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# Enabling Technology Policy

Developed by

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**Person-Centered Approach**

Core Services adheres to person-centered principles and a model of positive behavior supports. Person Centered Planning focuses on the person and their needs by putting them in charge of defining the direction for their lives. This model is disseminated into agency culture and practice through the following processes.

Pre-annual planning, a Personal Outcome Measure Interview, and Annual Assessment of Rights, Supports, and Protection is completed with the person and those most familiar with the person. In addition, two facilitated person-centered planning meetings are held monthly resulting in a minimum of one PCP meeting every two years for people supported. Information learned during the POM interview, PCP meeting, and Annual Assessment of Rights, Supports, and, Protection is reviewed with the person and also reviewed at the house meeting, Incident Review Committee PRERTS, and Individual Support Plan Planning meeting. Outcomes, supports and risks are identified and incorporated into annual planning. Information learned is used to develop and implement Training Specifics to the Individual.

In addition, Core Services is committed to:

* Identifying outcomes. What is missing from a person’s life? What is their vision of a preferred life? What can be accomplished rather than what can be eliminated? Can technology help achieve a dream that traditional services cannot?
* Technology as a first choice to achieve outcomes when applicable
* All agency personnel completing two-day Person-Centered Thinking training and 4-day Personal Outcome Measures training
* Credentialing opportunities for staff including SHIFT, NADSP e-Badge, CESP
* Regular follow up and monitoring of plan(s) (Individual Support Plan and Technology Plans) implementation by management to ensure that plans for achieving outcomes are identified, documented, implemented and monitored for effectiveness
* Use of Person-First Language. Person’s receiving supports, Technology or otherwise, will not be called clients or service-recipients. Individuals will be addressed by their names alone whenever possible, and if a distinction needs to be made they will be referred to as self-advocates, person’s receiving services, or person’s supported.

The goal of this policy is promoting person-centered and person directed supports and thinking on all levels of the organization.

**Organizational Commitment**

#### Core Services of Northeast Tennessee is committed to a technology first culture. This model includes developing opportunities for people to choose where, when, and what type of support they desire in order to live their definition of a preferred life. Technology is all around us and is a natural support for people who can and want to be more independent. Combining the support of Direct Support Professionals with the modern benefits of technology makes the seemingly impossible possible. Core Services is committed to innovation and will continuously seek new ways of providing support by applying new ideas, strategies and resources that create value. Proven approaches and best practices will be shared with others to promote the technology movement. The least restrictive model of support will be the primary consideration whenever determining service needs of a person. This may include the use of Technology as an alternative to in-home paid support. Core Services’ commitment to Technology is evident in all of our marketing and media materials, including but not limited to: Social Media, Website, Advertising, Pamphlets, Newsletters, Recruiting Materials, etc. Core Services will have and maintain a dedicated Technology Team (elaborated on elsewhere in this document) to ensure the Enabling Technology Program is capable and prolific in its exploration and development of Technology-Based Supports. A commitment to the use of Technology Supports and the Person-Centered Principals behind them is a requirement at every level of organizational leadership including but not limited to: Executive Leadership, Direct Support, Front-Line Supervision, Board of Directors. By-In is fostered through the frequent sharing of successes.

Core Services is committed to a system of ongoing evaluation and feedback from stakeholders to ensure practices support desired outcomes. The following positions currently exist to support the agency technology program:

* **Night Monitor**- The Night Monitor is responsible for ensuring quality services are provided during the night shift hours including but not limited to: ensuring staff alertness, cleanliness of homes, safety and happiness of individuals supported, and completion of documentation. The Night Monitor is also on-call to respond to any Enabling Technology alerts that occur during the night to receive and respond to “on-call” calls.
* **Remote Support Specialist -** The role of a Remote Technology Support Specialist is to assist people to live independently utilizing Technology. The RSS monitors alerts for homes supported by technology during sleep hours. This includes having an advanced knowledge of the individualized Technology Support Plan and ISP of each person that is receiving remote supports, understanding the philosophy behind Remote Supports and the use of Enabling Technology to achieve self-directed lives, and having the ability to quickly assess a situation and determine the appropriate response measure.

