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Frontline Leader Capability and Leadership Framework

Ability First Australia is undertaking a project that defines the role, competencies, and capabilities of the Frontline Leader. Spread over 4 stages, and scheduled for completion by June 2021, we anticipate this project will have a profound impact on the long-term viability of the NDIS: facilitating career pathways, informing recruitment practices, and increasing capacity for leaders to be successful in their roles.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Visit www.dss.gov.au for more information.

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has brought significant change to providers, workers and participants in the disability sector. As part of these changes, the roles and responsibilities for the Frontline Leader and many other positions in provider organisations have changed considerably. Frontline Leaders are essentially staff in a provider organisation who directly manage/lead the delivery of services by Disability Support Workers (DSW's) and associated frontline staff.

Ability First Australia (Ability First) and its members believe that investment in Frontline Leadership is crucial to the long-term viability and success of the NDIS. In 2019, Ability First was funded through the Department of Social Services' NDIS Jobs and Market Fund to undertake a project to define the role, capacity and capabilities of the Frontline Leader to inform organisation and job design, recruitment practices and training methodology. The project has four stages and will be completed by June 2021.

THE FIRST STAGE of the project documented the "Current State" role for the Frontline Leader. The findings from Stage 1 have been published on the Ability First website:

- Project background
- Participant views of the Frontline Leader role
- Typical Frontline Leader tasks
- Frontline Leaders views on how their future roles
- Generic position description for the current Frontline Leader

THE SECOND STAGE of the project included development of a series of documents and tools:

- Position Description for the future Frontline Leader roles
- Capability Leadership Framework
- Capability gaps analysis method
- Organisational designs
- Impact of span of control on Frontline Leader costs
- Participant views on Frontline Leader competencies

THE THIRD STAGE of this project will focus on developing a series of online tools as well as a career and training framework for Frontline Leaders. These tools will be tested by a number of providers before they are publicly released as part of Stage Four. A series of resources will be published on the Ability First website throughout the life of the project.

Foreword: Capability and Leadership Framework Design

A Capability and Leadership Framework outlines capabilities that an organisation needs to deliver against its key priorities and also what 'good' leadership looks like. The Framework also provides a consistent approach for evaluating talent – for selection, promotion, and development activities.

An effective Capability and Leadership Framework is balanced, and needs to be:

- 1 Broad enough to cover the full range of all-important capabilities (skills, knowledge, and attitudes)
- 2 Deep enough to assess behaviours accurately, and
- 3 Concise enough for managers to understand and remember

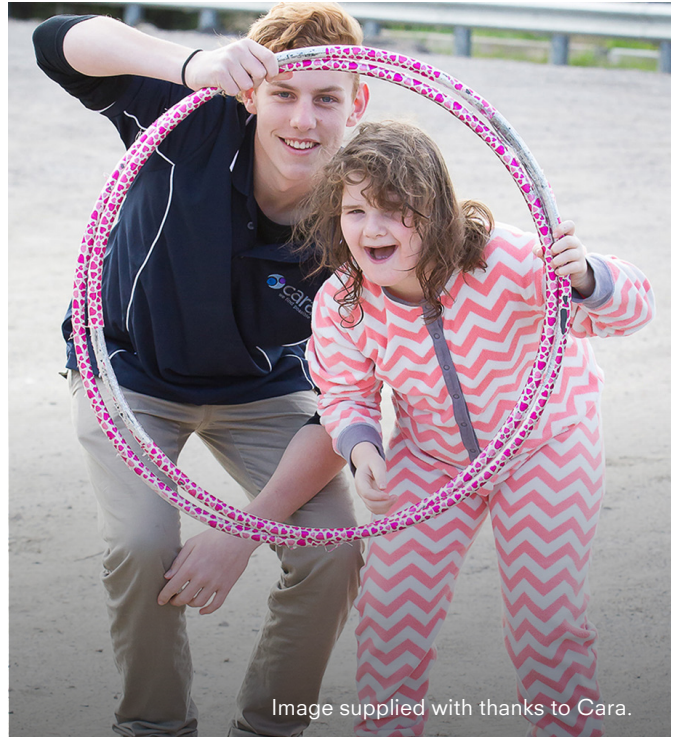
With the introduction of the NDIS the role of the Frontline Leader has shifted significantly from that of a largely “hands on” role to one that includes business acumen, leadership and strategy. The Frontline Leader Capability and Leadership Framework (FLL CLF) reflects this evolving culture of disability service provider organisations. It will support the professional development of current Frontline Leaders, while also setting expectations for new Frontline Leaders.

