



## PCS CHAMPION TRAINING

This companion manual includes the text for all audio narration in the PCS Champion Training Curriculum.

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## **COURSE DISCLAIMER**

The Resources section of the PCS Champion Training Curriculum contains a number of useful supplemental materials.

- A brief video overview of the entire screening process
- A companion manual with the text for all audio narration
- A link to EHD state materials

## MODULE 1: PCS CHAMPION TRAINING

### INTRODUCTON

Congratulations on becoming a PCS Champion! Participant Centered Services is a way of doing business that is here to stay. In Arizona, we call PCS “Together We Can,” because PCS can only succeed if we work together. In some ways it’s very different from previous styles of WIC services, but Together We Can change the face of WIC for the better. Together We Can succeed!

The information and activities in this course will expand your knowledge of PCS and your role as a PCS Champion and strengthen skills you can use to encourage and support your fellow WIC staff members. Many say these skills have also improved relationships with friends and family.

### THE DOCTOR, THE PRIEST AND THE FRIEND

I’m so glad you’ve decided to continue. Let’s begin with a story.

One day a man was walking down a street and he fell into a hole. The walls were so steep that he couldn’t climb his way out, though he could see all the way to the top. A doctor passed by and the man yelled “Help me doctor! I’ve fallen into this hole and can’t get out!” The doctor wrote the man a prescription, dropped it into the hole, and went about his day.

A little while later a priest walked by and the man yelled, “Father, please help me! I’ve fallen into this hole and can’t get out!” The priest wrote out a prayer, dropped it into the hole, and moved on.

Finally a friend walked by and the man yelled “Hey Joe, it’s me, down in the hole! Can you help me out?” Joe jumped down into the hole and the man said, “Are you stupid?!? Now we’re both stuck down here!” And the friend replied, “Yeah, but I’ve been down here before, and I know the way out.”

### A GREAT PCS CHAMPION

Being a PCS Champion is a lot like the friend in the story you just viewed. It doesn’t mean being a PCS expert or having perfect counseling skills yourself; but, instead, that you understand the challenges of using PCS skills and are willing to share what you’ve learned from practicing these skills yourself. In doing so you’re helping your fellow staff members navigate what may seem like a difficult change. So you can think of it as showing them the way out of the hole.

Many of the words we use to describe PCS also describe a great PCS Champion. Which ones describe you?

- **Warm, genuine, interested**
  - Empathetic
  - Personalized
  - Collaborative
  - Supportive

- **Curious, inquisitive**
  - Positive
  - Non-judgmental
  - Safety
  - Success

#### PCS CHAMPIONS ARE VALUABLE

PCS Champions have a valuable role in the WIC clinic. Much of what a Champion does is not a specific action, but shines through in his or her expressions and attitudes. This includes having a passion for PCS, an enthusiasm for enhancing the lives of others, a dynamic attitude, and a commitment to support fellow staff in a positive way.

A PCS Champion strives to be:

- Positive
- Knowledgeable
- Patient
- Dependable
- Flexible
- Confident
- Resourceful.

At times it may mean sharing your knowledge and understanding of a certain skill. Or it may just be listening to staff members' frustrations and encouraging them in their progress, no matter how small. Either way, your role is valuable!

#### PCS CHAMPIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

Some specific responsibilities of a PCS Champion include:

- Being a leader and role model for PCS by regularly practicing your own skills
- Recognizing the needs of WIC families and being their voice to your local agency
- Supporting and encouraging fellow staff in their efforts to implement and improve PCS
- Mentoring staff and providing regular feedback on their PCS skills progress
- Incorporating the spirit of PCS in all activities conducted throughout the clinic
- Maintaining an environment that supports participant centered services
- Conducting periodic system-wide assessments and peer observations of core PCS skills
- Identifying resources and training needed to promote the ongoing advancement of PCS
- Facilitating communication between staff and management
- Regularly celebrating and recognizing staff on their PCS efforts and achievements

## TAKING THE CHAMPIONS' PLEDGE

Your role as a Champion is very important. YOU make PCS work!

As with any job or responsibility, you may find being a Champion is challenging at times. But take pride when you see healthier and happier participants in our clinics and know you played a big role in making that happen!

If you're ready to be a PCS Champion for your co-workers, repeat this pledge after me:

"As a PCS Champion I will be an advocate change agent and facilitator working together with peers to achieve the mission and goals of our WIC program in a participant-centered environment. Together We Can!"

## MODULE 2: WHAT'S THIS PCS STUFF?

### INTRODUCTION: PCS- HERE TO STAY

PCS is not a fad, a trend or a campaign. It's about how WIC is going to operate moving forward. It's here to stay. It's the way we do business and Together We Can be successful!