Any programs utilizing Technology will be provided with the appropriate resources to do so effectively, which may include redundant systems when deemed necessary. These include: reliable internet, equipment that is in good working order and is not outdated or obsolete, cellular connectivity, and an ongoing review of devices for functionality, troubleshooting, and maintenance.

**Technology Team**

Core Services will have a Technology Team that will consist of members of upper management (Executive Director, Financial Independence Specialist, Director of Nursing, Program Director, Case Manager) as well as representation from all levels of the agency (Program Supervisor, Direct Support Professionals, Persons Supported). The point of contact for the Technology Team is the Program Director. Members of the Technology team must demonstrate capability with the basic use of tech, understanding of its purpose and the person-centered concepts behind its use, and a commitment to using Technology to support people in the most self-directed means possible. The number of team members may fluctuate but will have no fewer than six-members at any given time. An additional member to the team or a team-member’s removal will be discussed at the bi-weekly Technology Meeting and a decision made by majority vote of existing members as necessary. Any Team Member deemed to not be meeting expectations will be discussed by other members at bi-weekly meeting. Failure to meet expectations may result in removal from Technology Team.

Members of the Technology Team will include “Tech Champions”. Tech Champions are people who are technologically savvy and committed to understanding the array and purposes of technology supports and who have a vision of how they can be best used. Tech Champions will be responsible for specific areas of need.

The Technology Team will meet every other Monday in conjunction with the PRERTS meeting

The Technology Team will be responsible for:

* reviewing agencies policies and procedures as they relate to technology
* assessing programming and empowering the priorities, preferences and goals of people supported

The Technology Team will present a report to the quarterly Person-Centered Organization meeting and seek input from internal and external stakeholders who attend this meeting.

The meeting agenda will include but is not limited to: Progress Updates on goals in progress, future goals, areas that are working and not working, review of existing programs for potential expansion or modification.

**Communication**

Core’s commitment to being a Tech First Organization is communicated to all stakeholders

by various means including but not limited to: Social Media, Board Meetings, Internal Email,

Marketing Materials, Monthly Staff Meetings, Newsletters to Family, Person-

Centered Planning Meeting with Persons Supported. Technology as a mean of support will

be discussed during the annual Pre-Planning process with each person that Core supports.

Concerns are addressed by the agency’s Complaint Resolution Process as defined in a separate policy.

Successes or struggles with Enabling Technology are discussed at bi-weekly Technology Meetings and shared as often as necessary, up to daily, via public broadcast means such as Social Media or other forms of public address.

A Program Supervisor is assigned to each home utilizing technology supports

* The Program Supervisor will visit each home weekly
* Review daily documentation notes for the week
* Evaluate “what’s working” and “what’s not working” through discussions with staff and person
* Record site supervision visits in PHS

Issues, concerns, accomplishments and expansion plans will be discussed at PRERTS

meetings. Agency management will network with technology vendors through conferences,

site visits, and electronic communication to stay informed of new and existing technology.

Technology support success stories will be shared on Social Media, presentations at

conferences and other communications with agency stakeholders to promote the concept of

technology support

**Education**

An agency goal and focus will be educating all employees on the unlimited possibilities of

technology to increase independence and a preferred life for people supported. This will be

included in onboarding training for new hires. Both in-person and online training will be

utilized for this purpose.

DSP’s who support individuals using technology supports and all members of the agency

administration team will be required to obtain SHIFT certification. The agency will also

encourage and support all other stakeholders involved with an individual using technology

to also complete the standardized training. The long-term goal of Core Services is a

workforce with a 100% SHIFT certification rate.

Educational opportunities will be identified and implemented for employees at all levels of

the organization.

Educational opportunities will include: visiting sites where technology is being successfully

used, becoming proficient on electronic devices such as iPads and mobile apps, attendance

at conferences and webinars.

Focus groups will be held with people supported to educate them on the possibilities of

technology in their life

Periodically focus groups will be held exclusively for people supported who are currently

receiving technology supports to allow them a platform to compare and learn from each

other

Identification and implementation of technology supports in the workplace will be an

ongoing education opportunity for job coaches.

Successes are shared with all organizational stakeholders.