The FLL CLF includes the two levels of Frontline Leaders – Team Leaders and Coordinators. Designing the Framework around generic skills and knowledge of the Frontline Leader enables capabilities to be customised to reflect the specific scope of work within an individual organisation.

Organisations will be able to customise the framework to:

- reflect an organisation's unique culture, values and mission
- align with key documents/codes and corporate/participant expectations, e.g. code of conduct, service agreements
- reflect the language or terminology used in the organisation, e.g. clients, service users, participants, members or customers
- reflect a specific service line emphasis, e.g. short-term accommodation service vs respite services.

The success of the FLL CLF relies on the service provider's ownership and the degree to which capabilities are integrated and embedded across workforce planning and development practices. As such, individual organisations are encouraged to use and adapt the FLL CLF and feedback any improvements that may be beneficial for other organisations.



Definitions

LEADERSHIP refers to the approach taken by managers at all levels in leading staff and others to achieve organisational goals. Leadership requires a combination of personal, administrative and organisational change skills which can be expected to mature through a person's career with the benefit of a range of experiences and contexts.

CAPABILITY incorporates the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that each person brings to their work. It includes technical, business, personal and professional expertise which can be developed by formal and informal learning, observation, mentoring, guidance, feedback, lifelong experience, and reflection. Capabilities listed in this document include both behaviours and proficiencies.

The combination of leadership and capability recognises that both aspects are necessary for success in the Frontline Leader role and they are best developed in conjunction, considering the role, context and what each person brings to the job.

PROFICIENCIES are known as the skills demonstrated by good performance, measured against established standards.

BEHAVIOURS describe every action by a person that can be seen or heard. The Frontline Leader Capability and Leadership framework has defined behaviours in a way that is both observable and measurable.