This module is not going to explain PCS in great detail. Instead, over the next several minutes we're going to look closer at some of the key PCS skills that are important to use with our participants. While there are other skills that are important to PCS, those highlighted in this section are ones that'll be helpful to use while interacting with your co-workers to support their PCS adoption.

### ASKING PERMISSION

Asking permission of your participant or co-worker may seem odd or even uncomfortable, but it's an important part of building a trusting relationship. By asking for permission to share advice, or change a subject, or review a handout, you're respecting that person as an individual and helping them feel in control. And when someone feels they're in control, they're much more likely to consider or actually make a behavior change. Let's look at the different ways of asking permission.

- As part of your visit today, we'll need to review the paperwork you've brought in, get some measurements in the lab, and visit a little bit about his health and eating habits. How does that sound?
- Would you mind if I shared some things I noticed about the visit?

### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions are those that invite deeper conversation by asking someone to think and say exactly what's on his or her mind. They allow more information to be exchanged than a closed-ended question that seeks specific responses or details, such as yes and no, or facts and numbers. They convey curiosity and a desire to understand the individual, rather than judgment and expectation of certain answers. Interestingly, an open-ended question often sounds like a statement and begins with words like "Describe" or "Explain". Let's look at some examples.

- Describe your eating habits for most days of the week.
- Tell me about your approach to offering education.

### SILENCE

Once in the habit of asking more open-ended questions, you may find there are more moments of silence during your conversations, and that's okay. In fact, it's probably a good thing because that means the person you're talking to is thinking about their response – which was the intent of asking the open-ended question in the first place.

WIC is an equal opportunity provider.

Giving them a few moments to think probably means you'll get more useful information which may eliminate the need for follow-up questions. Your initial reaction to silence may be to fill that void with dialogue, but resist the urge unless you feel your question might have been misunderstood or needs to be clarified.

## ACTIVE AND REFLECTIVE LISTENING

In addition to allowing silence, there are other ways of showing that we are listening and care about what our participants are saying

Some ways to show you're actively listening include:

- Keep eye contact
- Face the participant
- Encourage the participant to continue talking by nodding and saying things like, "I see" and "go on, tell me more"
- Make a reflective statement to clarify and encourage the participant to continue

## AFFIRMATION

The truth is we all like to be recognized for something positive. Affirming your participants and co-workers increases their confidence in making a change or using a skill. They're then more likely to continue that change or practice that skill which you affirmed and continue making progress. A good affirmation is genuine, sincere and usually specific. Let's look at some examples.

- "I'm impressed with how well you see his hunger cues. Those can be tricky sometimes."
- "I appreciate how hard you've worked to ask more open-ended questions."

## CHANGE TALK

Because people are usually more persuaded by what they hear themselves say than by what someone tells them, it's part of our job at WIC to have the participant verbalize how they want to make a healthy behavior change. The same is true of our co-workers using more PCS skills. Their plan on what skills to work on and how is the most important and, ultimately the most effective. There are many different types of "change talk" including:

- Desire – I wish I could get my participants to open up a little more.
- Ability – I could try to ask more open-ended questions.
- Reasons – If I could get them to open up more, I know I could find more ways to help.
- Need – I can't keep having one-sided conversations.
- Commitment Strength – I'm going to come up with some open-ended questions to use in my assessment

## MODULE 3: CHECK THIS OUT

### INTRODUCTION

Knowing what to look for and how, with your coworkers, can be a challenge, but this module will help. As you've seen here, we're interested in capturing the "full picture" of Participant Centered Services, not just the words. In this module, we'll explore how to prepare for a staff observation, creating a comfortable environment for staff and participants in which you can observe some of the tools available for your use.

### OBSERVATIONS – READY IN A MOMENT'S NOTICE!

Being a PCS Champion means you may need to be flexible. Some Champions find it easy to schedule time to work with their co-workers. Others find the clinic can get very busy and change our intended schedule, so they have to take observation opportunities as they become available. With that in mind, you may find it helpful to keep a folder or notebook handy with all the materials you'll need for an observation ready to go, in case you only get a moment's notice.

Materials may include:

- Some of those materials may include:
- Clipboard or something hard to write on
- Writing utensils – pens, pencils, markers, etc.
- Something to take notes on – paper, sticky notes, etc.
- Handouts with information on key PCS skills, and anything else you may want to share with your co-workers.

### BEFORE GREETING THE PARTICIPANT

Having someone observe you in the workplace can be nerve-wracking, so it's important to take a few minutes to reduce some of the tension with your co-worker before bringing the participant into the office.

