

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

# Transforming Lives

## Developmental Disabilities Administration Guiding Values

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***"We have a choice—and we choose to move forward so the people we serve can exercise the rights and privileges that have always been theirs.***

***Unconditional support should not be earned, but provided through understanding, commitment and inclusion."***

***—Evelyn Perez, Assistant Secretary,  
Developmental Disabilities Administration***

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### ***History and Purpose***

The original Residential and County Guideline documents were published a quarter of a century ago: The Residential Guidelines were originally published in 1988; the County Guidelines, which address the roles and service/support guidelines for counties and citizen boards, were drafted in 1992. These two original sets of Guidelines have been used as a basis to create this single Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Guiding Values document. To accomplish this, a group of stakeholders including individuals, families, representatives from the counties, representatives from the state and other professionals, all worked equally, in concert, to bring these concepts together and develop these Guiding Values.

The DDA Guiding Values-

- Revisit Washington State's essential values,
- Combine prior documents into a single policy tool, and
- Recognize and celebrate the progress that has been made in Washington since the publication of the original Guidelines.

The process provided an invaluable opportunity to revisit and reaffirm the essential values of Washington State's vision for inclusive communities, which calls for equal opportunity for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities to live meaningful and productive lives.

The development of a single Guiding Values document acknowledges the evolution of the community and service system toward a more inclusive, integrated approach which includes supporting and empowering individuals and families. Individuals and families are moving into leadership positions, sitting on local boards and councils, and participating in the community in ways that fulfill their own personal dreams and aspirations.

As we reflect on what we have accomplished in Washington in the last quarter century, we can see many examples of progress in meeting the goals of the original guidelines. Many more individuals are working in community jobs. Supported Living services are striving to connect each individual uniquely to their community. Person centered planning is being used more often to assist individuals to move on their unique paths.

The workgroup that brought these concepts together is a genuine community team as envisioned by the original Guidelines documents. Indeed, "Nothing about us, without us". There is still much work to do to fully realize our vision for our communities. To revisit and publish this new set of community guidelines at this time offers an opportunity to reassess and set the course for the next phase of Washington's commitment.

## **DDA Guiding Values**

***Inclusion ~ Status and Contribution ~ Relationships~  
Power and Choice ~ Health and Safety ~ Competence***

None of these values stands alone or is more important than the others. They overlap, affect, and inform each other. As a values system, they can be used to:

- Support individual choices.
- Form a framework for person centered planning.
- Direct quality supports and services.
- Advocate for resources.
- Drive policies and system evolution.
- Provide a way to evaluate our efforts.

We recognize that people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities are self-advocates and contributing citizens who enrich their communities across their lifespans. Great strides have been made helping people connect, and still many people lack solid, mutual relationships and support networks. The role of services is to support the inclusion of all people into their communities and build these strengths starting at birth with parents and transitioning to adulthood. We believe that “all means all”, and refuse to accept or promote segregation, isolation, and poverty. To put these values into action we must make them a part of our choices and the policies and practices of our organizations. These values are how we assist others in creating their meaningful life and how our services are measured.

### ***Inclusion***

Inclusion is being present and participating in the community using common resources and doing activities with other citizens. Living in a community means experiencing diversity. We want to live, work, learn, relax and recreate in places that offer us opportunities to meet and participate in community life.

Inclusion means to:

- Live in a location we choose.
- Have a good job with an equal wage.
- Be present and included in our neighborhoods, religious spaces, schools, community groups, and recreational activities.
- Go to school with others our own age in the same classroom and lunchroom and feel that we belong.
- Have our life experience, self-advocacy, and leadership skills recognized, fostered, developed and welcomed.
- Be recognized for our individual talents and have opportunities to use them for the common good.

## ***Status and Contribution***

Status is being valued and well regarded by others. Positive recognition is important to all of us, and can be influenced by where we work and live; go to school; our role as a community member; managing daily activities; personal appearance and style; having and managing money; what we bring to others; making purchases; personal relationships and pursuits; and more.

Contribution is about recognizing and developing interests and skills, and having the opportunity to contribute these in the community. Through contributing, we experience a sense of belonging and pride in ourselves. We are recognized by others for making a positive difference. Contribution leads to the experience of reciprocity (give and take), belonging and being well regarded by others. We feel valued and equal.

Status and Contribution means to:

- Have a respected job that gives us a living wage; controlling and managing our own resources in a smart way.
- Use our skills, talents, and energy to make a difference in our communities and make our world a better place.
- Be included in school and extracurricular activities.
- Further our education into higher education.
- Participate actively in groups that we pick.
- Look and feel good about ourselves.
- Use the skills we have learned to be advocates and look for ways to be active members and leaders.

## ***Relationships***

Relationships offer a sense of belonging, continuity, and intimacy, and give meaning to life. Connection to others provides support and opens doors to new opportunities and experiences. Growth and stability both happen when we have a variety of relationships with family, friends, peers, coworkers, and community members.

We develop relationships when we:

- Have many opportunities to meet new people with common interests and goals.
- Renew, maintain, and grow relationships.
- Access social media, have in-person social opportunities, and initiate interactions based on our personal choices.
- Have assistance to be included in the community with people that are not paid to be there with us.
- Are able to get places on our own.

- Share equally in building relationships and giving to each other.
- Have support from others, if we need it, to learn how to navigate relationships.

## ***Power and Choice***

Power is having the ability to direct or influence our own lives. Information and experiences are basic to making choices. Choice is the opportunity to make decisions that are right for ourselves, and include the opportunity to succeed or fail.

Power and choice means to:

- Recognize what we want and how to achieve it.
- Express and pursue our own opportunities.
- Take a personal risk.
- Pursue dreams and goals.
- Choose who supports and encourages us in our lives.
- Access accurate information.
- Maintain respect, privacy, individuality, cultural identity.
- Honor dignity of risk.

## ***Health and Safety***

We believe the right to make choices and take risks is equally important to health and safety. Having information, experience and skills, giving to others, being in relationships and a sense of belonging all enhance and are integral to our safety and well-being. By improving all of these aspects of our lives, we become safer and healthier. A balance can and must be found. This allows each of us our own full and meaningful life with good health, needed safety, and the learning and self-worth which comes from making and living with our own decisions. We can find ways to have independence and choices while staying healthy and safe.

Health and Safety means to:

- Access doctors and other health care people who respect us, understand specific health care issues, and will work with us to maintain health.
- As adults, choose who supports us in every way and have control over how they do it.
- Know and understand that health issues are individual to each person.
- Learn what we need to do to be responsible and take care of our health.
- Work and live in a safe place.
- Have people in our lives such as friends, family members, coworkers, who care about us and treat us with respect and appreciation.
- Be loved and have relationships, including support and information on how to take care of ourselves and our partners if we choose to have a sexual relationship.



- Learn what abuse, neglect and exploitation are so we can protect ourselves and others, and know what to do if it happens.

## ***Competence***

Competence is being capable of doing what we **need** to do, and what we **want** to do. We can show our competence in many ways. We may be partly or fully self-reliant. We may have the capacity to receive and direct assistance from others. We recognize that our abilities can vary and change based on the task, and that our capabilities change throughout the span of our lives. We believe everyone should be given opportunities to be as independent, self-reliant, and self-directing as possible. We know that different cultures have different ideas about competence and independence – these should be recognized and respected.

Competence means to:

- Learn to do things that make our lives better.
- Communicate with those who provide supports, and direct those supports.
- Have help to live life and design learning in ways that work for us.

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