



Practical Person-Centered Skills for Case Managers



Craig Escude, MD, FAAFP, FAADM, FAAIDD, IntellectAbility President
David Toback, MA Person-Centered Services Mentor, IntellectAbility



Craig Escudé, MD, FAAFP, FAADM, FAAIDD

- Board-Certified Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Developmental Medicine, and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Over 20 years of experience caring for people with mental illness and intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Medical Director of Hudspeth Regional Center in Whitfield, MS – Retired 2018
- Founder of DETECT
- President of IntellectAbility
- Author of *Clinical Pearls in IDD Healthcare* and the *Curriculum in IDD Healthcare*
- Host of the *IDD Health Matters* podcast





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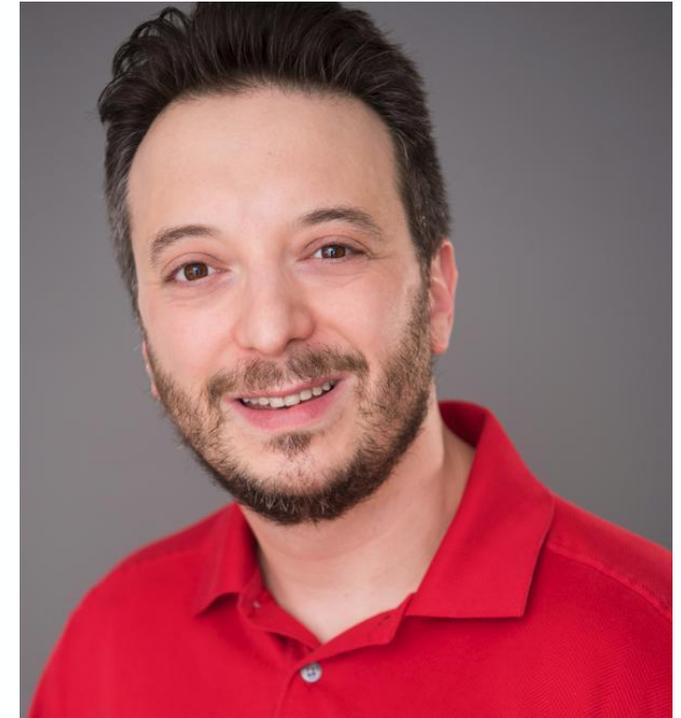
Person
Centered Services
A SHIFT IN SUPPORTER PERSPECTIVE



Productions
CUSTOM COURSE DEVELOPMENT

David Toback, MA

- Masters in Clinical Psychology from the Georgia School of Professional Psychology
- Over 17 years experience within the field of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Credentialed Person-Centered Thinking Mentor Trainer through The Learning Community of Person-Centered Practices
- Ambassador of Charting the LifeCourse through Charting The LifeCourse Nexus
- Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) Interviewer for 13 years
- Experience at the state and provider level with training, transitions, and staff development



Outline

- It starts with listening.
- What enhances our ability to listen?
- When do we apply discovery?
- How do we amplify discovery?
- What are the benefits?

It Starts With Listening.



How We Listen

- We are good stewards of observation.
 - Information that is spoken
 - Information that is not spoken
 - Noticing when words and actions are out of sync
- Respond, not react
 - Seeking out clarification
 - Get curious, not judgmental
 - Remember what you appreciate from others in conversations.

Behavior is Communication

- 93% of communication is done without words.
- Stop what you are doing and look at the person.
- Listen to any noises the person may make.
- Contextualize these things (What is happening now/just before?)
- Look for patterns of meaning.
- When you believe you understand something being communicated, ASK the person for confirmation with a simple yes/no question. Are you telling me

Ways to Communicate Without Words

- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Paralinguistics (loudness or tone of voice)
- Body language
- Personal space
- Eye gaze
- Haptics (touch)



What Enhances Our Ability to Listen?



What Enhances Our Ability to Listen?

- The Discovery Process
 - Conversations that matter.
 - Ask about the ask.
 - Also, what do people *not* want?
 - Observe, observe, and observe again.
 - Do we need to help, or do we need to listen?
 - Sometimes, we need to get out of our own way.

Reflecting Skills

- Acknowledging Responses
- Reflecting Content
- Reflecting Feelings
- Reflecting Meaning
- Summarizing

Use Simple Words and Sentences

- Avoid talking down to the person.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Avoid verbiage; say only what is completely vital.
- Use name before inquiry, “(Name) tell me about your friends.”

