

Organization-wide Positive Support Planning: Mains'l Services

Purpose of this Brief

Organizations in Minnesota interested in sustaining positive supports are creating teams that work together to implement and sustain practice. Embedding positive support practices involves changes within an organization that can improve quality of life outcomes for people receiving services. Examples of these changes include ongoing coaching and mentoring systems, integrating practices into new staff training, altering policies and procedures to support implementation efforts, development of expertise of staff members in specific practices, and data-based decision making. This brief describes the work of Mains'l Services implementing organization-wide planning. The information in this brief summarizes how Mains'l is addressing the key features of organization-wide positive supports with a special focus on the actions taken to build staff wellness via ongoing coaching and mentoring in positive supports and other systems change efforts.

Mains'l Services

Mains'l offers a variety of home and community-based services across five states. In Minnesota, their crew of 750 supports over 1,500 people receiving waiver services and Community First Services and Supports. Types of services provided by Mains'l include community residential services, individualized home supports, person centered planning, and financial management services for people in self-direction programs. Mains'l serves people of all ages with varying abilities and support needs.

Mains'l Services was one of the first teams to implement organization-wide person-centered practices in Minnesota starting in 2015 and has been a leader sharing examples of implementation in collaboration with Minnesota's Department of Human Services (MN-DHS). MN-DHS has funded training in organization-wide planning annually each year by inviting a group or cohort of organization-wide teams. Each team includes representatives from different roles within the organization. Teams invest in long-term action planning in order to embed changes into everyday meetings and tasks occurring within their organizations and by making positive supports part of everyday work.

Important Values Embedded in Positive Supports

Organization-wide actions reflect the values held by everyone within the organization. One of the key values that Mains'l emphasizes is that staff well-being and supports are essential. The leadership at Mains'l understand that staff wellbeing and supports are a key element necessary for successfully implementing new practices. The owner and founder of Mains'l Services, Terri Williams, reflected on this as Mains'l began working on organization-wide planning. Involving everyone in organization-wide planning helps staff and people with lived experience receiving services express what they need to feel supported. Mains'l created a visual for the outcomes they wanted to achieve and how they wanted to achieve them, with their mission, vision, and values as their foundation.

Table 1. Mains'l's Person-centered Values and Vision for the Future

Description and Vision: Mains'l's 2020 Picture
People are sailing their own boats with the people and services they choose: people have true connections with others and choose for themselves, based on their own preferences
People are engaged in meaningful work: people have work that gives them purpose, where they feel productive and valued
One world, one Mains'l: we have a crew that is aligned in all we do, no matter what state, what department, what building
Here is How We'll Make it Happen
Innovation, technology = efficient, effective, and opportunities for freedom: people have access to and are using technology to be more efficient and effective and make their lives better at work and at home
Living where and with whom you want, hopes and dreams, meaning and purpose: while we all have to live within our means, we are living the life we want based on our preferences and choices, our own hopes and dreams
Power with not power over: people are walking alongside of each other, supporting one another, without trying to control
User friendly tools, information, and resources: people have access to and are able to use a variety of resources they find valuable and make their lives easier
Collaboration and team approaches: people work together to share ideas, problem solve, and support one another—no one can do it alone
What we want: it's not just about what we want; everybody matters

Figure 1. Visual summary of person-centered values and vision for the future

Positive Supports Included in Organization-wide Planning

Mains'l continuously strives to embed person-centered practices (supports that focus on the person's wants and desires at the core of all services) and positive supports (culturally responsive, person-centered supports based on research that uses data to assess how well practices improve quality of life) as a foundation for who they are as an agency while supporting their employees and people receiving services. To do this, we have invested in our team members obtaining knowledge in topics and concepts to bring back to, not only the agency, but the greater community. Examples of additional positive supports that are integrated into organization-wide planning include:

- **Applied Behavior Analysis** – Using scientific knowledge of how and why humans behave as they do to inform evidence-based practices for how to support and teach people skills.
- **Culture of Safety** – As an organization, prioritizing behaviors, beliefs, and actions that encourage open communication, respect, and subsequent accurate event reporting.

