

the
ladd 
way

FUNDAMENTALS

The LADD Way is our roadmap to remain rooted in excellence.

The LADD Way is a set of fundamental behaviors that drive excellence in service delivery, innovation, and advocacy. *The LADD Way* is **how** LADD lives its mission, vision and values. From board members to frontline staff, *The LADD Way* applies to every employee and volunteer leader.

By committing to these fundamentals, we create a culture that is greater than the sum of our parts. As a LADD Team member, we empower one another to better support people with disabilities and build a world where everyone has an equal opportunity to live, work, and connect.

LADD's mission:

We are guided by the belief that all people have ability and value. We empower adults with developmental disabilities to live, work, and connect.

How to use this booklet:

Most challenges you encounter at LADD can be addressed by turning to the fundamentals outlined

in this booklet. When you're feeling frustrated or uncertain about your next step, take a moment to flip through these pages—you'll likely find the clarity or encouragement you need.

Remember, we are all human and works in progress. None of us will perfectly embody *The LADD Way*—and if you think you do, we invite you to revisit the fundamental “Work Curiously,” which reminds us to stay humble and avoid complacency.

That said, *The LADD Way* isn't about perfection. It's here to guide us and help us live our mission.

So please, use this booklet as a tool and a source of inspiration. You are one of the reasons LADD is such a special place. Together, we can—and will—create a world where all belong and have the opportunity to live in dignity.

Sincerely,

The 25-26 LADD Way Advisory Board

Hannah Eldridge, Neil Ferencak, Eric Gronefeld, Julianna Helbing, Olivia Moore, Deborah Pennington, Debbie Peters, Scott Stevens, Tim Valerius, LaVale Washington, Blair Whitt

EMBRACE THE MISSION

YOU ARE INSPIRED BY LADD'S MISSION:

LADD is guided by the belief that every person has ability and value. We empower adults with developmental disabilities to live, work and connect.

REMEMBER “THE WHY”

You are here to empower others and consistently place the needs of the people we support at the forefront.

PRACTICE INCLUSION

You actively seek out diverse perspectives and experiences. You engage colleagues and those you support with curiosity, believing that differing viewpoints are essential to achieving our mission.

HAVE FUN

Be authentic and intentionally create moments of joy in your work, your team, and with those

you support. Celebrate each others' commonalities and differences.

GET RESULTS AND BE STRATEGIC

LADD staff are curious, kind and empathetic to the people we support. You actively learn how to meaningfully engage and communicate with the people we support. You understand that being busy is not the same as getting positive outcomes. Good intentions alone are not enough. You are expected to have an impact in your role at LADD.

EMBRACE ACCOMMODATION

You adapt your communication or teaching style to match how others best learn and engage. You ensure everyone has the tools and support they need to fully participate.

BE AN AMBASSADOR

By living the LADD Way, you take pride in being part of the LADD community. Your decisions and actions consistently elevate and protect LADD's mission and reputation.

PRACTICE CONFIDENT PROBLEM SOLVING

MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

You take time to understand expectations and empower yourself and others to make thoughtful choices. In whatever position you have at LADD, you embrace your role as a teacher and coach, guiding and supporting people towards good decisions.

UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE

You seek and offer help when needed. You offer solutions when managing challenges and you give people opportunities to learn through creative problem solving.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Once you identify a solution, take action with confidence and inform stakeholders as appropriate. Seek advice and input from stakeholders in a timely

manner. If you make a mistake, remember mistakes are opportunities for growth.

CLIMB THE DECISION TREE

You and your supervisor establish clear guidelines for when to act independently, when to consult others, and when to seek approval. Respect the boundaries of your decision-making authority.

INFORM

After taking action, communicate with your supervisor about the situation, your response, and the outcome. Share successes and mistakes alike to foster learning and transparency.



BE FIERCELY ACCOUNTABLE

COMMIT TO CLARITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

You take personal responsibility for meeting expectations. When mistakes happen, you accept feedback and adjust your behavior to meet expectations moving forward.

ACTIVELY LISTEN

Seek to understand, rather than be understood.

ACT WITH INTEGRITY

You make promises you and your team can keep.

ASK QUESTIONS

Rather than assume, seek clarification.

MAKE CHANGES

When something goes wrong, work to understand it, resolve it and prevent it from recurring. Avoid excuses or shifting blame, take accountability.

ENSURE AGREEMENT

You take responsibility for clarifying expectations and meeting agreed-upon deadlines.

APOLOGIZE

When expectations aren't met, you acknowledge the impact and express sincere accountability. You don't dismiss or minimize others' feelings.

BE ON TIME

Punctuality is a demonstration of respect and professionalism.