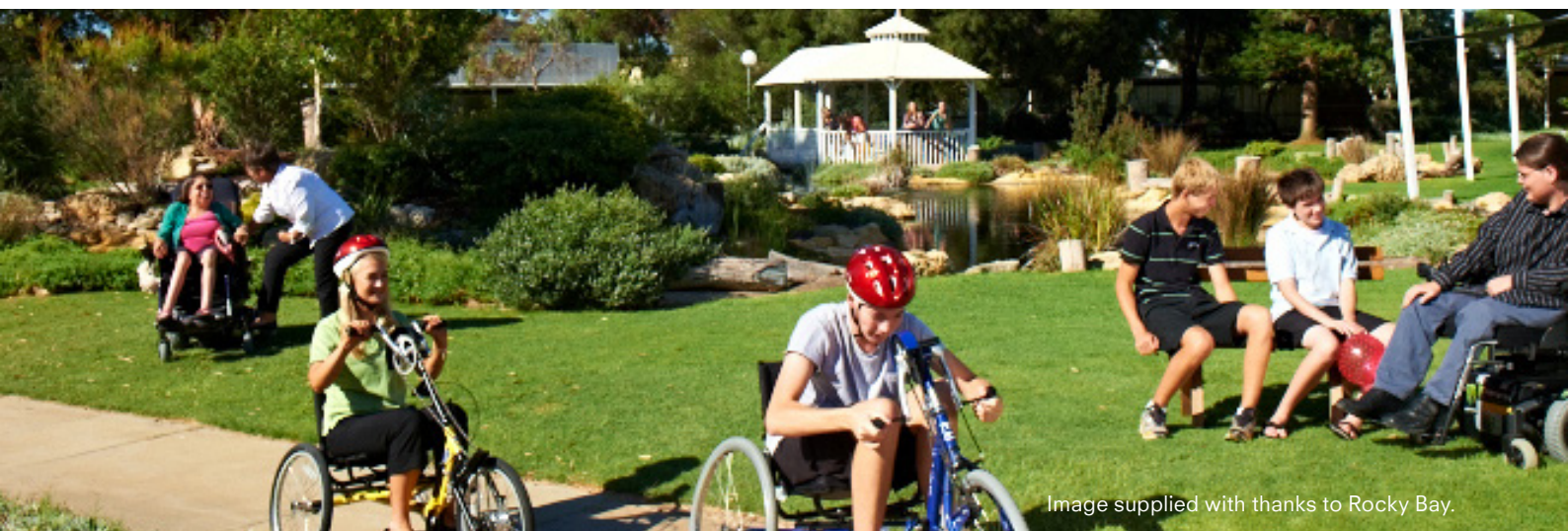


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Introduction

The Frontline Leader Capability and Leadership Framework (FLL CLF) describes the essential competencies expected of Frontline Leaders working within the disability sector. It has been designed to support disability organisations in developing their Frontline Leaders during a period of transformation due to the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The FLL CLF enables employees to understand what is expected of them, and there are descriptions of the behaviours they would normally demonstrate at different levels. It also helps an organisation to build and maintain a high-performance culture along with higher levels of job satisfaction and staff retention.

The framework also provides a common language for all Disability Service Providers to discuss and share experiences of their Frontline Leaders. More importantly it provides a reference point for

conversations between employees and managers in identifying areas of capability building and provides employees clear expectations on the requirements of their role. This is designed to not only strengthen capability in current roles but also provide an opportunity to understand expectations at the next level.

The aim of the capability framework is to support People and Culture leaders to turn management vision into business success at all stages: from hiring the right people to managing them, promoting them and having those all-important performance conversations with them that keep everyone's growth on an upward trajectory. It is expected that the Framework will be adopted and applied, in conjunction with the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators

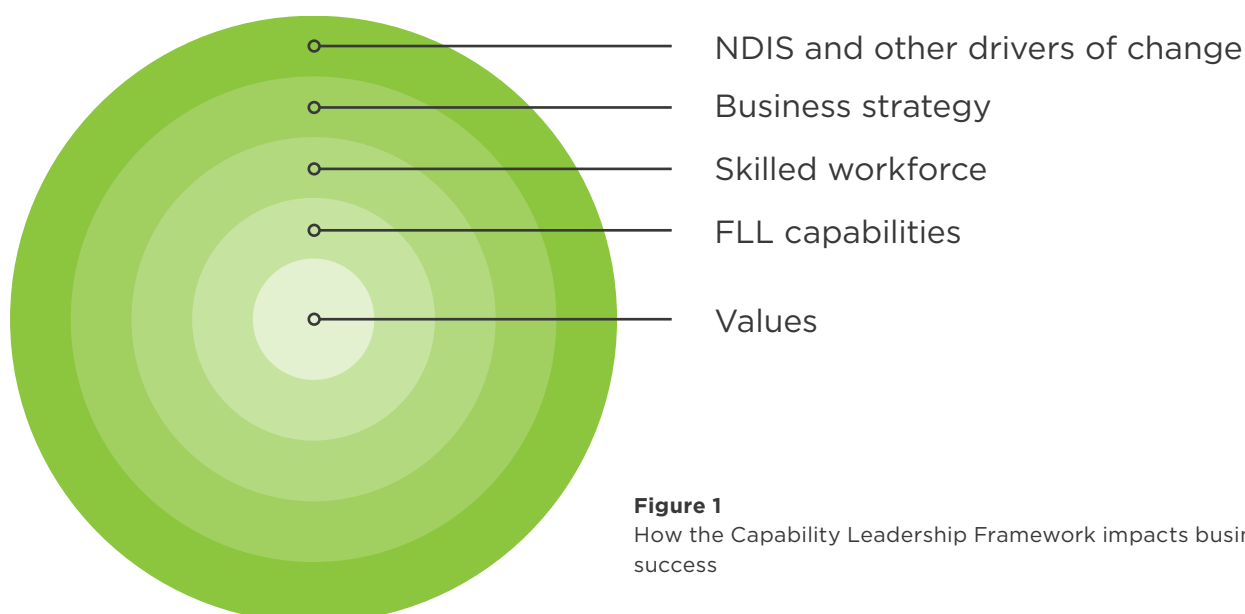


Figure 1

How the Capability Leadership Framework impacts business success



Core Competencies

A detailed review of current best practice, leadership theories and capability frameworks across community services, government, and corporate sectors identified a set of competencies for Frontline Leaders.

