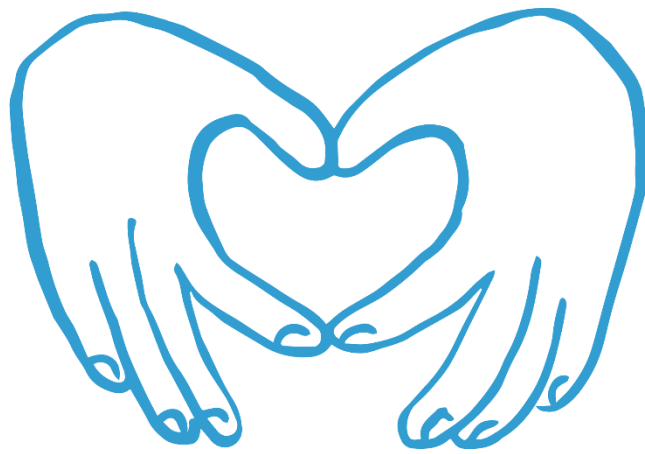


Values in Action



Life Your Way

**How Life Your Way Turns
Belief into Behaviour**

Foundational Framework Document

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Introduction: Values Are Only Useful When They Can Be Experienced

Values are often treated as words organisations choose to describe themselves. They are placed on websites, included in induction packs, printed in policies and repeated during recruitment. Yet values only become meaningful when they can be experienced by others.

A client does not experience integrity because it is written in a document. They experience integrity when a staff member turns up on time, follows through on a commitment, tells the truth respectfully, and does what is right even when no one is watching. A family does not experience inclusivity because it appears in a mission statement. They experience inclusivity when their knowledge of the person is respected, when communication is clear, and when their loved one is treated as a whole person rather than a rostered support. A staff member does not experience empowerment because the organisation says it believes in growth. They experience empowerment when they are trusted, coached, given clarity, and supported to bring their strengths into their work.

At Life Your Way, values are not intended to be decorative. They are not designed to make us sound good. They exist to shape behaviour.

This matters because culture is not created by what an organisation claims to value. Culture is created by what it repeatedly rewards, tolerates, coaches and challenges. Over time, people learn what really matters by watching what leaders notice, what teams normalise, what is ignored, what is celebrated and what is allowed to continue.

The purpose of this document is to define how Life Your Way's values become visible in practice. It connects the organisation's belief framework to everyday behaviour, leadership decisions, staff development and client outcomes. It is designed to ensure that as Life Your Way grows, our values remain lived rather than laminated.

Our values are Inclusivity, Integrity, Empowerment and Adaptability. Together, they describe the kind of organisation we are trying to build and the kind of support we are committed to providing. They are not separate ideas. They operate together. Inclusivity ensures people belong. Integrity ensures people can trust us. Empowerment ensures people grow. Adaptability ensures we continue learning as people and circumstances change.

When these values are lived well, people feel seen, respected, capable and supported to become more than they currently believe is possible.

The Role of Values in an Infinite Game

Life Your Way is not playing for a short-term win. The organisation was not built simply to fill shifts, deliver activities or grow a customer base. It was built around a longer and more demanding purpose: to create environments where people can grow, participate, belong, contribute and believe in their own potential, staff and clients alike.

That is an infinite-game ambition. It does not have a fixed finish line. There will always be another person to support, another family to partner with, another staff member to develop, another standard to improve and another opportunity to create. In an infinite game, values matter because they help people make decisions when there is no perfect script.

Rules can tell people what must happen in predictable situations. Values help people decide what should happen when situations are complex. Policies create minimum standards. Values create direction. Procedures help manage risk. Values help preserve purpose.

This distinction is important in disability support because no policy can fully capture the complexity of human life. Staff will encounter moments where they need judgement, not just instruction. Leaders will face decisions where efficiency and quality pull in different directions. Families will need reassurance when circumstances change. Clients will need support to take steps that are meaningful but uncertain.

In those moments, values become a compass.

They do not remove complexity, but they help us navigate it. They remind us that the point of support is not simply to complete the shift, fill the day or avoid difficulty. The point is to act in ways that preserve dignity, build capability, strengthen trust and keep possibility open.

Inclusivity: Belonging Is More Than Being Present

Inclusivity at Life Your Way means creating welcoming environments where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to participate fully in community life. This value reflects a belief that every person deserves to be known, heard, respected and supported to contribute in ways that are meaningful to them.