USE COMPASSIONATE EMPATHY

SEEK TO UNDERSTAND BEHAVIOR

Behavior is a form of communication. So, get curious about behavior that surprises or concerns you, seeking to understand rather than judge.

ACTIVELY LISTEN

Give your undivided attention. Don't multitask or mentally prepare your response while someone is speaking.

ASK QUESTIONS AND SEEK FEEDBACK

Ask for clarity and understanding. Don't assume you know someone's perspective. Regularly seek input on how your support can improve.

HONOR FEELINGS

Allow others to feel what they feel without judgement. Don't rush or dismiss their emotions. Avoid the use of the phrase, "calm down." Instead, model calm behavior and offer calming techniques and support.

GET CONSENT

Before solving a problem on someone else's behalf, ask for their permission and input.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Take care of your emotional well-being. Seek help and advice when you feel emotionally entangled. You are not responsible for another's happiness.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

You aren't responsible for someone else's happiness, but you are responsible for how you respond. Use emotional intelligence to respond with thoughtfulness and care.

NEVER COMPROMISE ON WELLNESS

YOU PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN YOUR WORK

You support wellness for colleagues and those we serve. You and the people we support are clean, and appropriately groomed. Healthy eating, physical and mindful activities are encouraged at LADD, always.

RECOGNIZE YOUR INFLUENCE

Model healthy behavior. Encourage and engage in physical activity, nutritious eating and mindfulness.

EMBRACE ACTIVITY

Integrate movement into your day whenever possible.

GET CURIOUS ABOUT NUTRITION

Learn how to support access to healthy food options.

ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Support you and your peers and the people we support's mental well-being by taking responsibility for your own emotional well-being and seeking support and advice when you are struggling to support a peer or someone we serve's emotional health. Ensure you are trained on how to have difficult conversations, de-escalate a situation and/or redirect.



SPEAK THOUGHTFULLY

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND RESPECTFULLY

Say what you mean and mean what you say—just don't be mean when you say it.

BE UPFRONT

Speak directly and respectfully, regardless of a person's role. Avoid using sarcasm, intimidation, or silence to avoid tough conversations.

RESPOND THOUGHTFULLY

If you're feeling emotional, opt for phone or in-person conversations when you have to undertake difficult conversations. Avoid electronic communication when you are upset.

BE PROACTIVE

Be proactive and practice difficult conversations. If you can't let something go, address it respectfully and directly. At LADD, we all make space for tough conversations.

ENSURE UNDERSTANDING

Confirm mutual understanding before concluding a conversation. Understanding does not always mean agreement.



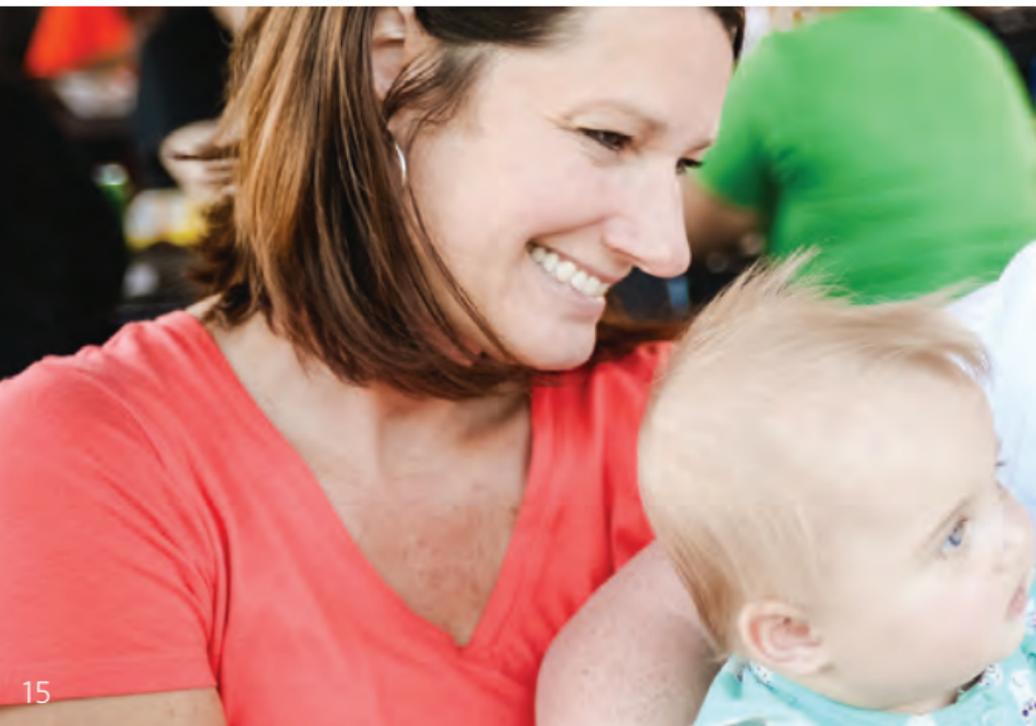
WORK CURIOUSLY

TREAT CURIOSITY AS A STRENGTH

In whatever role you play at LADD, you ask questions and are curious about the people we support, our colleagues and families so we can better serve and support each other.