The FLL CLF has five core competencies and they are:

- Thinks and Works Strategically
- Achieves Results and Drives Accountability
- Engages People to Build Positive Relationships
- Exemplifies Personal Drive and Integrity
- Communicates and Collaborates with Influence

These core competencies are further divided into proficiencies. A proficiency describes the behaviours that an effective person would demonstrate for each capability. It is not expected that a person will immediately display or demonstrate all the proficiencies and behaviours detailed in the framework. There will also be differences in proficiencies and behaviours linked to individual experience and the specific responsibilities of the role being performed.

In some cases, the proficiencies listed may be more advanced than the employee currently demonstrates. It is expected, however, that once a person has been at any given level for a substantial period, they would have the capacity to demonstrate the full range of proficiencies in the relevant profile.



Note that capability development is cumulative, i.e. the behaviours described at each level create the new foundation of behaviours for the next level.



Capability Leadership Framework Levels (CLF)

There are two profiles in the Capability Framework that align with two position classifications (and their equivalents): Team Leader and Coordinator. These levels align with the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (SCHADS) 2010 classifications of a Social and Community Services employee level 3 and 4. Please note, if your organisation has an Enterprise Agreement (EA), it will be necessary for you to map your EA levels onto the SCHADS levels.

- **CLF 1 – SCHADS Level 3**
- **CLF 2 – SCHADS Level 4**

It is recognised that not all disability service organisations have both Team Leader and Coordinator level positions within their management structure. As such, there may also be a requirement for individual organisations to tailor and adapt the CLF levels to reflect specific requirements of their Frontline Leader roles. The FLL CLF levels provide a set of detailed and behaviourally specific descriptors of the key behaviours, and underlying skills, knowledge, abilities, and attributes required for successful workplace performance across each of the levels.

Level	Example Role	Description	Example titles
CLF 1	Team Leader	General features at this level require the application of knowledge and skills which are gained through qualifications and/or previous experience in a discipline. Employees will be expected to contribute knowledge in establishing procedures in the appropriate work-related field. In addition, employees at this level will normally be required to supervise various functions within a work area or activities of a complex nature. Employees require skills in managing time, setting priorities, planning and organising their own work and that of lower classified staff and/or volunteers where supervision is a component of the position, to achieve specific objectives.	Team Leader Services Team Leader Short Stay Coordinator Service Leader
CLF 2	Coordinator	General features at this level indicate involvement in establishing organisation programs and procedures. Positions will include a range of work functions and will normally involve supervision. Work may span more than one discipline. In addition, employees at this level may be required to assist in the preparation of or prepare the organisation's budget. Employees at this level will be required to provide expert advice to employees classified at a lower level and volunteers. Employees are required to set priorities, plan and organise their own work and that of lower classified staff and/or volunteers and establish the most appropriate operational methods for the organisation. In addition, interpersonal skills are required to gain the co-operation of clients and staff.	Service Manager Support Services Manager Quality Service Lead Disability Support Leader Service Leader

How the Capability Leadership Framework can be used

The FLL CLF has been developed for all Frontline Leaders employed in the disability sector. It applies to permanent, temporary, and casual employees. We encourage organisations to apply the FLL CLF where possible. However, it is acknowledged that organisations may need to adapt the framework to reflect specific requirements not covered by the generic nature of the FLL CLF.

