WHAT IS PERSON-CENTERED CARE?
- For healthcare providers, the goal is to be with the person as he/she journeys towards health.
- The person is the center of care and an active member of the health care team.
- The team “walks with” the person towards health.
- The person is the expert on what is best for him/her.

“Doing for” as opposed to “walking with” makes a very big difference in how care is delivered.

Example of Patient-Centered vs. Person-Centered Care
Situation: Client refuses to take medication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Patient-Centered Care the nursing staff will:</th>
<th>In Person Centered Care the nursing staff will:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask the patient what the problem is</td>
<td>Listen to what the person says about taking medication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide appropriate health education</td>
<td>Provide appropriate health information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop strategies to ensure the patient takes the medication</td>
<td>Discuss strategies and alternatives that are acceptable to the person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report the issues and strategies back to the team</td>
<td>Advocate for the person (and the person’s decision) to other team members</td>
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CENTRAL BELIEFS TO PERSON-CENTERED CARE
- Life’s journey is enriched by positive relationships
- The health care team can support health by nurturing positive relationships
- Positive relationships are built on mutual respect
- Each person knows what is best for him/her
Sometimes, challenges such as memory problems or serious illness impair a person’s ability to communicate. However, the person is still worthy of respect and participation in his/her own life. Keeping the person in the center of care means that the health care team has to use creative practices to discover what the person really wants for his/her life. Those creative practices can only be useful if they are based on a positive relationship with the person.

**KEY POINTS**
- The person always has the power to accept or refuse the health care team’s advice.
- If the person is not capable of understanding the consequences of decisions he/she makes, the team is responsible for finding safe ways to honour the person’s decisions.
- This approach would involve the substitute decision maker, the team and the person.

**IDEAS FOR PRACTICING PERSON-CENTERED CARE**
- Get to know the people (patients) that you are working with.
- Develop positive relationships with the person and his/her family.
- Be curious, find out who the person is.
- Include the person and his/her family in all aspects of care.
- Ensure positive relationships are centered on the person (not you or others).
- Make positive relationships an important part of your work day (report, documentation etc.).
- Make the person’s hopes and dreams central to all activities.
- Accept and support differences.
- Be flexible.
- Engage as many people as needed in order to explore the possibility of supporting personal choice.