- Remember the importance of building rapport. For example, consider acknowledging that observations can be stressful. Trying to convince others that they shouldn't be nervous, when they are feeling so, may make you sound like less of a credible teammate, and interfere with your ability to build rapport.
- Consider framing the observation as a valuable opportunity. Let co-workers know what they may miss out on if they don't continue with the observation.



- Many staff members have said that working with their Champion made them feel like they had a partner and support through something that was tough. Others have said they feel more prepared and perform better when their supervisors or program managers sit in on observations. Still others were simply thrilled to hear from someone else that they were already providing many services in a participant centered way.
- While some may get more benefit from the experience than others, almost everyone reports at least some satisfaction, even if they were feeling initial, and natural, anxiety.

#### MORE ABOUT BEFORE GREETING THE PARTICIPANT

Another way you can build rapport is to remind your co-workers that you're all on the same WIC team and you're in this PCS journey together. Your only goal is to encourage them and talk through their own ideas on improving their PCS skills. Let them know that you will be taking notes to help you remember the highlights of the visit and that it's best that they ignore you altogether and focus on the participant.

Ask your co-workers questions, like:

- "What skills have you been working on lately?"
- "What would you like me to be listening for?"

These are likely things your co-workers feel confident in and you can affirm later, or they may be things they want help with and you can discuss later.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, kindly remind your co-workers to explain your role in observing and ask permission of the client for you to do so. If the participant is uncomfortable with you observing, then waiting for another opportunity is best for everyone.

#### DURING THE APPOINTMENT

Once the participant is okay with you observing, try to stay in the background of the appointment as much as you can – as if you were a fly on the wall.

- If possible, sit somewhere that doesn't encourage the participant to interact with you – you want them to be interacting with your co-worker.
- Ideally, you don't want to say anything during the appointment unless someone asks you something directly.

You'll be watching and recording things so that you can provide positive feedback and suggestions for improvement – especially related to the skills we reviewed in the last module.

Keep in mind that it's not always the exact words someone says that's most important. Rather, focus on posture and body language, tone of voice, the speed or pace of the appointment and how the participant and co-worker react to each other.

## NOTE TAKING AND OBSERVATION TOOLS

You probably recall from the previous module that, when affirming someone, your statement carries more meaning when it's genuine and specific. By taking notes of precise examples and wording from an appointment we can later affirm the positive skills of our co-workers in such a way that builds their confidence and motivation for using more PCS skills. This is also important because everyone will use different words to say the same thing and it's nice for them to know those words are being understood. Using an observation tool for taking notes can be a smart and easy way to organize your thoughts and prompt you to look for certain skills throughout the appointment.

Look at the different tools to see which tool might be best for you.

- **PCS Counseling Observation Guide** – Very straightforward and easy to use. Plenty of room for comments and remarks.
- **PCS Skill Observation Form** – Great for providing focused feedback on specific skills. For instance, if a co-worker mentions she's been practicing a specific skill.
- **Sowing-Growing-Glowing** – A fun way to highlight your co-workers' strengths by rating skills as "glowing," and then encouraging self-assessment by having them rate the remaining skills as "sowing," as in still planting seeds of change or considering using a skill, and "growing," as in still developing or practicing a skill.
- **PCS Encounter Observation Guide** – Perhaps helpful for those who lose themselves in the conversation by asking them to keep a running tab of the topics discussed. This may also be the best tool if at some point you choose to provide feedback on an audio recording a co-worker has made of an appointment.
- **PCS Observation Circle Tool** – In keeping with our goal of modeling PCS skills while mentoring our co-workers, having them select topics to discuss with you is a great way of exploring the topics that matter most to them and directing your feedback.

## SUMMING UP WITH THE PARTICIPANT

Once the appointment has ended, it's very important to thank participants for allowing you to share their time with you. Having extra people around may make participants uncomfortable even if they happily agreed to have you sit in. The last thing we want is for them to feel unwelcomed and not return. You may even mention to them that we always welcome comments or suggestions on ways we can improve the program and make their experience a little more enjoyable.

After all, who better to get suggestions on becoming more participant centered, than from our participants themselves. Together We Can!

## MODULE 4: PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

### INTRODUCTION: PROVIDING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

As you work with more of your co-workers, you'll likely develop a style of offering input that works for you. This module will give you some easy to follow steps that will help structure some key elements of effective feedback. These elements include TARP, Explore, Offer, Explore, and Goal Setting.

