

Planning

FOR THE 21ST CENTURY..



harbor regional center

HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER

“Making it happen”

by...

building partnerships,

expanding knowledge,

creating options,

and opening doors...

Vision Statement

Children with developmental disabilities live with families in typical communities. They attend their neighborhood schools and play with neighborhood friends. Adults with developmental disabilities live in the residence of their choice – with their families, with friends, or alone. They engage in activities of their choice – work, volunteering, education, or socializing. They have meaningful relationships with friends and co-workers. They are seen as valuable, contributing members of their communities.

Families are respected and supported, and are in control of their lives with respect to parenting their child with special needs. They are seen as capable, competent decision-makers and as major sources of support for their children.

Harbor Regional Center assures that families receive early, consistent, culturally sensitive support to assist in promoting family stability and security. The Center has a major role in providing information, explanation, education, and training which allows families to increase their knowledge base, to make competent choices, to exercise increased responsibility, and to emerge more in control of their lives.

Harbor Regional Center builds and maintains strong partnerships with consumers and families to ensure a service delivery system that is flexible, accessible, responsive, and community-based. Consumers and family members take a leadership role in the governance of the service delivery system and demonstrate responsibility in ensuring its success.

Core Values

EMPOWERMENT

Harbor Regional Center believes that families which include a child with developmental special needs, and adults with developmental disabilities, want and need to exercise as much control over their own lives (empowerment) as possible. Empowerment is achieved by increasing security, expanding knowledge, and exercising responsibility. Harbor Regional Center's role is to provide support, information, and choices in order to facilitate the empowerment process.

SUPPORT

Families which include a family member with special needs must develop coping strategies and find ways to integrate their family member into the family system. Ensuring that families receive early, consistent support increases family stability and security, and assists them to maintain a balanced family system. Support comes from informal sources, such as immediate and extended family members and other parents of children with special needs, as well as from formal resources, such as educators, clinicians, and service coordinators.

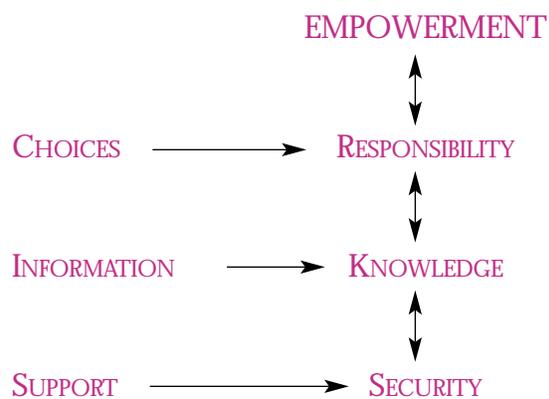
INFORMATION

When provided in the context of support, information increases the family's knowledge base and allows them to make competent choices on behalf of their family member with a disability.

CHOICES

It is imperative that families see themselves as competent decision-makers who can be effective advocates on behalf of their family member with a developmental disability. In following through on their choices, families display increased responsibility for their family member. Handling one's responsibilities in a competent manner increases control over one's life.

The model below graphically displays how security, knowledge and responsibility lead to empowerment, and how the provision of support, information and choices enhances this process:



FAMILY/PERSON-CENTERED SERVICES

Harbor Regional Center's goal is to strengthen each family's ability to promote their family member's development, not just to provide services to the family member with a delay or dis-

ability. Families are seen as capable, competent decision-makers; professionals are seen as equals on the family's/person's team. Outcomes are generated not just for the family member with a delay or disability, but for other family members and the family as a whole. Family members and the person with special needs share their concerns and priorities. The person's strengths and capabilities, as opposed to his weaknesses and deficits, are stressed. We respect the observations, opinions, and preferences of each family/person and support them in the choices they make.

We see each person as needing support, not fixing; we view each family and their community as major sources of support; and we believe the purpose of family/person-centered services is to see each person in the broad context of his family and his community, not just in the context of his disabilities or delays.

THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AS NATURAL SUPPORT

We believe a systems approach is the most viable method by which an individual's support system can contribute maximally to his desired outcomes (hopes, dreams, goals). Resources, such as family members, neighbors, friends, self-help groups, volunteers, business enterprises, religious organizations, and generic agencies are all viewed as potential providers of services and supports, or as advocates for individuals with developmental disabilities. These resources are utilized in the person/family-centered planning process and, on a broader scale, in collaborative development of needed services and supports.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE/ MOST INCLUSIVE ALTERNATIVE

Harbor Regional Center is committed to the principle of the "least restrictive/most inclusive alternative." This means that services and supports for consumers should not restrict freedom to any degree greater than is essential to meet the individual's desired outcomes, and that necessary services and supports should be provided in natural, as opposed to special or segregated, environments. This principle cuts across all life experiences, including residential, educational, recreational/leisure, and work environments, and is embraced in the development and coordination of services and supports.

PARTNERSHIP

We believe we have the best chance for success in service delivery if all stakeholders (consumers, families, "vendored" providers of services and supports, "generic" providers of services and supports, staff and board) are partners, committed to the vision and mission of the Center; if they are active participants in the activities of the Center; if they are involved in establishing the direction of the Center; if they face the challenges and the adversities together; and if they accept responsibility for the results.

Harbor Regional Center values our relationship with all of our partners. We recognize that our success or failure is inextricably linked to theirs and theirs to ours. We know we must all work together with a common sense of purpose if we are to achieve the vision and the mission we have jointly established.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Harbor Regional Center is located in a culturally diverse geographic area and is enriched by the customs and traditions of our neighbors. We recognize, however, that this very diversity, complicated by the multiplicity of languages and dialects spoken by our consumers and their families, challenges us in many ways. We are committed to learn, to understand, and to interact in a culturally sensitive way with all of our consumers and their families. We know that our community, our organization, and our services are greatly enhanced by the cultural mosaic which characterizes the population we serve.

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES/ LOCAL CONTROL

California's developmental services system was designed by a public policy leader of vision – Frank D. Lanterman – to provide community-based, family-centered coordinated services and supports. This is accomplished through a remarkable and effective private sector partnership which combines the best features of private sector business practice with the most compassionate and professional elements of the human services. The importance of decentralized, local control of the governance of the regional center cannot be overstated. When all local stakeholders (consumers, families, professionals and local community leaders) shape the vision and direction of the Center, a true sense of community is fostered and this will result in a cohesive network of services and supports efficiently delivered at the local level.

EVALUATION, INNOVATION, FLEXIBILITY, AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

The system within which we work is constantly changing. Sometimes this change is a slow, evolutionary one, and at other times reforms, innovations or catastrophes happen exceedingly rapidly and without warning. In either instance, Harbor Regional Center and all of our partners must be flexible and willing to adapt to the demands of difficult, unique or new challenges.

Effective organizations are not static. Ideally they are continually re-examining their operations, keeping abreast of the latest technologies, and experimenting with innovative pilot projects, procedures and studies to improve their service delivery. When public funds are expended in exemplary, innovative ways, a worthy return on these investments is realized, as well as advancement of the state-of-the-art. Harbor Regional Center is committed to the pursuit of excellence through this self-evaluation and renewal process.

Key Result Areas

▶ **Enhance Communication to and from Consumers, Families, Service Providers, Staff, Board and the General Community.**

All stakeholders have indicated (through focus groups and responses to the survey) that there is a need to increase the provision of information through a variety of strategies – especially through regular and frequent training opportunities.

▶ **Encourage Partnerships with All Stakeholders (consumers, families, service providers, staff, board, general community)**

We believe we have the best chance for success in service delivery if all stakeholders are partners, committed to the vision and mission of the Center; if they are active participants in the activities of the Center; if they are involved in establishing the direction of the Center; if they face the challenges and the adversities together; and if they accept responsibility for the results.