Inclusion is often misunderstood as physical access or social attendance. A person may be present at an activity but not included in it. They may be sitting in a group but not connected to it. They may attend a community event but remain invisible within it. True inclusivity goes further. It asks whether the person is recognised, whether their communication is understood, whether their preferences shape what happens, and whether the environment adapts enough for participation to become possible.

For Life Your Way, inclusivity begins with attention. Staff need to notice who is engaged and who is drifting to the edge. They need to recognise when louder personalities dominate quieter ones, when a person's communication style is being overlooked, or when an activity is continuing in a way that excludes someone. Inclusion requires warmth, but it also requires skill. It asks staff to adapt communication, adjust expectations, create entry points and ensure people are not left behind simply because it is easier to keep moving.

Inclusivity also shapes how we speak. Language can either strengthen dignity or quietly reduce it. Speaking with people rather than about them, using age-appropriate language, respecting preferred names and communication styles, and avoiding labels that define people by behaviour or disability are all practical expressions of inclusion. These behaviours may appear small, but they send powerful messages about whether a person is respected as an individual.

A truly inclusive culture also applies to staff. New staff should not have to fight their way into belonging. They should be welcomed, supported and given the information they need to succeed. Teams that create in-groups and out-groups quickly become unsafe, and unsafe teams cannot deliver consistently safe support. Inclusivity therefore requires leaders to pay attention to team dynamics, not just client interactions.

When inclusivity is strong, people experience Life Your Way as a place where they are not merely allowed to attend, but genuinely expected, valued and supported to participate.

When inclusivity is weak, people may still be present, but they are not fully included. They may be spoken over, rushed, excluded by habit, or treated as though their

preferences matter less than the convenience of the group. Over time, these patterns erode trust and reduce participation.

The test of inclusivity is not whether we say everyone belongs. The test is whether people experience belonging when they are with us.

Integrity: Doing the Right Thing When It Would Be Easier Not To

Integrity is one of the most important values at Life Your Way because trust is the foundation of support. Clients, families, staff and partners must be able to trust that we will do what we say we will do, communicate honestly, act respectfully and make decisions that align with our purpose.

Integrity is often tested in ordinary moments. It is tested when someone is running late and needs to communicate early. It is tested when a shift note needs to be completed accurately rather than quickly. It is tested when a staff member notices a mistake and chooses whether to acknowledge it. It is tested when a difficult conversation needs to happen directly rather than being avoided or redirected into side conversations.

At Life Your Way, integrity is closely connected to the phrase that helped shape the organisation: do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. This phrase matters because it removes performance from the equation. Integrity is not about looking good. It is about being trustworthy when there is no immediate reward for doing so.

As the organisation grows, integrity also requires evidence. Good intentions are no longer enough. A maturing organisation must be able to demonstrate that its values are being lived through behaviour, documentation, communication, supervision and decision-making. This is not about bureaucracy for its own sake. It is about proving that trust is deserved.

In practice, integrity means turning up prepared, following agreed plans, maintaining confidentiality, respecting professional boundaries, recording information accurately, raising concerns through the right channels and supporting decisions once they are made. It also means acknowledging when we fall short. An organisation with integrity does not pretend mistakes never happen. It creates the conditions for mistakes to be identified, learned from and repaired.

Integrity also protects culture. When people speak differently in private than they do in public, when concerns are discussed informally instead of being raised appropriately, or when decisions are undermined through side conversations, trust begins to fracture. These behaviours can seem small, but they create uncertainty.

People begin to wonder what is really being said, whether decisions can be relied upon, and whether the organisation means what it says.

For leaders, integrity means consistency. Staff watch whether leaders follow through, whether expectations are applied fairly, and whether values are upheld when it is inconvenient. If leaders avoid hard conversations, tolerate poor behaviour, or drift from agreed standards, the culture learns that values are optional.

Integrity is not perfection. It is honesty, accountability and alignment. It is the willingness to keep bringing behaviour back to purpose.

Empowerment: Capability Grows When People Are Supported to Try

Empowerment sits at the heart of Life Your Way's belief framework. We believe people are capable of more than they currently believe, and empowerment is the value that turns that belief into practice.