As we take a closer look at each of these components, remember that our aim is to build on our co-workers' PCS strengths by using those same skills to champion their progress. Dance with one another, enjoy the process, and watch how your PCS skills grow as well!

### TARP – THANK, AFFIRM, REITERATE PURPOSE

TARP is a simple acronym that stands for Thank, Affirm, and Reiterate Purpose.

Once the client leaves and it's just you two again, those stressful feelings that we tried to diffuse before the appointment may return as your co-worker anxiously awaits your feedback. These three little steps can be done very quickly and get your conversation off to a positive start.

- **Step 1:** Thank – Much like thanking the participant, it's very important to thank your co-worker for sharing his or her time and office space as well.
- **Step 2:** Affirm – Start building your co-worker's confidence right from the start by pointing out the positive elements you observed during the appointment.
- **Step 3:** Reiterate Purpose – Remind your co-worker that your role is only to support and encourage, not point the finger or criticize.

### EXPLORE

The next step is to encourage self-assessment by EXPLORING how your co-worker felt about the appointment. It may be tempting to jump right in and offer your feedback after sitting quietly the entire time, but allowing your co-worker to paint a picture, from their perspective, lets you focus more on the needs and skills he or she identifies. You may even find that you don't need to share much of your input because your co-worker is highly motivated to improve on specific skills. In this case perhaps spend the rest of your time pulling examples from the notes you've taken.

Some questions to ask may include:

- How do you feel the appointment went?
- What do you think went well? What did you learn?
- What are you taking away from the appointment?

## OFFER

Notice the next step is OFFER, rather than give or provide. Keeping with the spirit of PCS we only want to share our feedback if our co-worker is ready to receive it and we have his or her permission to do so. Therefore, it's good to start this step by asking something like, "Would you mind if I shared a few things I noticed with you?"

Once we have permission, here are a few guidelines to keep in mind while offering your feedback:

- Be clear, brief, and specific – Feedback is easier to understand and use when given in little packages
- Focus on the positives – Remember our goal is to build on one's strengths. Try to elicit your co-worker's own ideas for improvement before making suggestions, and only after affirming the good
- Use your own PCS skills – Listen actively and reflectively while encouraging change talk
- Avoid imperative language like "you should... , you need to..., you have to..."
- Avoid feedback overload – Select a couple of key areas to provide feedback on. Change comes with little steps.

## EXPLORE

After your co-worker's done some self-assessment and you've provided your feedback, it's time to EXPLORE how he or she feels about what you've discussed. It's helpful to ask some open-ended questions to encourage her to reflect on your feedback. This opens the door for her to really examine her PCS skills and begin to verbalize areas for improvement or even solutions to troublesome skills she's already identified.

For example, you might ask:

- "What else would you like to add? What do you think about my comments?"
- What, if anything, do you see yourself doing differently next time?
- How do you see yourself using some of the things we've talked about?"

## SMART GOALS

As we know from working with participants, if we're expecting behavior change, we want to help them clearly identify what the next steps will be. Summarizing what you've talked about and then helping to identify one area to focus on can help them make improvements, while making them feel that you're "in this together".

Mutually agreeing to a SMART goal is a great way to do this. SMART stands for:

- **Specific** – A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general one
- **Measurable** - Goals with measurable progress are easier to show change
- **Achievable** – A goal should be challenging but within reach
- **Realistic** – The goal should not depend on things outside of one's control
- **Timely** – Determining an endpoint for the goal encourages work towards it

## MODULE 5: SEARCHING IN THE DARK

A woman was walking down the street when she noticed a man under a light post looking for something. She walked over and asked if she could help him, and he replied, “Sure, I’ve lost my keys and can’t seem to find them; they’re bound to be here somewhere.”

They searched and searched for several minutes when finally the woman asked, “Where was the last place you remember having them?” The man responded, “Well, down that alleyway. I had to have had them to lock my office door.”

The woman asked, “Have you looked between here and there?”

The man replied, “No, not yet.”

The woman then asked, “How come? You seem quite sure they’re right around here?”

The man replied, “Because this is where the light is.”

### INTRODUCTION: WHERE TO START

Being a PCS Champion, at times you may begin to feel like the woman in the story you just viewed. It may seem like you’re doing all the right things but going around in circles and not seeing results. What feels like common sense to you, may feel incredibly uncomfortable for someone else. Trying to change behaviors in a group of people can be very challenging. It requires regular and varied approaches.