- **Trauma-informed Supports** – Recognizing the impact of trauma on both the people we support as well as team members by emphasizing safety, trust, collaboration, and empowerment to create supportive, recovery-focused environments.

Tiered Onsite Evaluation Tool

Fidelity of implementation means that an organization is implementing positive supports in the manner in which it is intended. The fidelity tool called the Tiered Onsite Evaluation Tool, or TOET, is one way to assess fidelity. This simple team checklist is used to gather evidence that person-centered practices and positive behavior support are being used in the way they are intended. You can see in Figure 2 that the team completed the first TOET in 2016. The time necessary to complete the TOET with a trainer is two to three hours.

However, teams prepare in advance by gathering the evidence of implementation in the form of training materials, policy documents, training systems, and summaries of data. Each subscale of the TOET appears in Figure 2 on the horizontal axis. Subscales listed in Figure 2 include: a) forming a team, b) person-centered practice, c) positive behavior support, d) cultural responsiveness, e) monitoring data, f) supporting and teaching staff, g) visibility of positive supports, and h) the overall total score. This Figure shows the impressive growth Mains'I has achieved by comparing scores on the TOET early on in implementation with their work in 2025. The area the team is still working on further expanding is related to monitoring data for decision making. Table 2 indicates a score of 91.7% (11 out of 12 items are fully in place) for an overall average across subscales of 98.3% (57 out of 58 points possible).