**Organizational Documentation**

The following data will be collected for the purpose of evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the enabling technology program. This information will be included in an annual trending report for the calendar year.

* # People using technology
* # People with reduced DSP support as a result of technology support
* # Reduced DSP hours as a result of technology supports
* # People using smart devices
* # People using medication dispensers
* Medication Variances for people self-administering or using a medication dispenser
* Reportable Incidents for people supported with technology compared to other people supported
* The presence of POM outcomes and supports for people using technology supports compared to other people supported
* Weekly cost savings as a result of a reduction in paid supports
* # Concerns received for people using technology supports
* Basic Assurances House monitoring tool
* Data received from DSPs Personal Outcome Workshop feedback
* Data received from the Core Council and Self-Advocate Council

Individual Technology Vendors are often able to provide detailed data points regarding the use of ET: Frequency of specific occurrences ie sensor activation, Ring Camera activation, Medication dispenser, etc.

Data collection is specified within each person’s Enabling Technology Plan as it is specific to each person. The Practical Health Systems electronic documentation system will be used to document all supports, events, reportable incidents, sick slips, falls and behaviors.

* A data review occurs bi-weekly at PRERTS meetings and if there are concerns, a COS is scheduled.
* A COS will be convened as needed to discuss progress
* The Executive Director will trend data on a quarterly and annual basis. This information will be included in the agency annual trend report.

**Funding, Purchasing, and Billing**

The Tennessee Statewide Waiver Program and the Employment and Community First

Choices Program have a funding mechanism in place to support the implementation and

ongoing use of Enabling Technology. These funds will be utilized as the first means of

paying for Technology Supports. A person may choose to pay for Technology

themselves if they have the means to do so and are unable to acquire Tech through other

funding mechanisms. Family members may choose to supplement technology costs if

necessary. The purchase of Technology is completed through the following process:

* + Technology and Vendor are selected through the planning process.
  + Quotes are obtained and reviewed by a member of the Tech Team, and submitted to TN DIDD for approval.
  + If approved, a member of the tech team will either purchase the items or services with agency dollars and submit for reimbursement through the waiver (if Vendor is not an approved DIDD Provider), or the Vendor may bill the Waiver funding directly if approved to do so.
  + Billing for Waiver funding is submitted through the DIDD Waiver by Core Services’ Case Manager.

Successful implementation of technology supports results in a reduction in the need for

DSP support. Core Services is committed to reallocating DSP resources when an employee

is displaced by technology.

Saved staffing costs will be reallocated toward employees’ wages, positions and other needs

that will support the sustainability of the technology program

**Assessment**

If a need is indicated, as result of information learned during the annual planning process,

the Enabling Technology Plan Questionnaire will be completed for the purpose of further

identification of the persons priorities, interests, and concerns and the role and

opportunities of technology in the person’s life.

* Does the person have outcomes that could be achieved through technology, such as a desire for more independence?
* Is the individual ready for the transition to use of technology?
* Will enabling technology allow this person to achieve their vision of a preferred life?
* Are there identified risks that can be overcome with technology?
* Who in their life will be supportive or resistant to this transition?
* Matching a person’s needs to specific pieces of technology will be outlined during the Person-Centered Planning Process and during the intake process with an Enabling Technology Vendor when/if one is identified. A DIDD “Tech Champion” may be included in this process for added expertise.

Any concerns, priorities, conflicting viewpoints or preferences will be further elaborated on during the Person-Centered Planning portion of the process (See Person-Centered Approach section of this policy. If a conflict cannot be adequately resolved during this process and/or rises to a level requiring formal conflict resolution, the Concern Resolution Policy will be followed.