This final module will explore some of the other ways we, as PCS Champions, can step out into the dark and help our co-workers find their “key” to PCS. Such as:

- Modeling PCS skills for your co-workers
- Partnering with your supervisor
- Journaling and following-up regularly
- Providing or organizing training
- Getting feedback from participants, and
- Celebrating success to encourage and motivate

### MODELING

Now that you’ve accepted the role of PCS Champion, part of your responsibility is to set a good example for PCS when interacting with clients or fellow staff. Additionally, many of your co-workers would benefit from observing you working with a client, just as you’ve learned to observe them.

You get the benefit of their feedback to improve your skills, while they get to watch and listen to your gestures, body language, and wording, and perhaps get some new ideas for their counseling approach. While the skills are the same for everyone, individuals need to find their own voice and words that feel comfortable to them. By watching you they’re likely to become more aware of the skills they’re trying to improve. Perhaps most importantly, it reinforces the spirit of Together We Can: that you are peers, working together toward a common goal, not an expert or authority.

## ENCOURAGE YOUR SUPERVISOR

No matter what job or role you play in WIC, your supervisor can be an important ally in your staff's progress.

Sit down and discuss your supervisor's vision for PCS in your office and how you can both support one another to benefit staff. Brainstorm ways you can work together to avoid confusion from conflicting messages and lessen each other's workloads.

- Invite your supervisor to observe you working with clients, using your observation tool, to see the kinds of things you're trying to develop in your peers.
- Ask him or her to take an appointment and experience the entire observation process from that perspective.

## FOLLOWING UP

Accountability is one key to long-term behavior change. In our fast-paced and often chaotic WIC clinics, it can be easy to forget about those SMART goals we set for ourselves. Think of yourself as the "accountability partner" for your clinic, and every now and then check in to see how things are going with your staff. Not only will it provide motivation for your staff to work toward their goal, but it reinforces that you genuinely care, and again, Together We Can!

- You may find it beneficial to keep a journal, with brief notes from an observation, like the date, the kind of appointment you observed, and that staff person's SMART goals.
- Another option is to keep a notebook or file where you keep the observation tools from appointments, so you can go back and review them, or before sitting in on an appointment to see what things you previously discussed.

## TRAINING

It is often easier to learn and practice a skill without the pressure of meeting your participants' needs within their appointment time. Additionally, your observation and feedback alone might not be enough to see the improvement you and your co-workers are looking for in PCS. For these reasons, you may need to provide or locate training opportunities for your staff to strengthen their skills apart from participant contact.

For example, you may:

- Ask your supervisor for time at a staff meeting to review a particular PCS skill, practice using a certain handout in a PCS manner, or have some fun role playing
- Find out what kinds of training or resources your local and state agency may be able to offer
- Several other states publish their PCS resources online, which you may find helpful
- Keep an eye out for workshops or seminars in your area that may be helpful, if your agency will send you and others to it

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

While you observe co-workers practicing and mastering their PCS skills, it's likely you'll notice some changes in how participants respond as well. Observing these changes is nice, but you may find it more useful to get formal comments or suggestions from them. For this, consider using a survey, with questions, like:

- How welcomed did we make you feel during today's visit?
- How confident are you in using the information you received today?
- What else should we know to better serve you and all of our families?

Or anything else you and your co-workers think will help strengthen their PCS skills. Your state agency may also have some good ideas or tools for helping you create such a survey.

Participant responses may help co-workers:

- Decide on relevant training topics
- Think of ways to change the efficiency or comfort of the clinic
- Create ideas for new education topics or materials, or
- Be affirmed and congratulated on a job well done

## CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Changing the way we approach WIC services and education is a process that will take time. There'll be challenges and barriers to overcome along the way, which may make some lose interest or enthusiasm. That's one big reason to share and celebrate all the PCS victories and breakthroughs. After all, if you can't enjoy what you're doing, then what's the point? Be creative and enjoy the ongoing process of change!

Here are some other ways to share and celebrate:

- Recognize individuals publically with awards and honors
- Throw office parties when the group hits a milestone or mutual goal
- Create friendly team competitions with prizes or incentives
- Get WIC families involved by letting them recognize extraordinary office visits
- Your imagination is the only limit

## ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

However you and your office proceed, just remember that no one knows you better than YOU. What's good for one office or Champion, doesn't necessarily work for another. We all serve a slightly different population and demographic, so keeping with the spirit of PCS, think about what "making PCS work" will mean for your office's participants.

There's no single right or wrong answer here. Find what works in your office and run with it. Trial and error is expected. Just roll with mistakes, then try something else, if needed. Network with other Champions in other offices. Talk often. Find out what's working for them. Talk with your supervisor about joining the Champions group, if you've not already done so.

We have many clinics, in many agencies, in many counties and regions across this state, but remember...we're all Arizona WIC.  
Together We Can!