

Showing Up is the Standard



Life Your Way

**Reliability, Preparation and
Presence as the First
Expression of Quality**

Foundational Framework Document

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Introduction: Presence is the First Promise

Every support relationship begins with a promise, even when that promise is never spoken out loud. The promise is that we will be there, that we will be ready, and that the person will not have to carry the uncertainty of whether support will arrive, whether staff understand what matters, or whether the day will be treated as important. In disability support, reliability is not a minor operational preference. It is one of the foundations of dignity.

Life Your Way has always been built around the idea of turning up. Turning up when things are exciting. Turning up when progress is slow. Turning up when a person is unsure, when a family is worried, when a staff member needs coaching, or when a plan needs to be adjusted. This pillar formalises that belief into a practice standard. Showing up is not simply attendance; it is the disciplined act of arriving prepared, informed, emotionally available and ready to create opportunities for growth.

The staff voice behind this pillar was direct and practical. Quality looks like turning up, being prepared, being present, reading behaviour support plans and notes, and doing what we say we will do. These may sound like simple expectations, but they are the behaviours through which trust is built. A provider can have strong policies and still fail at quality if people experience inconsistency, distraction or a lack of preparation.

At Life Your Way, showing up is the first expression of Integrity. It demonstrates that commitments matter. It is also an expression of Inclusivity because people cannot participate fully if the support around them is unreliable or unprepared. When people experience staff who arrive ready, attentive and informed, they receive evidence that they are seen. Their day mattered enough for someone to prepare. Their goals mattered enough for someone to remember. Their safety and dignity mattered enough for someone to pay attention.

The Shift Starts Before Arrival

One of the most important cultural shifts for a growing organisation is recognising that support does not begin when a worker physically arrives. The shift begins in preparation. It begins when a staff member reads the notes, understands the purpose of the day, checks for relevant changes, knows the person they are supporting and considers what opportunities may emerge.

Preparation is not administrative clutter around the real work. Preparation is part of the work. Without it, staff may be present in body but absent in practice. They may miss emerging risks, repeat questions that have already been answered, overlook important preferences or fail to connect the activity of the day to the person's broader goals. Poor preparation forces clients, families and colleagues to carry information that should have been held by the organisation.

This matters particularly in Life Your Way's group based and program based model. Staff may move between clients, groups, activities and community environments. In that context, preparation creates continuity. It ensures that a client is not known only by the worker who knows them best, but by a team that shares responsibility for quality. It reduces dependence on individual personalities and strengthens the reliability of the organisation as a whole.

Good preparation does not require staff to memorise every detail of every plan. It requires them to know what is relevant to the support they are about to provide. What are the goals? What has changed? What risks or triggers should be considered? What has worked recently? What family or team communication requires follow-up? What opportunities for participation might exist today? These questions turn preparation into practice.

Reliability Creates Psychological Safety

Reliability is often discussed as a scheduling issue, but its impact is psychological. People relax into support when they can rely on it. Families grow confidence when they do not have to wonder whether commitments will be kept. Staff teams operate better when colleagues arrive as expected and prepared to contribute.

For many clients, repeated inconsistency can communicate that their time and plans are less important than everyone else's. Last-minute changes, poor handovers and unclear commitments may create anxiety or resistance that is then misread as disengagement. Sometimes the behaviour we observe in a person is not about the activity at all; it is about the uncertainty surrounding the support.

Life Your Way cannot promise that plans will never change. Staff will become unwell, transport may fail, weather may interrupt activities and client needs may shift. Reliability does not mean a life without disruption. It means that when disruption occurs, the organisation communicates clearly, acts early, takes responsibility and protects trust wherever possible.

Presence is More Than Being Present

Physical attendance is the minimum standard. Presence is the quality standard. A staff member may arrive on time, wear the uniform, follow the itinerary and still fail to be present if their attention is elsewhere. Presence means noticing the person in front of you. It means listening, reading the room, responding to emotional cues, adapting the pace and remaining engaged in the purpose of the support.

This is particularly important in social and community settings. It is easy for staff to drift into supervision rather than support. The group may be at an event, the activity may be underway, and on paper the shift may appear successful. Yet the real measure is whether staff were active in creating connection, participation and confidence. Did they notice who was on the edge? Did they help someone enter a conversation? Did they step back when natural connection was forming? Did they create opportunities for the person to contribute?

Presence also means emotional regulation. Staff bring themselves into the room, and their emotional state affects the environment. A distracted, rushed or reactive worker can create tension even without intending to. A calm, attentive and prepared worker can create safety before saying very much at all. In this sense, professionalism begins with the internal discipline to show up regulated enough to support someone else's growth

Following Through is Where Trust Becomes Visible

Many organisations underestimate the cultural power of follow-through. People remember whether what was promised actually happened. A small commitment that is not completed can carry a larger message than the task itself. It can tell a client that their request was not important, a family that communication cannot be relied upon, or a staff member that accountability is optional.