**Implementation**

The following procedure is utilized to assess, implement, and provide ongoing oversight of any Enabling Technology program:

1. Education on enabling technology completed with all individuals supported and DSPs
2. Annual Pre-Planning Assessment including Personal Outcomes Measures Interview by a certified POM interviewer.
3. Individual Assessment completed (in home) to determine person’s interest, goals, and abilities as it relates to enabling technology . Assessment performed by a member of the Enabling Technology Team
4. Circle of Support
5. Person Centered Planning Meeting
6. Personal Outcome Measure Interview
7. Vendor selected (based on needs/preferences)
8. Intake with selected vendor
9. House located (if applicable)
10. Assessment Completed with Vendor
11. Transition Meeting
12. Enabling Technology Plan completed (Tech Champion) and ISP amended (ISC)
13. Staff identified and trained
14. Person supported completes online training
15. Technology Installation by vendor (if applicable) or by qualified party if a vendor is not used. Qualified party is defined as an Enabling Technology Champion with SHIFT Leadership or ETIS certification, two years’ experience as a member of Core Services Technology Team, and possesses competency/understanding of technology.
16. Move in
17. Individual Trained on Technology (by vendor or member of Tech team where applicable)
18. Staff training onsite (by vendor or member of Tech team where applicable)
19. Trial Period (if applicable) where the individual gradually transitions to greater independence. The timeframe, process, and scope of this will be determined during the preceding meetings and specified in the Enabling Technology Plan.
20. Formal meetings quarterly to discuss what is working/not working.
21. Meeting schedule is gradually reduced based on the recommendations of the COS
22. Technology reduced as it is no longer needed, with the ultimate goal being total independence

Security/Privacy: Passwords will be managed by the Program Director and Tech Champion(s). This information will be stored on an Administrative Drive which only a small number of administrative employees have access to. DSPs will not have access to passwords to minimize distribution of this information. All tablets/smartphones used in or in conjunction with Technology Programs will be required to have password protection per Core Services’ Information Security policy. Agency-provided devices will be used for all Technology Oversight. Personal Devices are not to be used for this purpose. If an employee leaves that has or has previously had access to any passwords or technology platforms (example: Ring doorbell access), the associated passwords will be changed upon their departure. Credit card/banking information is not to be saved on any devices to minimize risk of loss, theft, or accidental exposure. Financial information will be protected in according with Core Services’ Personal Funds procedures and policy.

**Due Process**

The policy of Core Services of Northeast Tennessee is Enabling Technology will not be used for the purpose of restricting rights or invading privacy. Enabling technology will only be used if it is agreed upon by the person supported for the purpose of promoting rights, independence, and dignity. Any need for the involvement of a Human Rights Committee will be a considered a misuse of Enabling Technology as it implies the person receiving the supports does not consent. Any technology that could be deemed restrictive or is proposed for a restrictive purpose is strictly forbidden. This will be determined throughout the assessment, planning, and implementation process.

Core Services of Northeast Tennessee commits to using Facilitated Person-Centered Planning for the selection of candidates, planning of outcomes and supports and implementation of enabling technology. In most instances, this will require extensive involvement of the persons Circle of Support and multiple PCP facilitated meetings. If a person is considered a candidate the aforementioned procedure will be implemented.

**Maintenance and Repair**

The agency will be responsible for ensuring proper functioning of Enabling Technology equipment and timely replace of equipment necessary for proper support.

A staff will be identified at each site and will hold responsibility for checking technology weekly. A maintenance checklist will be used to documents efforts. Batteries and other needed anticipated maintenance items will be kept on site to avoid delays in support. Program Specialist ensures functionality of all technology during a monthly site inspection. Any issues are immediately addressed by a member of the Technology Team. Repairs may be completed internally when applicable or may require the use of an outside entity, such as a hired professional or Technology Vendor. HIPAA compliance, functionality of technology, and reasonable mitigation of IT risks (malware, viruses, etc) are the ultimate responsibility of Core’s Technology Team. HIPAA expectations for Core employees apply to all areas of the company including technology.

All technology failures of 15 minutes duration or more will be considered an emergency – refer to Back Up Plan and On Call Procedures below.

Responsibilities of Agency and Staff:

* Test functioning
* Replace Batteries
* Respond to all alerts and notifications (even default notifications)
* Develop a backup service plan for each person
* Request changes in system and supports in a timely manner

**Backup Systems**

Any non-functionality of technology is to be reported immediately and resolved as soon as possible. Some systems auto-generate alerts when tech isn’t functioning as normal, others may be observed during routine checks. In the event of Technology not functioning as normal, an on-site staff person will be dispatched to the home within 30 minutes of outage.

