

## DEFINING QUALITY

### WITH PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES®



**INSPIRED BY A VISION** of a world of dignity, opportunity, and community for all people, CQL challenged the field of human services when we redefined quality as *responsiveness to people* rather than compliance with standards. In 1991, CQL published the *Personal Outcome Measures*® offering people an opportunity to define their own quality of life outcomes and exert choice and self-determination.

The *Personal Outcome Measures*® focus on the items and issues that matter most to people. Organizations committed to Personal Outcomes recognize the connections between the service/intervention and the whole person. The *Personal Outcome Measures*® represent a valid and reliable quality of life tool that can be incorporated in all human services for people of all ages.

The *Personal Outcome Measures*® contains 21 items that define quality from the individual's perspective. These are the key indicators and experiences that people and their families have said are most important to them. The *Personal Outcome Measures*® are organized into the following factors:

**MY SELF:** Who I am as a result of my unique heredity, life experiences and decisions.

**MY WORLD:** Where I work, live, socialize, belong or connect.

**MY DREAMS:** How I want my life (self and world) to be.

## THE *WHAT REALLY MATTERS* INITIATIVE

CQL has always been at the forefront of defining quality in services and supports. With each edition of standards, measures, or indicators (from 1971 to the present), CQL has asked and heard from people about the real meaning of quality. Those definitions have changed dramatically over 40 years.

We have seen the successes, as well as the often slow pace of change, in the reality of most people's lives. CQL continues to lead with a clear focus on excellence in person-centered services and supports. Building on our own accomplishments in impacting quality for life for people, we continue to bring forward fresh insights and new methods.

Beginning in the fall of 2009 through our *What Really Matters* initiative, CQL engaged a diverse group of thought leaders and stakeholders across the fields of mental health, aging and disabilities. We came together to say that it's time to strip away unnecessary distractions and focus on what really matters — personal choice and person-centered services and supports. Person-centered services give people the control over the decisions that affect their lives. CQL's approach to quality is about focusing on the real meaning of things — personal choice and person-centered services. We believe that organizations need to focus on what really matters to people.

With this Initiative, our focus lands squarely on the real meaning of quality in person-centered services and supports. CQL works with organizations, systems, and communities who are dedicated to achieving excellence through person-centered service models — across all disciplines. We support those organizations through our assessment, consultation, measurement, and improvement strategies.

Personal Outcome Measures® remain at the foundation of this work.



## THE DIFFERENCE IN PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES®

CQL's *Personal Outcome Measures*® have been a hallmark of our work for the last 20 years and have been a powerful data set for the valid and reliable measurement of individual quality of life. Instead of looking at the quality of how the services are being delivered, the *Personal Outcome Measures*® approach looks at whether the services and supports are having the desired results or outcomes that matter to the person.

<b>IN TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS:</b>	<b>WITH PERSONAL OUTCOMES:</b>
The focus is on program standards	The focus on the person
Service action is based on professional criteria	Service action is based on the person's criteria
The person is assigned to program	Services and supports are designed for the person
Expectations for performance are defined by program	Expectations for performance are defined by the person

Each of the three words in *Personal Outcome Measures*® shows how this approach is different

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**PERSONAL** Starts with the person's own view of his or her life

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**OUTCOME** Defines what is important to the person

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**MEASURES** Offers an objective determination of whether people are getting what is personally important

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### 1. They're PERSONAL

What we do is determined by each person for him/herself. Each person's assessment for quality of life is unique to him or her. The definitions for quality of life are set by the person, with the help of people who care about him/her and know him/her very well.

### 2. They're OUTCOME Based

How we work is guided by what's happening in the person's life – so that the individual is experiencing real outcomes related to the personal expectations for quality that he/she has defined.

### 3. They're MEASURED Differently

We can't look at personal outcomes without measuring quality differently. Traditional systems measure how services are delivered or what the organization does. CQL's approach to measurement looks at personal quality of life and addresses questions of priority and relevance for the person, based individual life priorities.

## KEY FEATURES OF THE *PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES*<sup>®</sup>

- A powerful tool for evaluating personal quality of life and the degree to which organizations individualize supports to facilitate outcomes.
- A way for organizations to redefine their role in the lives of the people they support.
- A conversation with people receiving supports is the most powerful source of knowledge and understanding when it comes to defining excellence and person-centeredness.

## WHY CHOOSE PERSONAL OUTCOMES?

CQL's *Personal Outcome Measures*<sup>®</sup> form the foundation for organizational quality enhancement. CQL is committed to helping your organization's leadership, management, and staff use person-centered principles and proven strategies in all aspects of your service delivery.

We start with the belief that knowledge about people is the foundation for delivering quality services. With a clear understanding of what people want and need from the services and supports they receive — their Personal Outcomes — staff can marshal the organization's resources toward that end.

*Personal Outcome Measures*<sup>®</sup> help you learn about people's personal definition of quality of life and gather information about the person's priorities and preferences in order to support their personal outcomes. *Personal Outcome Measures*<sup>®</sup>:

- Offer the best tool for evaluating personal quality of life and quality of services
- Put listening to and learning about the person at the center of your work
- Guide the delivery of individualized supports based on people's priorities
- Help you focus your limited resources and organizational energy on what really matters
- Provide data and analysis for evidence-based practice
- Demonstrate the link between person-centered/recovery-based services, quality of life and cost effectiveness



**CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership**

100 West Road, Suite 300, Towson, Maryland 21204 410.583.0060 [www.c-q-l.org](http://www.c-q-l.org)