Wait Longer Than Usual For A Response

- Be patient, make an inquiry, then wait.
- Observe any behavior after the inquiry.
- After a sufficient wait, ask the same question differently.
- Look for any behavioral clues (eye movement, changes in expression, etc.)

7 Steps to Active Listening

Be attentive

Summarize

Ask open-ended
questions

Show empathy

Request

clarifications

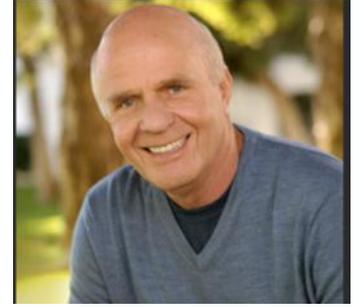
Use open body

language

Paraphrase



“ When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.



”

Dr. Wayne Dyer

When Do We Use Discovery?



When Do We Us Discovery?

- Before planning
- When meeting someone new
- When a label about a person is given without the person
- When we see this phrase:
 - “No changes in the past year...”

How do we amplify discovery?

Amplifying Discovery – Using Skills

- **Rituals and Routines** – Small things matter and this skill offers us insight into what those small things are.
- **Good Day/Bad Day** – What we value within our experience is telling, and this skill provides an appreciation of individual perspective.
- **Two Minute Drill** – When we focus on a specific topic or situation, what can we learn in two minutes? A lot!

Amplifying Discovery – Using Skill Examples

- **Rituals and Routines** – Ask someone how they want to celebrate their next birthday.
- **Good Day/Bad Day** – Ask someone to describe what a Good Day with friends looks like and what a Bad Day with friends looks like.
- **Two Minute Drill** – Having trouble coming up with ideas for planning? Ask everyone to share in two minutes what they hope the next year will look like.

Why Does Listening Matter?



Why Does Listening Matter?

- Robert Perske worked with people with developmental disabilities who had confessed to violent crimes and were convicted due to their forced confession.
- He discovered how Law Enforcement intentionally used Power Over to elicit a confession.
- Many of the concepts he discovered can be understood to avoid unintentional Power Over.
- Does anyone enjoy the following?
 - Being lonely
 - Having others speak over or for you

Considerations for Avoiding Power Over

- People with developmental disabilities rely on authority figures for solutions to everyday problems.
- They tend to have a desire to please people in authority.
- They watch for clues from authority.
- They have a longing for friendship.
- They often “bluff” greater competence than they possess.
- They may have impaired judgment.
- They may want to give “correct answers.”

Applying Strategies for Avoiding Unintentional Power Over

- Allow the person to make beginning decisions:
 - Time and location of conversation?
 - Where will everyone sit?
 - Who should be present?
 - Starting topic of conversation, (i.e., What would you like to talk about first?)
- Make inquiries with no wrong response, (i.e., In your opinion...)
 - Avoid confrontational inquiries
 - Avoid diagnostic inquiries
 - Use humble inquiries

Where Do We Apply Discovery Learning?

Where Do We Apply Discovery Learning?

- The annual planning process
 - Move away from cookie-cutter to customized
- Creating connections
 - Community living
 - Friends
 - Relationships
 - Work opportunities

Next Steps

Next Steps

- Participate in Person Centered Practices
- Utilize the Person-Centered Description as part of planning
- Start developing One-Page Descriptions
- Ensure key personnel are supported with training and coaching



Q&A





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Questions?



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Empowering IDD Care:

A Four-Part Webinar Series with Dr. Craig Escudé

Supporting People with IDD or Who Are Aging in Person-Centered Ways

Date: November 12, 2025

Time: 11:00 AM CT



IntellectAbility's *IDD Perspectives* Webinar Series

A new series of free 45-minute webinars featuring experiences and insights into IDD health and support from national experts.

Each webinar in this series brings together Dr. Craig Escudé and a featured expert guest to explore key topics related to health and safety, quality of life, and practical insights for those supporting people with IDD.

Upcoming Webinar Topics:

- Dual Diagnoses
- Choice, Independence and Relationships
- Reproductive Health for Women with IDD



Craig Escudé

MD, FAAFP, FAADM, FAAIDD
President, IntellectAbility

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Thank You!

Jodi Fenner

Vice President of Growth & Execution

E Jodi.Fenner@tcare.ai

Craig Escudé, MD, FAAFP, FAADM, FAAIDD

Craig@ReplacingRisk.com

David Toback, MA

David@Replacingrisk.com