Given the 24/7 nature of programs, a formal on-call system is necessary to ensure the availability of back-up staff in various situations. Expectations related to on-call responsibilities are listed below.

The following Management Positions have identified on-call as part of the duties identified in Job Descriptions:

Remote Support Specialist

Night Monitor

Program Director

Program Supervisors

Case Manager

Registered Nurse

Financial Independence Liaison

Executive Director

Program Director/Incident Management Coordinator

An on-call number (423.483.1057) is posted in all business locations, is available on the company website and is widely known agency wide. An on-call schedule is completed monthly and the on-call number is transferred to the appropriate employee on duty.

The Registered Nurse is not part of the on-call schedule but is available to on-call supervisors 24/7 in the event of an emergency or urgent matter.

The Executive Director is not part of the on-call schedule but is available to on-call supervisors 24/7 in the event of an emergency or urgent matter.

The on-call system is for emergency and urgent issues only. Routine issues such as payroll errors and other approvals should be handled during normal business hours.

Each ET site/home will have a lead staff assigned, a DSP II. The DSP II will receive compensation for 24/7 on call duties. This individual will be supplied a company cell phone with internet, texting, email and video capability. In an emergency 911 should always be the first call made. The following chain of emergency response will be used for all other alerts/situations:

1. First call – DSP II assigned to home
2. On-Call Supervisor
3. Program Supervisor assigned to the home
4. Program Director
5. Executive Director

The Remote Support Plan will outline situations that will call for an on-site visit and implementation of the chain of emergency response.

Emergencies and outages will be discussed at bi-weekly Tech Team meetings.

Check and Maintenance

911 may be called in the event of an emergency, if person-supported cannot be reached, or if an onsite staff can reach the home in the specified time frame.

**Technology Vendors**

Expectations of Vendors include:

* Comply with all applicable laws
* Approved by TN DIDD
* Align with agency person centered philosophy
* Live support 24/7
* Education and consultation
* A description of what support looks like
* Alerts going to the right person/place
* Assistance during annual process
* One-on-one support
* Expertise on particular types of technology

A discussion of potential vendors will occur during the assessment and planning process. If a person choses a vendor, a member of the Tech Team will initiate contact and begin the process. Vendors will be invited into the process after the COS has convened for person centered planning and outcomes have been identified. Discussions with vendors, including recommendations, will be documented in the planning meeting minutes.

The agency and person supported will seek to understand the standard operating procedure of the vendor and if these meet the vision of the agency, person, and COS.

Expectations of Vendors include:

* Comply with all applicable laws
* Approved by TN DIDD (necessary for waiver funding)
* Align with agency person centered philosophy
* Live support 24/7
* Education and consultation
* Meet persons funding abilities, either private-pay or waiver funded
* A description of what support looks like
* Alerts going to the right person/place
* Assistance during annual process
* One-on-one support
* Expertise on particular types of technology

**Cameras**

Core Services discourages the use of cameras within a person’s home. In the event that a person receiving supports request to use technology, such as a closed-circuit camera system, to observe activities in their home, this use of technology will be discussed with the person and their COS. After a thorough discussion of how, why, and when, if the COS believes a legitimate need exists, the agency policy will be to support the technology. Core Services will never use video or audio supports within the home for purposes of monitoring staff. This technology will be exclusively used by the individual supported. Cameras may be utilized on the exterior of the home to ensure personal safety and prevent exploitation, if deemed necessary by COS.

Camera footage may be stored on a cloud server associated with a device. It is accessible to members of Core’s Tech Team, Person-Supported, and Family Members in some cases.

**Medication Administration**

Refers to personally using prescription medication in a manner directed by the prescribing practitioner. All medication administration procedures will adhere to Core’s “Medication Safety Policy” and DIDD regulations.

* Each self-administration program should be developed in accordance with the individual’s needs and capabilities.
* The agency RN will perform an assessment to determine each person’s ability to self-administer
* The circle of support and treating practitioner will evaluate and review the individual’s functional and cognitive ability to self-administer medications.
* All self-administration training will be coordinated with the person’s circle of support and treating practitioner. The plan will include the following:
  + Individual training
  + Storage, labeling and documentation of administration
  + Oversight to ensure safe administration to include covering the 8 rights of medication administration
  + Ensure medication administration during any time the individual is incapable to include documentation
* Supporting a person with Med Admin through the use of ET will only be done by staff certified to administer medications per DIDD. They can only operate in the scope this certification provides as outlined in the Medication Safety Policy.

