



Exploring the Implementation Gap: Autonomy, Choice, and Control

Using data from the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI)

Choice and control are fundamental human rights for people with disabilities. Everyone should have the power to make decisions about where and with whom they live, who supports them, how they spend their time, and who they form relationships with.

The Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI) evaluates how well organizations align their values with evidence-informed practices. The *Autonomy, Choice, and Control* domain from the OPPI includes seven key indicators: *Person-Centered Supports, Autonomous Decision-Making, Control Over Service Plans and Budgets, Choice of Living Arrangements, Respectful Behavioral Support, Self-Determination, and Control Over Service Delivery*. These elements reflect how organizations empower people to lead lives of their choosing.

This brief shares insights from the latest OPPI data collected from 1,171 professionals across disability services. Respondents include Executives (10%), Directors (19%), Managers (30%), Frontline staff (35%), and others (6%). While *Autonomy, Choice, and Control* principles are prioritized similarly among different positions, the data reveal gaps between intent and practice, especially among leadership roles. Further analysis confirmed statistically significant differences across positions. Addressing these gaps of respondents in different roles is essential to ensure that people with disabilities not only have the right to choice and control but can truly exercise it in their daily lives.

April 15, 2025

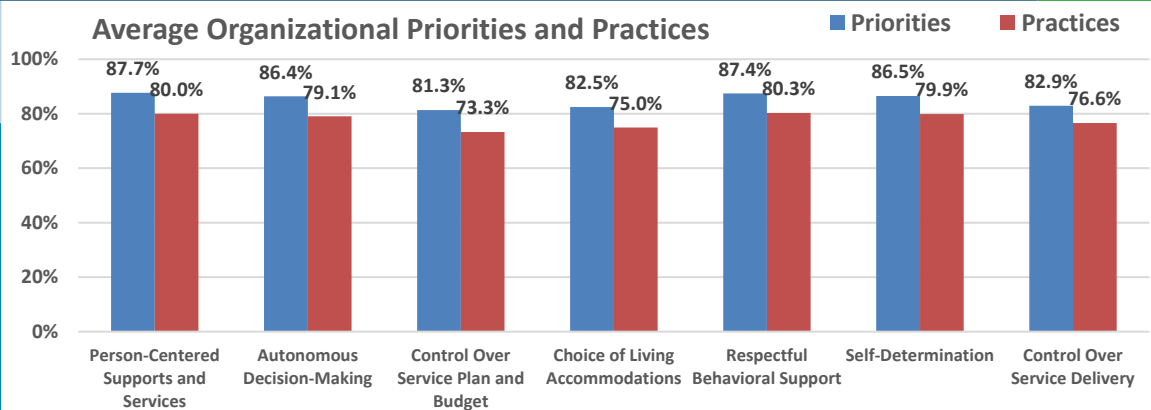
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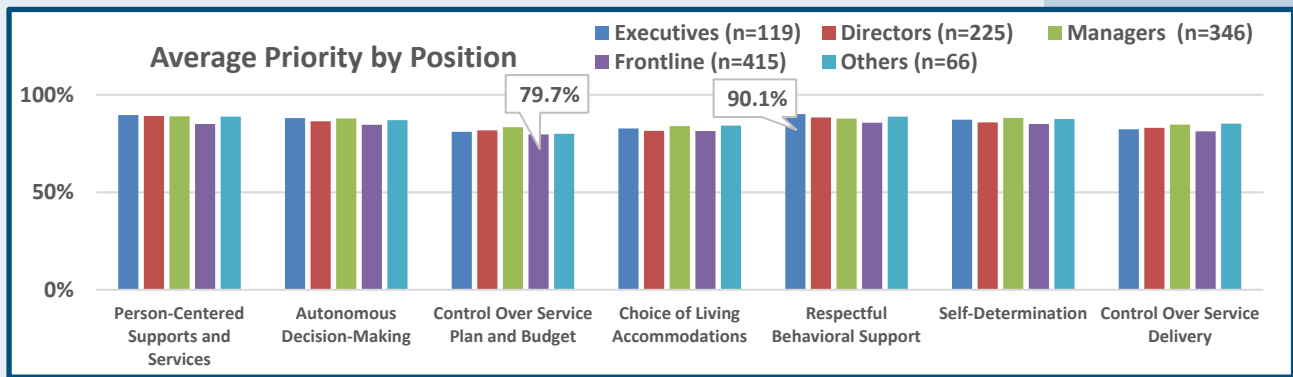
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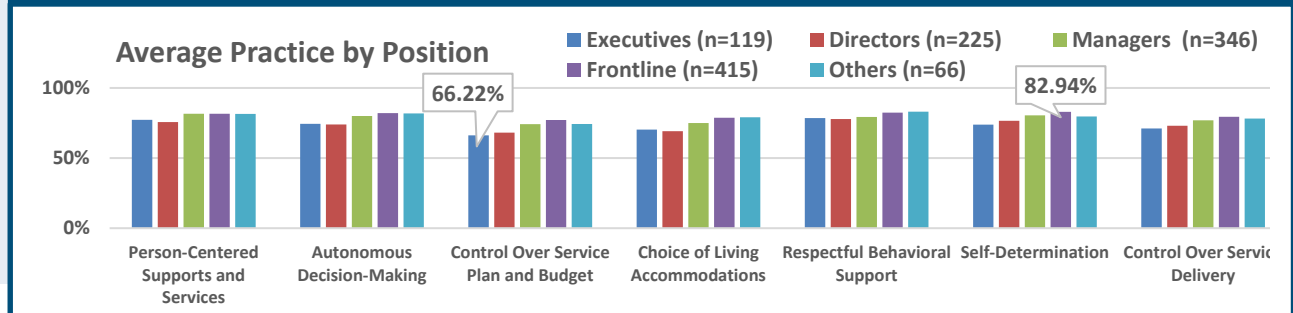
Contact Cory Gilden at cgilden@natleadership.org with questions related to our research.