To empower someone is not simply to encourage them. It is to create the conditions in which they can take greater control of their life, make informed choices, build confidence and pursue meaningful goals. Empowerment is practical. It happens in the way staff offer choices, wait for responses, break down tasks, support safe risks, celebrate progress and resist the temptation to take over too quickly.

This is especially important in disability support because over-support can look like kindness while quietly reducing independence. A staff member may complete a task for someone because it is faster, cleaner or easier. They may speak on behalf of a person because it avoids discomfort. They may avoid a community opportunity because it might be difficult. Each decision may appear reasonable in isolation, but over time these patterns can create dependence.

Empowerment asks a different question. It asks, "How can we help this person do more for themselves, in their own way, with the right level of support?"

This does not mean withdrawing support prematurely or setting people up to fail. Empowerment is not abandonment. It is careful scaffolding. It means understanding the person, matching support to ability, using prompts thoughtfully, providing time to process, and adjusting the level of support as confidence grows.

Empowerment also requires staff to see behaviour differently. If a person is distressed, avoidant, resistant or disengaged, the empowering response is not to label them as difficult or lazy. It is to ask what the behaviour may be

communicating and what support might help the person re-engage. This shift from judgement to curiosity is central to person-centred practice.

The value of empowerment also applies to staff. Life Your Way asks staff to bring their strengths, interests and experience into their work. A staff member's ability to cook, coach, create art, support fitness, build calm routines, lead activities or connect with a particular client group is not incidental. These strengths are part of how personalised support becomes possible.

However, empowerment without accountability can become inconsistency. Staff are trusted to use judgement, but that trust sits inside shared standards, clear expectations and reflective practice. Empowerment means people are supported to grow, not left alone to define quality for themselves.

When empowerment is strong, clients become more confident, staff become more capable, and families begin to see new possibilities. When empowerment is weak, support may become comfortable but limiting. People may be protected from challenge, over-supported through tasks, or denied the dignity of trying.

The measure of empowerment is not whether support feels easy. It is whether support is increasing confidence, capability and ownership over time.

Adaptability: Staying Responsive Without Losing Direction

Adaptability is essential because people change, goals change, families change, staff teams change, funding environments change and community opportunities change. An organisation that cannot adapt will eventually become misaligned with the people it exists to support.

At Life Your Way, adaptability does not mean being random, reactive or endlessly flexible without standards. It means responding thoughtfully to changing needs while remaining anchored to purpose and values.

This distinction matters. A support plan may need to change because a client's confidence has grown. A program may need to shift because a group dynamic has changed. A staff approach may need to adjust because the person is not responding as expected. A family may need a different communication rhythm during a period of transition. In each case, adaptability allows the organisation to remain useful.

Adaptability requires curiosity. Staff need to be willing to ask questions when they are unsure, accept feedback without becoming defensive, learn from mistakes and

try new approaches when something is not working. Leaders need to create a culture where changing course is not seen as failure but as evidence of learning.

This value is particularly important in a growing organisation. As Life Your Way navigates the constant change within the National Disability Insurance Scheme there will be a natural tension between standardisation and flexibility. Standards are necessary, but they should not make the organisation rigid. Systems should help people do better work, not prevent them from responding to individual needs.

Adaptability also requires emotional regulation. Change can create anxiety. When plans shift, staff may feel uncertain, clients may feel unsettled and families may need reassurance. In those moments, adaptable staff remain calm, solutions-focused and connected to the person in front of them. They do not allow frustration about the change to become more important than the needs of the person being supported.

When adaptability is strong, people experience Life Your Way as responsive, creative and steady through change. When adaptability is weak, the organisation becomes attached to habit. Staff may insist on the original plan even when it no longer serves the person. Teams may resist new systems because “we have always done it this way.” Leaders may confuse consistency with rigidity.

Adaptability allows Life Your Way to keep improving without losing itself.

Green Flags, Red Flags and the Culture We Create

Every organisation has green flags and red flags, whether it names them or not. Green flags are the behaviours that strengthen culture. They create trust, safety, consistency and momentum. Red flags are the behaviours that weaken culture. They may begin as small habits, but when they are tolerated, they become accepted patterns.

At Life Your Way, green flags include taking ownership without needing to be asked, communicating early, supporting independence even when it takes more time, maintaining professional boundaries, staying calm when circumstances change, seeking feedback, sharing information and doing the right thing even when it is inconvenient.