ASK WHY

When you encounter a confusing decision or behavior, ask “why” to gain understanding. Make



sure you assume positive intent before you dig deeper.

LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Welcome diverse perspectives and challenge your assumptions. Ask for feedback on your performance.

RECOGNIZE COMPLACENCY

If you believe you know all there is to know about someone or something, it is probably time to seek out new ideas and solicit feedback.



PLAY UP STRENGTHS/ TROUBLESHOOT WEAKNESSES

BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR ABILITIES

Clearly communicate your strengths and where you need support.

FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS

Reflect on your talents and those of your team. Be prepared to speak to your strengths and the strengths of your team when called upon to do so.

SEEK AND GIVE FEEDBACK

Accept constructive input and offer it respectfully to others. Own the fact that you might fail or fall short in some way and seek feedback anyway.

RECOGNIZE YOUR VALUE

Know your expertise and share insights generously. Offer input without waiting to be asked, but always with respect.

TAKE CONTROL

Own your career development. Don't wait for others to guide your growth. Ask for what you think you need.

CHECK YOURSELF

Be strategic in your communication. Listen and ask questions before responding. Recognize when you overpower others with your perspective and need to pause.

BE FEARLESS

Embrace your unique personality and creativity. What makes you different is your strength.

GET INVOLVED

ADVOCATE FOR INCLUSION IN COMMUNITY LIFE

You help build a world where everyone is valued and included.

BE AN AMBASSADOR

Recognize the societal bias against people with disabilities. Represent inclusion through your actions and words.

GET OUT THE VOTE

Get informed and take the time to vote. Support others to vote. Voting is how our voices are heard.

KNOW WHEN TO BE QUIET AND PATIENT

Ensure people with disabilities have a voice or input in some way when decisions are being made about their lives. Remember, all of us need space to make

mistakes. When a person or colleague speaks up for themselves or another—perhaps for the first time—be patient, supportive and encouraging. Getting involved in the community is hard and can require repetition.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Facilitate natural community relationships built on shared interests.



BE COURAGEOUSLY INCLUSIVE

ACTIVELY FOSTER A CULTURE OF BELONGING

DRIVE CHANGE

LADD is here to support you as you drive change. If you do not know how to drive change but believe change is needed, know you have the full force of this agency supporting you and helping you find a way, so speak up and ask for help. You are not alone.

EXAMINE AND ADJUST

Reflect on your actions and LADD's practices to ensure they promote belonging. Don't excuse bad behavior in the name of inclusion.

GIVE SPACE FOR TRUTH

Listen to and honor others' experiences. Avoid comparing hardships or invalidating someone's reality.

ACCEPT DISCOMFORT

Acknowledge your biases and stay open to learning. Growth isn't always comfortable, but it's always necessary.







LADD'S SERVICE GUARANTEE:

The LADD Way is a guide to HOW we deliver services. From the perspective of the people we support and our families, our service guarantee is the impact of Living the LADD Way.

We are committed to people we support living in dignity. Below are LADD's 10 service promises to the people we support and their loved ones:

1. LADD staff are curious, kind and empathetic to the people we support.
2. We actively learn how to meaningfully engage and communicate with the people we support.
3. We embrace our role as teachers and coach vs. caregivers and don't tell people what to do unless there is an immediate safety risk.
4. We ask questions and are curious about the people we support so we can better serve them.

5. We are well trained in knowing how to de-escalate a situation and/or redirect.
6. We encourage community integration for everyone we support. People supported, regardless of ability, have access to regularly scheduled community outings and opportunities to fully integrate in the community in which they live.
7. People LADD supports are clean and well groomed.
8. The homes we are in charge of are clean, well-kept and SAFE. When we are not in charge of a home we actively help pursue health and safety measures in any home we provide supports in.
9. Healthy eating, physical and mindful activities are encouraged at LADD, always.
10. We are proactive communicators with loved ones or a person's guardian.



**For more information go to:
www.laddinc.org/tlw**

**Nominate someone for
“Leading the LADD Way!”**



BELIEVE