Figure 2. Tiered Onsite Evaluation Tool November 11, 2016 and June 9, 2025

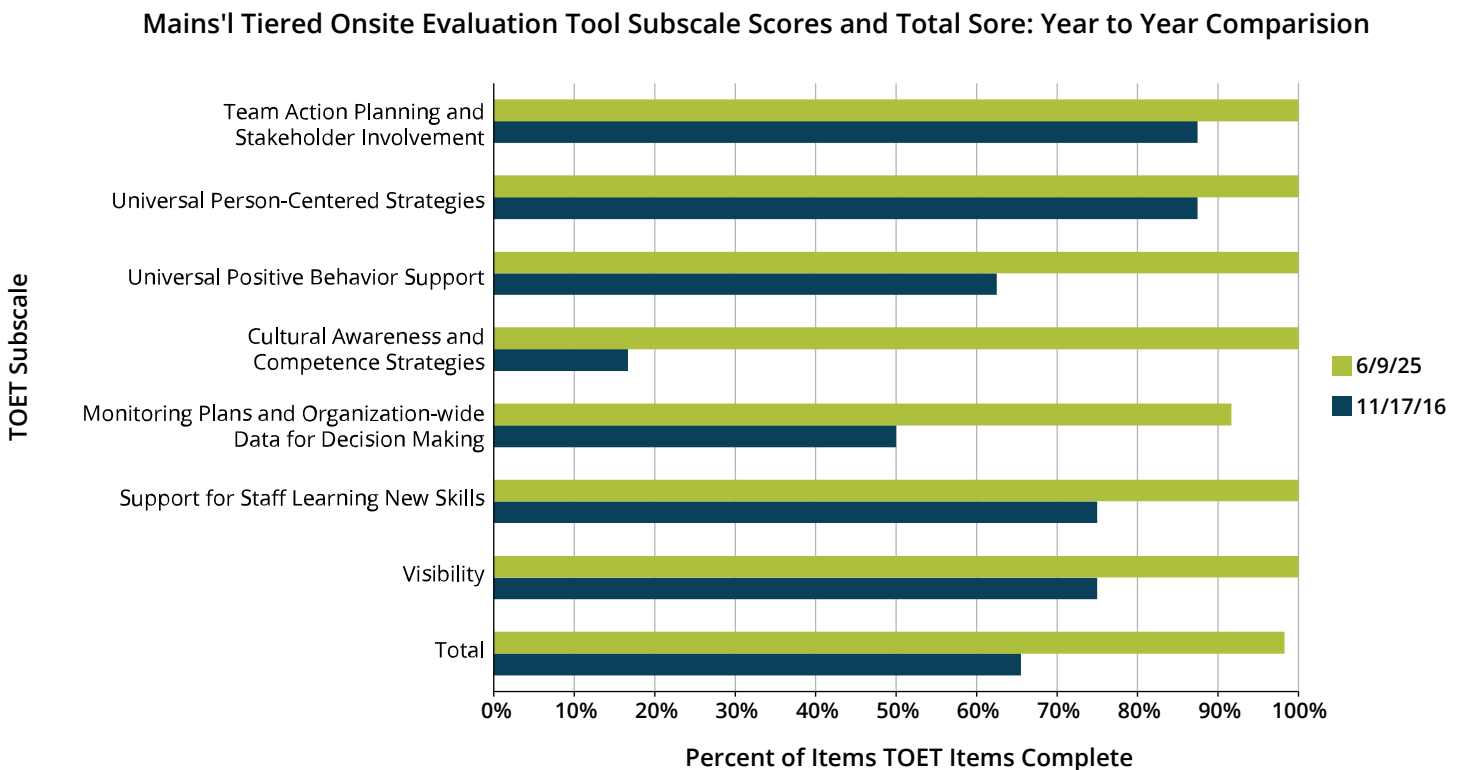


Table 2. June, 2025 Mains'I Summary of Scores on the Tiered Onsite Evaluation Tool (TOET)

Subscale	Percent	Total Points
Team Action Planning and Stakeholder Involvement	100%	8 (out of 8)
Universal Person-Centered Strategies	100%	8 (out of 8)
Universal Positive Behavior Support	100%	8 (out of 8)
Cultural Awareness and Competency Strategies	100%	6 (out of 6)
Monitoring Plans and Organization-wide Data for Decision Making	91.7%	11 (out of 12)
Support for Staff Learning New Skills	100%	12 (out of 12)
Visibility	100%	4 (out of 4)
Total TOET Score	98.3%	57 (out of 58)

Examples of Positive Strategies

The following strategies described in this section highlight some of the interventions that drive Mains'I's person-centered values. These interventions help create a culture of support for both people receiving services as well as their staff.

Trainer Capacity Building

Mains'I has invested in ongoing capacity building of positive supports by continuing to support staff as they maintain their expertise over time. The following list describes key trainer roles with special expertise:

- 7 PBS facilitators
- 6 Person-centered Thinking Trainers
- 5 Person-centered Planners
- 2 Planning Methods Facilitators
- 2 Person-centered Mentors
- 1 Positive Support Advocate who supports service teams in monitoring and addressing Behavior Intervention Report Form completion (BIRFs) and Rights Restrictions.

All classroom trainers, the Human Resources Team, and Services Leadership Team have been trained in person centered practices and coaching.

My Plan Data

Mains'I partnered with a software company to create a platform to implement and monitor person-centered practices as part of their electronic documentation system. The My Plan Data program helps support employees in better understanding what is important to the person as this information changes for people living their lives and evolving and growing over time.

Center on Me

Mains'I created the world's first holistic digital person-centered planning platform designed to give people a tool that they can use to create and control their own person-centered plan. [Center on Me](#) guides people through the three guiding principles of person-centered planning. Users can create a plan at their own pace, involve others on their own terms, and help people access their plan easily.