These behaviours matter because they create the lived experience of our values. They show clients that they are respected. They show families that we can be trusted. They show colleagues that they are part of a team. They show leaders that culture is being carried at every level of the organisation.

Red flags include choosing what is easy over what is right, creating reliance rather than independence, avoiding difficult conversations, becoming defensive, resisting change, blurring boundaries, failing to document or communicate because “everyone already knows,” and speaking negatively about clients, families, colleagues or organisational decisions rather than raising concerns appropriately.

The purpose of naming red flags is not to create fear or shame. It is to create awareness. Everyone will occasionally notice red flags in themselves. The strongest people in an organisation are not those who never drift from the values. They are the people who recognise the drift, take responsibility and move back toward the standard.

This is why Life Your Way’s approach to appraisal and development is not about catching people out. It is about building reflective practice. The question is not simply, “Did you perform well?” The deeper question is, “Is your behaviour helping create the culture and quality of support we want Life Your Way to be known for?”

A mature values culture does not rely on personality, goodwill or informal norms. It defines what good looks like, creates space for honest reflection, and supports people to keep growing.

Leadership Responsibility: Values Are Carried by What Leaders Allow

Values become real or unreal through leadership.

This does not mean leaders are the only people responsible for culture. Everyone contributes to culture. But leaders have disproportionate influence because they shape what is reinforced, what is corrected and what is left alone.

If a leader says communication matters but avoids difficult conversations, the team learns avoidance. If a leader says integrity matters but tolerates incomplete documentation or side conversations, the team learns that standards are negotiable. If a leader says empowerment matters but only values staff who do things their way, the team learns compliance rather than growth. If a leader says adaptability matters but reacts defensively to feedback, the team learns that change is unsafe.

Leadership at Life Your Way therefore requires alignment between words and behaviour. Leaders must model the values, coach toward them, and challenge behaviours that move the organisation away from them. This is not about being harsh. In fact, values-based accountability should be one of the most respectful things a leader offers. It tells people that the work matters, the standard matters, and their growth matters.

Leaders also need to recognise strengths. A values culture should not focus only on what needs correction. Staff should understand where they are already contributing strongly. Someone who naturally builds relationships may be a role model for inclusivity. Someone who remains calm under pressure may be a role model for adaptability. Someone who follows through consistently may be a quiet anchor of integrity. Someone who helps clients attempt tasks rather than stepping in too quickly may be demonstrating empowerment in its most practical form.

The role of leadership is to make these behaviours visible, repeatable and shared.

Culture becomes stronger when people can see what good looks like.

Values as a Decision-Making Framework

The practical test of values is whether they help people make better decisions.

When a situation is unclear, Life Your Way staff and leaders should be able to return to four questions. Is this inclusive? Does it respect the person and support participation? Is this acting with integrity? Are we being honest, transparent and aligned with what we said we would do? Is this empowering? Does it build confidence, choice and capability rather than unnecessary dependence? Is this adaptable? Are we responding to what is actually needed rather than simply following habit?

These questions do not remove professional judgement. They strengthen it. They provide a shared language for reflection and discussion. They also help ensure that values are not applied selectively. A decision that feels empowering but ignores integrity may create risk. A decision that feels adaptable but excludes key people may weaken trust. A decision that feels inclusive but removes all challenge may limit growth.

The values work best together.

They create balance.

Inclusivity keeps us connected to belonging. Integrity keeps us connected to trust. Empowerment keeps us connected to growth. Adaptability keeps us connected to learning.

Together, they help Life Your Way remain both principled and responsive.

Values Are What People Experience

Life Your Way's values are not intended to sit above the work. They are the work.

They are visible in how staff greet clients, how leaders respond to concerns, how families are communicated with, how goals are supported, how boundaries are maintained, how mistakes are handled and how teams move through change.

As Life Your Way grows, our challenge is not simply to preserve the words. It is to preserve the behaviours that give those words meaning.

Inclusivity means people belong in practice, not just in principle. Integrity means trust is earned through action, not claimed through intention. Empowerment means people are supported to build capability, not protected into dependence. Adaptability means we continue learning, adjusting and improving without losing our purpose.

The belief framework explains why Life Your Way exists.

The values explain how we behave because of what we believe.

And the behaviours prove whether we mean it.