Use of Automated Medication Dispenser:

* Each self-administration program should be developed in accordance with the individual’s needs and capabilities.
* The agency RN will perform an assessment to determine each person’s ability to self-administer
* The circle of support and treating practitioner will evaluate and review the individual’s functional and cognitive ability to self-administer medications.
* All self-administration training will be coordinated with the person’s circle of support and treating practitioner. The plan will include the following:
  + Individual training
  + Storage, labeling and documentation of administration
  + Oversight to ensure safe administration to include covering the 8 rights of medication administration
  + Ensure medication administration during any time the individual is incapable to include documentation

**Environmental Access and Privacy**

The selection of person’s homes and environments is completed in conjunction with the person to ensure their needs and preferences are met. All environments must be accessible to the person. This is determined by the person-supported, their Circle of Support, and specialty providers such as OT, PT, SLP, or PCP. An environmental assessment is part of the formal ET assessment process. Technology Plans, as with other aspects of the planning process, are written to ensure Privacy is protected and safety is ensured to a reasonable degree.

**Remote Supports**

Person’s receiving “Remote Support Services” are beholden to the same regulatory requirements as other persons under the purview of the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, MCOs, and all funding mechanisms for the services we provide. Core Services undergoes several oversight audits to ensure compliance including: CQL Basic Assurances Review, DIDD Quality Assurance Review, Licensure Audits, and Financial Audit Review.

In addition to and in conjunction with an Independent Support Plan, a personal remote support plan will be developed by the agency and COS through the Facilitated PCP process for each person supported by technology. At a minimum, the plan will identify:

* The intended outcome of the use of enabling technology;
* The specific enabling technology being used and its purpose;
* Facets of their life to be supported by enabling technology
* Activities in which enabling remote supports are needed (e.g. cooking, working, community life, transportation, etc.);
* Who the COS has selected to have access to content gathered via remote supports;
* An Emergency Response Plan and Back-up System Response Plan
* A Program Supervisor will make a minimum of a weekly visit
* A Program Assistant will perform a monthly onsite check of technology

Core Services offers internal Remote Support Services. The following infrastructure (in addition to aforementioned backup protocols) is in place to implement and support this service:

* **Night Monitor**- The Night Monitor is responsible for ensuring quality services are provided during the night shift hours including but not limited to: ensuring staff alertness, cleanliness of homes, safety and happiness of individuals supported, and completion of documentation. The Night Monitor is also on-call to respond to any Enabling Technology alerts that occur during the night to receive and respond to “on-call” calls.
* **Remote Support Specialist -** The role of a Remote Technology Support Specialist is to assist people to live independently utilizing Technology. The RSS monitors alerts for homes supported by technology during sleep hours. This includes having an advanced knowledge of the individualized Technology Support Plan and ISP of each person that is receiving remote supports, understanding the philosophy behind Remote Supports and the use of Enabling Technology to achieve self-directed lives, and having the ability to quickly assess a situation and determine the appropriate response measure.
* **Platforms –** The following platforms are used to provide Remote Support: “Seness Care” for two-way audio/video communication between Remote Support Specialist and persons receiving supports. “Ring” to view Video Ring Doorbells and other Ring devices. “Outlook” to receive sensor alerts via email. “Nest”.

Core Services is committed to ensuring personal privacy for persons supported. All staff are trained on and required to sign the “People Have Privacy Policy” upon hire. The importance of this expectation is reinforced through Person-Centered Thinking Training, Personal Outcomes Measures Training, and in agency literature, philosophies, and mission.

Personal Privacy extends to the rights of a person to protect their personal possessions and to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. See also: Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation Policy.

**Outcomes and Goals**

Technology outcomes and goals are always written to model independence and not monitoring

Technology outcomes are proactive, support, teach skills, empower, allow dignity of risk and introduce possibility.

Technology outcomes and goals are written to address the person’s preferences, concerns and priorities of their life and not for any other purposes.