▶ **Increase Outreach to the Community**

We believe we have an obligation to help the community at large better understand and feel positive about people with disabilities. We believe in this way, our efforts to increase full inclusion opportunities in neighborhoods, in schools, and in places of employment will be enhanced. We also believe that we must take special care to

ensure that our local public policy makers are kept informed about issues affecting the quality of life of persons with developmental disabilities and their families. To these ends we must increase our public information and education efforts.

▶ **Address the Needs of “Low Incidence” Subpopulations**

“Low incidence” subpopulations include persons with developmental disabilities who also: are senior citizens; have a dual diagnosis including mental illness; are parents; have HIV or AIDS; have a history of substance abuse; have been the victim of abuse; have been prenatally substance exposed; have an alternative sexual orientation; are technology dependent; have a history of criminal activity; have mild retardation to borderline intelligence; or come from an ethnic/cultural background which is extremely under-represented in the general population.

Harbor Regional Center believes that all persons with developmental disabilities, regardless of any additional status, characteristics, conditions, or disabilities should be provided with quality services and supports designed to meet their unique needs. To this end, greater efforts must be made to reach out to and understand the special needs of such “low incidence” subpopulations.

Quality Service Commitment

Providing quality service means:

- ▶ *When I meet with consumers, families, service providers, visitors and other employees, I come to such meetings prepared with all available background information regarding the subject of the meeting. I welcome you and make certain that you are introduced to any other participants in our meeting.*
- ▶ *I demonstrate respect for your time by keeping appointments promptly at the agreed upon time and by attending to the agreed upon topic(s). I treat you considerately, working collaboratively, not interrupting and not imposing my own agenda.*
- ▶ *I look for ways to be helpful to you and to others, responding to you as quickly as possible and explaining any necessary delays.*
- ▶ *I take time to listen to your concerns and your problems, doing so with understanding and without judging. I give you my full attention.*
- ▶ *I demonstrate my professional competence by staying current in my field and performing tasks accurately. I know the limits of my job, solving problems within my authority and knowing how to get help when necessary.*
- ▶ *I share with consumers and families all of the information I have about the various service options available and provide my assessments and recommendations in a constructive, non-imposing manner.*
- ▶ *I encourage consumers and families to make their own informed choices and respect their decisions.*
- ▶ *If I do not have information essential to assist you in decision-making, I make every effort to obtain, or to assist you in obtaining, such information. If I cannot help, I make every effort, personally, to find someone who can.*
- ▶ *I solicit your ideas and suggestions on how Harbor Regional Center and I can improve our services and try to implement them whenever possible.*
- ▶ *I explain our service delivery system so that it is understandable and accessible to you and free of unnecessary red tape or excessive delays.*
- ▶ *I am open and honest about what I can do and what I am unable to do to assist you.*
- ▶ *If I do not speak your language, I make every effort to have someone who speaks your language available to assist in translation and, whenever possible, provide you with written materials in your language.*
- ▶ *I try to know and be sensitive to any cultural differences we may have.*
- ▶ *If I make a mistake or misunderstand your request, I acknowledge it and take quick and deliberate action to correct the situation.*
- ▶ *If, in spite of my efforts, you feel I have not been responsive or have caused you to be dissatisfied with Harbor Regional Center's and my service, I forward your complaint to the appropriate authority to ensure that every effort is made to respond promptly and constructively to your concerns.*

Acknowledgments

Harbor Regional Center wishes to acknowledge the generous assistance of the Harbor Regional Center Strategic Planning Steering Committee in the development of this “Plan for the 21st Century.”

The members, whose names appear below, organized and participated in numerous focus groups designed to elicit input from our various stakeholder groups, and spent countless hours in committee meetings refining the material which is presented here:

David Yates, HRC Board Member, Parent, and Chair

Mary Crawford, Service Provider

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Eileen Haden, Parent

Harry Long, Parent

Ann McKerren, HRC staff

Clare Miller, HRC staff

Elissa Nadel, Consumer

Juana Naranjo, HRC Board Member and parent

Monica Sifuentes, M.D., HRC Board Member

Harry Van Loon, Service Provider

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Thank you

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