THE FRAMEWORK IS DESIGNED TO:

- support managers to describe staff performance expectations clearly
- assist in the development of consistent role descriptions across the sector by providing a common basis for describing capability requirements and levels of proficiency
- support individuals and supervisors to identify targeted learning and development activities (formal and informal) to specific capability levels
- lead to highly functioning organisations focused on delivering quality outcomes
- support the selection and prioritisation of professional development for employees
- assist managers and staff to have a clear, shared understanding of role expectations and providing a starting point for capability assessment and development planning
- support organisations to complete systematic workforce planning, as the capabilities are used to identify current and future workforce capability needs and gaps
- assist employees to identify career and development pathways based on the capabilities required for progression to chosen roles
- provide best practice recruitment outcomes as managers and selection panels have a clear picture of the type and level of capability required and can apply targeted assessment methodologies
- provide sector mobility based on consistent articulation of capabilities required in roles across the sector

Frontline Leader Capability Leadership Framework

Comparative Profile

1 Thinks and Works Strategically	CLF 1	CLF 2
1.1 Purpose	1.1.1 Is supportive of and can describe the organisation's vision, mission, and business objectives to other staff. Communicates and follows direction provided by supervisor. Recognises how own work contributes to the achievement of organisational goals. Can explain and communicate the reasons for decisions and recommendations.	1.1.2 Understands, supports and promotes the organisation's vision, mission, and business objectives to other staff. Identifies the relationship between organisational goals and operational tasks. Communicates goals and objectives clearly to others. Understands, supports, and can communicate to others the reasons for decisions and recommendations.
1.2 Planning	1.2.1 Understands the internal and external environmental factors that contribute to the development of plans, strategies and team goals. Identifies issues and problems that may impact their own or their teams work objectives. Demonstrates an awareness of the impact of these issues on their own or teams work. Uses performance data effectively to monitor and propel achievement of planned outcomes. Sets realistic objectives and goals, aligned with functional and/or organisational goals. Communicates to their manager/supervisor when the goals cannot be met. Accurately scopes out tasks and projects. Develops schedules and allocates staff to tasks.	1.2.2 Understands the internal and external environmental factors and initiates and develops team goals, strategies, and work plans. Identifies broader factors, trends and influences that impact their own or the team's work objectives. Considers the ramifications of issues and longer-term impact of own work and work area. Able to make difficult decisions to achieve desired outcomes and set clear priorities among projects. Obtains organisation's support and resources for plans. Determines effective reporting and evaluation methods. Draws accurate conclusions from financial, workforce and other information to inform prudent strategic planning decisions.

1 Thinks and Works Strategically	CLF 1	CLF 2
1.3 Finance	1.3.1 Understands and works within defined and agreed budgets. Complies with the organisation's accounting and financial reporting requirements. Safeguards and maintains the organisation's financial, physical, and intellectual assets within scope of role. Understands the NDIS Price Guide and other drivers of revenue or income, and how they impact the revenue received from and costs of delivering services.	1.3.2 Helps customers achieve best value from their funding. Analyses financial data and trends to inform decision-making. Reviews and evaluates contracts to inform future contractual arrangements in relation to the NDIS Price Guide. Scopes and evaluates the financial implications of proposed policies and projects to ensure responsible budget management. Makes financial decisions that deliver the desired financial results. Allocates resources across competing priorities. Ensures that assumptions and forecasts that underpin financial planning are consistent and realistic.
1.4 Commercial Acumen	1.4.1 Demonstrates an understanding and supports the organisation as a business. Builds and maintains a good understanding of local and regional issues that relate to their own role and the organisation's operations. Uses appropriate formal and informal networks to get things done. Applies appropriate discretion, confidentiality, and political sensitivity in work on behalf of the organisation.	1.4.2 Works confidently within the organisation's structures, processes and networks. Knows the organisation's competition and how strategies and tactics work in the market for the organisation's services. Understands the forces that shape political frameworks and agendas and how these impact on the organisation and community. Assesses how decisions will affect and be affected by local, regional, and national situations.
1.5 Marketing	1.5.1 Supports marketing activities when required with support from the organisation. Understands the importance of effective marketing in improving service delivery and in achieving organisational goals.	1.5.2 Contributes to market analysis and marketing strategy development. Implements/conducts marketing activities in accordance with marketing strategies. Use promotional opportunities to protect and/or enhance the organisation's reputation.
1.6 Governance	1.6.1 Complies with organisational governance requirements while achieving business goals. Applies a good working knowledge of the risks and liabilities associated with the work area. Monitors compliance with organisational controls and supports employees who report compliance issues. Acts without delay and appropriately in dealing with incident, risk management, mandatory reporting. Ensure compliance with WHS Legislation.	1.6.2 Consistently applies the relevant governance framework and ensures organisational compliance with legislative, regulatory, policy and procedural requirements. Perceptively assesses the risks and returns on decisions and investments. Understands the operational risks and liabilities for the area and can recommend pre-emptive or corrective action. Proactively identifies current and emerging risks.
1.7 Systems	1.7.1 Streamlines systems and processes to achieve organisational objectives. Looks for and identifies inefficient or ineffective methods or procedures and takes steps to eliminate or improve them focusing on continuous quality improvement. Seeks and implements structural, system and technology changes to support service improvement.	1.7.2 Develops solutions to organisational issues based on a realistic analysis of their potential impact on related systems and processes. Identifies leverage points where small changes can effect a substantial change in outputs or outcomes. Investigates ways to improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency by harnessing technology options. Streamlines organisational structures and processes to facilitate service improvement.