Following through does not mean saying yes to everything. In fact, integrity often requires careful boundaries and realistic commitments. The more important discipline is to avoid casual promises. If something cannot be done, that should be communicated honestly. If a commitment is made, it should be owned. If circumstances change, the person affected should not be left guessing.

Within Life Your Way, follow-through is closely linked to the phrase, do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. It is doing the unglamorous parts of quality: completing the note, sending the update, checking the plan, making the call, clarifying the uncertainty, raising the issue and closing the loop.

Leadership Shows Up First

This pillar applies as strongly to leaders as it does to support workers. Leadership presence cannot be limited to roster management, messages and problem solving from a distance. If leaders are responsible for shaping practice, they must be connected to the places where practice occurs.

Leaders show up when they are visible in programs, present in difficult conversations, prepared for supervision and consistent in follow through. They show up when staff receive coaching before frustration builds. They show up when families are not left to chase answers. They show up when they model the standards they expect of others.

In a growing organisation, leadership presence protects culture. It prevents standards from becoming theoretical and helps leaders understand the realities staff face. It also sends a message to staff that frontline practice matters enough for leaders to pay attention.

What This Looks Like in Practice

In practice, Showing Up Is the Standard means staff understand that attendance, preparation, presence and follow-through are inseparable. A worker preparing for a Health is Wealth session should know the client's current goals, relevant dietary or emotional considerations, and how the session can build ownership rather than simply complete a recipe. A worker supporting a Get Connected event should know who may need help entering social interactions, who is building travel confidence and what opportunities exist for clients to contribute to the night. A worker supporting Pathway to Purpose should understand that a work exposure session is not just about attendance; it is about identity, confidence, skill and feedback.

Families experience this pillar when they do not need to constantly re-explain information, when commitments are honoured and when staff appear to know the person beyond the roster. Staff experience it when colleagues arrive ready and leaders follow through. Clients experience it when the day feels organised around them rather than around the convenience of the service.

Staff voice	Strategic translation	Practice implication
Turning up	Reliability is the first promise of support.	Attendance is treated as a dignity issue, not merely a roster issue.
Being prepared	Preparation is part of support.	Staff read relevant notes, goals and plans before the shift begins.
Being present	Quality requires attention, not just attendance.	Staff actively engage, notice and respond throughout the support.
Reading BSPs and notes	Information continuity protects trust and safety.	Critical information is understood by the team, not held by one person.
Doing what you promise	Follow-through is integrity in action.	Commitments are realistic, owned and closed out.

Green Flags and Red Flags

Green flags Behaviours that strengthen this pillar	Red flags Behaviours that weaken this pillar
Arrives on time, regulated and ready to engage.	Arrives late, rushed or unprepared.
Reads relevant notes, BSPs and goals before support.	Relies on memory or other staff rather than reading information.
Communicates early if circumstances change.	Treats communication after a problem as sufficient.
Uses the activity to create participation, not passive attendance.	Supervises the activity without creating engagement.
Follows through on commitments or clearly explains changes.	Makes casual promises and does not follow through.
Notifies who is disengaged and adapts support.	Misses signs of exclusion, anxiety or disengagement.
Completes documentation while the information is current.	Leaves notes incomplete, vague or delayed.

Measurement and Leadership Dashboard Signals

Measurement for this pillar should not be used to punish ordinary human error. Its purpose is to identify whether reliability and preparation are becoming part of the operating culture. Leaders should look for patterns rather than isolated events, and they should respond early where drift appears.

Signal	What to look for	Possible source	Leadership response
Punctuality and attendance	Patterns in late arrivals, missed shifts, preventable cancellations or last-minute changes.	Rosters, incident logs, family feedback.	Identify root cause, adjust systems, coach reliability.
Preparation quality	Evidence that staff knew current goals, plans, risks and changes.	Shift notes, supervision, spot checks.	Clarify expectations and simplify access to key information.
Presence in practice	Staff actively engaging and creating participation rather than supervising passively.	Practice observations, client feedback.	Observe, coach and model active support.
Follow-through	Commitments made to clients, families or staff are completed or clearly updated.	Communication records, complaints, supervision.	Assign ownership and close loops visibly.

Reflection Questions

For staff, the central reflection is whether the person experienced you as prepared, present and reliable. Did you know enough to provide good support? Did your attention remain with the client and the purpose of the shift? Did you follow through on what you said you would do?

For leaders, the reflection is whether systems make it easy for staff to show up well. Are notes accessible and useful? Are expectations clear? Are roster pressures undermining quality? Are leaders visible enough to know what practice actually looks like?

Showing Up is an Act of Belief

Showing up may sound basic, but it is deeply connected to the Life Your Way philosophy. We cannot ask people to believe in their potential if our own behaviour communicates inconsistency. We cannot build trust if preparation is optional. We cannot create mattering if people feel that support is distracted, rushed or unreliable.

To show up well is to say, through action, that this person matters, this day matters and the opportunity in front of us matters. It is the first standard of quality because every other standard depends on it.