellence in Supported Decision Making**

Information and advice to find alternatives to guardianship, when possible.

952-945-4174 or [CESDM@voamn.org](mailto:CESDM@voamn.org)  
<https://www.voamnwi.org/cesdm>

### **WINGS**

Support for guardians to better understand their responsibilities and to improve the team decision making process.

952-945-4172  
[www.wingsmn.org/](http://www.wingsmn.org/)