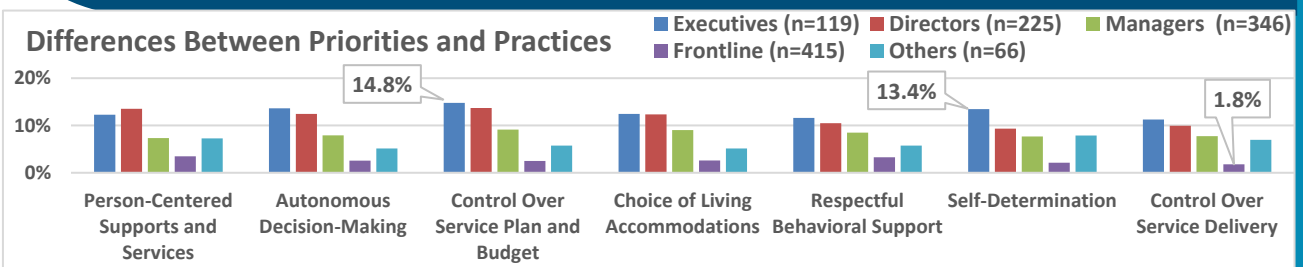
- *Priorities* were rated statistically higher than *Practices* for all indicators.
- Organizations prioritize *Person-Centered Supports and Services* the most (87.7%), reflecting a strong sector-wide commitment to ensuring services are tailored to needs and preferences.
- *Respectful Behavioral Support* has the highest implementation (80.3% practice), suggesting a strong focus on providing support that maintains dignity and promotes positive relationships.
- *Control Over Service Plan and Budget* has the lowest implementation, at only 73.3% practice, and priority (81.3%). This highlights a gap between organizational intentions and real-world application, pointing to a need for improved strategies and resources to empower individuals in managing their service plans.



The chart above shows consistently high priority ratings across all organizational roles. **Respectful Behavioral Support** is the highest-ranked priority overall, especially emphasized by the *Executives* (90.1%). In contrast, **Control Over Service Plan and Budget** is the lowest-rated across positions, with the lowest score by *Frontline Staff* (79.7%), suggesting this as an area for improvement. **Autonomous Decision-Making** and **Person-Centered Supports and Services** demonstrate strong alignment across roles, reflecting a shared commitment to these core values. Slightly lower scores among *Frontline Staff* across most indicators may reflect differences in day-to-day experience or a perceived implementation gap.



The chart above indicates consistent patterns across organizational roles in how organizational practices are implemented. **Self-Determination** is the most highly rated practice overall, with *Managers* rating it the highest at 82.9%, reflecting a strong emphasis on supporting individual choice and autonomy. In contrast, **Control Over Service Plan and Budget** received the lowest average rating, particularly among *Executives* (66.2%), suggesting this is an area where further improvements are needed to empower people with disabilities in managing their services. **Person-Centered Supports and Services** and **Autonomous Decision-Making** show relatively high and consistent ratings across all positions, suggesting these practices are well embedded in daily operations. Slightly lower ratings from *Executives* and *Directors* across multiple indicators may reflect gaps between strategic oversight and direct implementation.



The chart above illustrates that *Executives* and *Directors* show the largest gaps between priorities and practices, particularly in areas such as **Control Over Service Plan and Budget** (14.8%) and **Self-Determination** (13.4%). These gaps suggest a need for greater implementation at the leadership level. In contrast, *Frontline Staff* report the smallest differences, with particularly strong alignment in **Control Over Service Delivery** (1.8%), indicating that direct service roles are more closely aligned with actual practice. These findings suggest a need to better align priorities and implementation across all staff levels.

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