

# OPTIONS' Philosophy

**Philosophy statement: “By increasing self-reliance, we will improve the quality of life for those we serve”**

The idea of the philosophy statement, to increase self-reliance, is to help the persons served learn to do the things they can to help themselves to the greatest extent of their ability. We would like help persons gain skills and have the satisfaction of successfully being able to participate in their life, to meet their goals and have a sense of accomplishment.

It is acknowledged that we all require assistance in different areas and not a single one of us is completely independent. We rely on those around us for help when needed. Like us, the persons served will benefit from help in a variety of areas and we want to make sure they know how to seek out the resources and help they need, when it is needed, yet at the same time, gain the skills to empower them and help with success and feeling good about what they can do. Many times caring staff want to help and may initially jump in to do things for the persons served. We encourage staff to not do everything for the person but to help assess the level of skill and need and help teach the person and guide them so they can participate to the fullest extent possible. That will vary from person to person.

For example, one person may be able to remember to take their medication on time, tell you the name, dosage and what the prescription is for. Another person may be able to independently get a glass of water and bring it with them and count the number of medications they take each day. Both persons could be doing what they can to help themselves to the greatest extent possible.

In another example, think about a person who is moving into a new home. One person may be able to hang up their clothes and organize their room without much assistance. Another person may have difficulty putting clothes on the hanger but can carry the item to the closet. A helpful staff may be able to help the person unpack very quickly and do it themselves. However, that would be a missed opportunity to help the person make choices on where they want things to be placed and to feel good about helping make their new space their own. Sometimes staff will have pre-conceived ideas about how things should be set up. For instance, somebody may strongly feel that socks and underwear belong in the top drawer of the dresser. However, another person may prefer to have them in the bottom drawer. Let the person served make the choice on where they want things to be and empower them to arrange their belongings in their

own way. Be patient, it certainly may take longer to move in, but it's not a race. It's a time to learn about the person, build a rapport and help them feel comfortable and proud about their participation. Asking questions and facilitating the participation will help the person feel good about who they are and feel proud of their accomplishment.

## **Core values: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Caring**

- **Trustworthiness:** Many of the persons served at OPTIONS are more vulnerable than those in the general public. They count on us to help them with a variety of personal needs, from ensuring they receive the proper medical care to helping manage their own money. It is essential that our staff have the best interests of the persons served in mind at all times and act accordingly. If there is ever a question or concern, staff are asked to ask questions and to speak up. If you see something, say something. Our persons served come first and it is up to us to ensure they are well cared for.

Building trust can take time and it is not something to take lightly. It can be very hard for some of our persons served to give trust as many have had staff come into their lives only to leave again just as they have become comfortable. Turnover does happen so it is important not only to help build natural supports and relationships, but to help the person served learn to self-advocate and make decisions that will help protect themselves.

- **Respect:** We would all like to be treated in a respectful manner and ask that everybody be kind to one another. We are here to work as a team and ensure the highest quality of services possible. We have a lot to be proud of as we are in positions to provide care for some of the most amazing persons you will ever meet. That said, we are also working with people who are learning, who may find life frustrating or challenging for a variety of reasons. Some of the services programs are behavioral services. It is possible that there are times you may not be treated in a particularly respectful manner by a person served. Please don't take it personally. It's not about you and that person may be upset about something completely different. We are helping people to learn positive social interactions and to manage their anger and frustration. No matter what, the persons served at OPTIONS must be treated with ***dignity and respect at all times.***

It is understood that sometimes what we do is hard and we all have a zillion things going on outside of work. We ask that you develop a personal plan to help keep things in perspective so you can be present and balanced in order to respond positively to persons served. Our persons served deserve our best.

Sometimes things happen that can cause a person served embarrassment or could affect their dignity. For example, imagine a person served has occasional enuresis (bladder control issues). To have an “accident” in public could be embarrassing. It is important for staff to be aware of this issue and help the person plan ahead. There are measures that can be taken that will help such as reminding them to use the restroom before going out, have them use a pad if necessary, have a change of clothes handy in a backpack or tote bag and know where the restrooms are in the community. Imagine you are taking the person to see their favorite band for free downtown but then they have an “accident” and become upset. A staff person who is prepared and calmly helps wrap a sweatshirt around their waist and provides re-assurance while guiding them to the nearest restroom, can help the person retain their dignity and enjoy the day. If however, a staff person expressed frustration or had a “tone” in their voice that could be perceived as negative or non-supportive, the person may become upset, embarrassed or angry. People react in different ways when not treated in a respectful manner or when their dignity is at stake. The results could be that the person no longer wants to go out in the community and isolated. The person could socially isolate or become depressed, feeling they have no value. On the other hand, they could become more agitated or aggressive. They may no longer trust you as the staff person or be willing to work with you. Such a response, even if not intended, could make a big impact. Please be aware of your words and ensure all of our persons are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

- **Responsibility:** The work we do each day can be filled with joy and can be very fun. But, there is also a big responsibility. We are responsible for the health and safety of the persons served. We must provide a safe and secure environment and be able to pay attention to details and ensure medication is administered properly. We are responsible for implementing the Individual Service Plans and policies and procedures to ensure the persons receive the best care possible.
- **Caring** The work we do in caring for others is filled with rewards. We often receive far more than we give in the joy we get out of helping somebody learn new skills or reach a goal. The greetings each day when somebody is genuinely happy to see you can melt your heart. Providing care can also be difficult at times. It is important for staff to be here for the right reasons, truly wanting to help persons learn and grow and a desire to help make a difference in the lives of others. What we do, does make a difference every day. This is not a position for a person just looking for a job. The persons served deserve the best we have to offer. If you are here because you genuinely care about others and want to help

people learn and grow to reach their goals and dreams, you are in the right place.