



The Learning Community  
for person centered practices

Participant Stories



## Ruth's Story, part 2

Like many seniors, Ruth takes multiple medications including heart medicine, diuretics and "blood thinners" (Coumadin). When you are interviewing her as part of the intake assessment for in-home care she shares her long standing ritual (30+ years) of having a small drink or two of Bourbon (or Rum) and sweet tea at bedtime. She reports that her family is fine with this ritual (her granddaughter usually fixes the drink for her), but as the person doing her intake assessment you have concerns. The family indicates the doctor said "it was okay as long as it was only one drink". You mention your concerns to your supervisor and she suggests that the two of you work through a Donut exercise to help sort through your responsibilities and options.



# Kathleen

You are a Person Centered Planner and have been asked by an agency to come and do the day of person centered thinking exercises that we have been doing. The agency manager tells you that she wants to see how the "what makes sense analysis" would work with the people that they are supporting. As the trainer, you ask the agency to pick someone who could come at the end of the day who would enjoy the attention and the process. The agency picks Kathleen. You arrange for Kathleen and her mother to come to the training, 2 staff who know her well are already planning to attend. You have also arranged to meet Kathleen and her mother, Sarah, before the training starts. When she arrives you are impressed with her appearance. She looks as if she had stepped from the pages of a Victorian novel. She is wearing a long dress with a lace collar. She has lace trimmed cuffs and high boots. Her hair is piled up on her head and secured with decorative pins. You complement her on how she looks and her mother tells you proudly that Kathleen made the dress herself. Kathleen and her mother tell you how they both like to sew and that they have a sewing room at home. They find patterns that they like and then make the clothes. They spend many pleasant evenings, each working on their own project. Kathleen's mother tells you how they each have their own taste in clothing and that Sarah's taste is more "modern".

The conversation continues with the 2 staff joining in. You learn that Kathleen lives at home with her mom, Sarah. She attends Productivity Enterprises, a workshop during the day. As a single working parent, Sarah says that she is happy that Kathleen has someplace to go nearly every day. She lets you know that Kathleen cannot be home alone as she will let anyone who knocks come into their house. Sarah says that this creates a problem for her as she needs to take leave whenever the workshop is closed and that most of her annual leave has to conform to the schedule of the workshop.

Kathleen tells you that her favorite contract at the workshop is cutting patterns. You ask her if this is what she does all the time and she says no. Wilbur, one of the staff, interjects that there isn't enough pattern cutting work for everyone that wants to do it and so, in order to be fair, they rotate who gets to do it. When you ask Kathleen her least favorite contract she looks down and says "bearings". The other staff person, Janet, jumps in and explains that assembling bearings is their base contract and that it is the one that everyone does when they are not working on other contracts.



When you ask Kathleen why she dislikes the bearing contract, Wilbur tells you that Kathleen dislikes getting her hands dirty and that bearing assembly is greasy work. He notes that Kathleen wears gloves when she does it so that she doesn't really get dirty. Kathleen says that sometimes she gets grease on her clothes. Wilbur says that they have a goal for Kathleen to learn to keep herself clean while doing the work. You ask if there are any other goals that you should know about and Janet says "Well there is the issue with the scissors". Kathleen looks down while Janet says that whenever Kathleen does the pattern cutting she wants to use a particular pair of scissors. She tells you that this is a problem because the scissors all belong to the workshop and are kept in a drawer together. When they are passed out it is first come first served. Kathleen would try to be first in line to get "her" scissors and would pout if she didn't get them. She is now on a behavior contract where she has to assemble bearings without complaining to show that she can "act like an adult" when someone else gets the scissors that she wants. Sarah says that she offered to let Kathleen bring her scissors from home but the workshop staff said that that would not be safe as someone might grab them and get hurt. She said that she understood the workshop's position but thought it was too bad that Kathleen didn't get to do something that she was very good at and enjoyed.

\* You ask Kathleen what she likes about going to the workshop and she tells you that she has a lot of friends there and that she enjoys spending time with them. Wilbur says that there is this group of 5 people that Kathleen has been hanging out with for years (she went to school with some of them) and that they always get together during breaks and lunch.

You turn to the staff and ask whether Kathleen has been considered for supported employment. Sarah jumps in and says that doesn't want Kathleen to leave the workshop because she is "safe" at the workshop and there is a van that picks her up and drops her off. Wilbur says that they do have "enclaves" where Kathleen could come to the workshop and then be driven to the job site. He says that Kathleen isn't eligible right now because of her behavior program (it is the workshop's policy that no one can be in supported employment who has a behavior program) but that she turned down the enclave work when she was eligible. Kathleen crosses her arms across her chest and says "I don't want to clean." Janet lets you know that the enclaves are janitorial contracts.

Based on what you have heard do what makes sense and doesn't make sense from Kathleen's perspective, Mom's perspective, and the staff's perspective. Note that there is also that "things to figure out" page for those things that you aren't sure about or still want to know.

