

WHAT REALLY MATTERS – A PERSON-DIRECTED INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

SPEAKING OUT SESSIONS



As we embark on this Initiative, CQL puts people with disabilities, self advocates, consumers and their supporters at the center of our work. Only by asking – and by listening – to people can we know **what really matters**.

Planned for Fall 2009, Speaking Out sessions are the forum for people with disabilities, consumers of mental health services, advocates, self-advocates, and families to share their perspectives on person-directed (consumer-directed) supports in their own voice.

Sessions may be held in conjunction with other meetings, conferences or venues; they can be national in scope or local. We welcome partners and collaborating organizations to co-lead Speaking Out sessions. And we want to share those stories, experiences, and priorities – to guide the work of the Initiative and to inform the public about the real meaning of our work.

Goals:

- To ensure that people most impacted by the Initiative have a direct say
- To hear from a wide range of people throughout the U.S. (the world?)
- To learn how people define “what really matters” in the services and supports they receive
- To understand what person-directed supports are and what they need to be
- To disseminate written, video and/or audio summaries of the sessions

How it Works:

A typical Speaking Out session would last about one hour. Tools for recording what’s said are essential. Refreshments are nice, but not required. There is no charge or pre-requisite to participate in a Speaking Out session.

Session leaders will have a list of suggested questions to kick off the discussion. Leaders should make sure that everyone who wants to, has a chance to speak, and that no one dominates the discussion. Respect for all opinions is expected.

There is no right or wrong answer – every voice can and should be heard.

How to Get Involved:

CQL staff (or Board members) can become involved in multiple roles:

- Organize and lead sessions in your local community
- Identify potential partners (such as People First, SABE, Arc, NAMI, Autism Society, UCP chapters in your area)
- Record the sessions (audio, video, flipchart, transcribe)

Community Organizations can become involved as:

- Host sites for a Speaking Out session
- Co-Leaders of a session
- Recorders