Supporting People with More Complex Service Needs

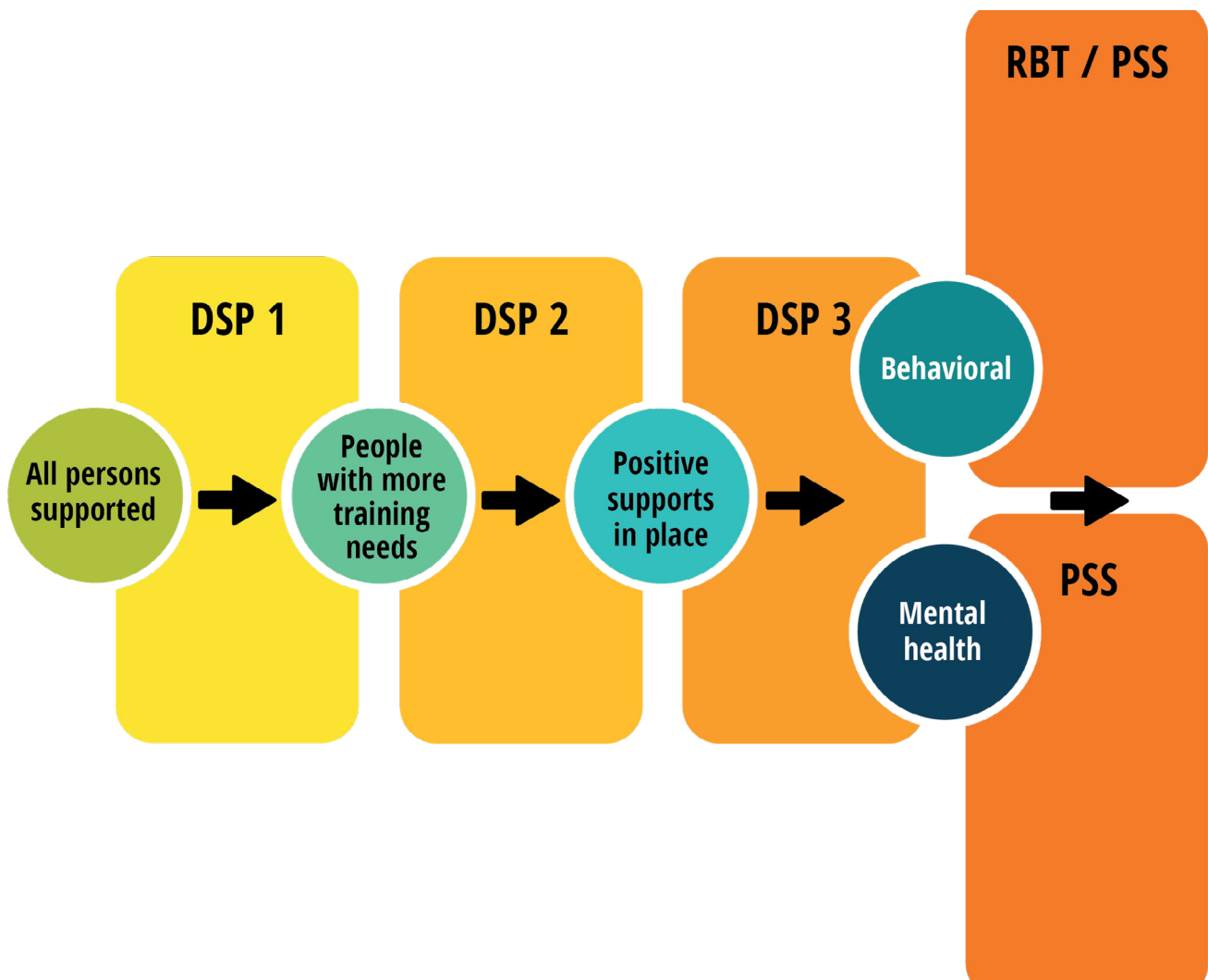
Mains'I strives to provide supports to those that need it most. Multiple idiosyncratic supports have been developed based on assessing and responding to the essential supports necessary for people to thrive and including the needs of each team member who support them. Mains'I currently provides services for a number of people who live independently or with only one other person since this environment (living alone or with one person) was identified as necessary for addressing the best quality of life outcomes possible. Mains'I's Wellness and Services departments collaborate with the person's team to gather information using positive support practices to design and implement effective environments that are especially tailored to people with more complex service needs. This process starts with a multi-modal discovery process with person-centered thinking and other practices used to take into account what is important to and for the person, highlight the environmental variables that help build positive interactions, and to identify what "best supports" could look like for each person. The supports needed to create a positive and stable setting (i.e., debrief teams, core team meetings, positive support feedback tools) are developed by identifying the person's and team member's needs. This focus on both staff competency and person specific needs has continued to enable Mains'I to prepare and support people with complex needs who are living in their communities.

Building Career Pathways for Staff

Direct support staff are one of the most valuable resources in every organization. Mains'I has invested in strategies that provide staff with a career pathway as they grow and evolve in their jobs. One way this is achieved is by using existing waiver services like positive supports. Staff who are learning to support people with complex needs are presented with training plans that provide specific details about the person and the types of positive support practices that will help them. These plans include training on diagnosis-specific information and certification as specialists in Safety Care Training in order to increase skills in crisis prevention. Mains'I currently has 208 active Safety Care Specialists. In addition, Mains'I is currently working on a plan to create tiers of

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) that represent a continuum of expertise. These tiers promote continued learning and provide opportunities for a career pathway as staff gain more experience supporting people with more intense needs. Below is an example of a pilot pathway that is currently being developed. Each DSP level expands the staff member's skills and is associated with changes in their roles and salaries. Once they have completed the third DSP training level, staff can progress to become certified as a Registered Behavior Technician or may specialize in mental health with the top DSP staffing level establishing individuals with expertise that will help promote their careers since they will have acquired important training and skills.

Figure 3. Creating a Career Pathway within Mains'I for Direct Support Staff



Debriefing Protocol

Providing support to people with complex health and wellness challenges can be very difficult for direct support staff, managers, and supervisors within an organization to do well. Mains’l created a process that provides staff with an opportunity to share their emotions and experiences in a safe and supported manner. All members of the Wellness Department and employees who answer the agency 24-hour incident reporting line have been trained to deliver debriefing to team members within the organization. The debriefing process is focused on first ensuring that the team member feels safe and comfortable continuing their role, and secondly, on attempting to learn what worked and did not work in specific situations when this applies. This Debrief Protocol is meant to address the potential trauma and/or negative experiences encountered while providing services, and to support staff in managing the emotions that arise during these tough situations.

Impact on Wellbeing and Retention

Agency evaluation data reflect significant positive outcomes on key measures. The organization reports that these improvements compared to industry benchmarks are, in part, due to the organization-wide implementation efforts they have invested in since 2015. Examples of evaluation outcome data include:

- Annual satisfaction surveys completed by people Mains’l supports indicate that on average, more than 91% of people with lived experience with services are satisfied with the supports Mains’l provides,
- DSP and Supervisor turnover rates at Mains’l averaged 10% lower than industry average,
- Employees trained as person-centered leaders and coaches average 1% turnover, and
- Employee engagement/satisfaction scores average 7% higher than industry average. Mains’l was above the industry benchmark in all categories in 2025.

Table 3 reports Mains’l supervisor turnover rates compared to industry supervisory turnover rates from 2018 to 2024. The differences in percentage across years show this pattern with only one year, 2022, showing a pattern where turnover was higher.

References

RRM Industry Report (2025). *Providers in a precarious place*. Eagan, Minnesota. <https://my.arrm.org/home>.

Table 3. Mains’l Supervisor Turnover Compared to Industry

Year	Mains’l Supervisor Turnover	Industry Supervisor Turnover	Difference
2018	7.5%	16.5%	-9%
2019	4%	21.6%	-18%
2020	10%	22.0%	-12%
2021	7.5%	27.4%	-20%
2022	42%	31.9%	10%
2023	16.0%	25.0%	-9%
2024	10.0%	27.3%	-17.3%

Table 4. Mains’l Trained Person-Centered Leaders and Coaches Turnover

Year	Average Active	Separations	Turnover Rate
2014	56	0	0%
2015	56	0	0%
2016	56	0	0%
2017	56	0	0%
2018	56	0	0%
2019	54	2	4%
2020	51	2	4%
2021	50	1	2%
2022	47	2	4%
2023	45	1	2%
2024	44	0	0
Total	52	8	1%

Table 5. Results of Staff Satisfaction Survey Data for Mains’l

Theme	Mains’l	Industry	Difference
Respected & Supported	84%	74%	10%
Enabled to Grow	81%	72%	9%
Empowered to Execute	69%	62%	7%
Closely Aligned	85%	79%	6%
Engaged	74%	68%	6%
Fairly Valued	60%	58%	2%

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