2. Achieves Results and Drives Accountability	CLF 1	CLF 2
2.1 Direction	2.1.1 Clearly and comfortably delegates routine tasks and decisions to direct reports. Supports people to successfully perform delegated tasks. Allows people to finish their own work (within the agreed timeframes). Monitors process, progress, and results.	2.1.2 Clearly and comfortably delegates important tasks and decisions to members of the organisation, external suppliers or others. Sets clear, stretching goals and assigns responsibilities that help to bring out the best work from people. Assists staff to prioritise, delegate and refocus energy when faced with overwhelming workloads.
2.2 Leadership	2.2.1 Provides current, direct, complete, and actionable positive and/or corrective feedback to others. Assists others to identify their development needs and plan development. Assigns challenging and stretching tasks for development purposes. Provides guidance, advice, and coaching to develop others. Recommends suitable development activities to others. Motivates staff to achieve goals.	2.2.2 Provides a supportive environment that inspires self-improvement and growth. Finds and implements ways to creatively challenge and develop others. Identifies and assists those with the desire and potential to become leaders. Contributes to policies and procedures for the development of others. Mentors others. Promotes an organisational climate where learning and development is valued and supported.
2.3 Managing Employees	2.3.1 Assesses the suitability of existing staff and potential recruits when required. Manages people with consideration for their strengths and work interests. Identifies skills and performance gaps and takes action to address them. Deals with unacceptable behaviour promptly and effectively. Works in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy and procedures. Demonstrates understanding of professional boundaries.	2.3.2 Attracts and recruits suitable people to serve the organisation. Manages staff performance, clearly communicating performance expectations, rewarding achievement, and providing constructive feedback where appropriate. Maintains effective and productive workplace relations. Nurtures talent and engages in succession planning. Drives performance management and development strategies to continually improve staff performance.
2.4 Collaboration	2.4.1 Works effectively and co-operatively with others to achieve team objectives. Promotes the importance of collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork by role-modelling these behaviours. Welcomes and respects divergent opinions during consultation and collaboration. Seeks opportunities to work collaboratively with other organisations within the disability sector.	2.4.2 Actively seeks opportunities and ways to work with others to achieve shared goals. Is open to opportunities for collaboration within the Organisation. Leads collaboration beyond organisational and disciplinary boundaries to achieve results and learn from others.

3. Engages People to Build Positive Relationships	CLF 1	CLF 2
3.1 Network and stakeholder engagement	3.1.1 Reviews and manages services in response to changing needs of relevant groups in the community. Builds and sustains relationships with a network of key people internally and externally. Proactively offers assistance for a mutually beneficial relationship. Anticipates and is responsive to customers needs.	3.1.2 Creates and sustains dynamic, strategic, and productive relationships with key stakeholders. Builds and sustains relationships with a network of key people internally and externally. Recognises shared agendas and works toward mutually beneficial outcomes. Anticipates and is responsive to customers' needs.
3.2 Customer Relationships	3.2.1 Works with customers to explore and resolve their practical complex needs, expectations, and goals in line with their NDIS plan. Understands relevant service delivery theory and has operational knowledge of supports and services available. Is flexible and suggests alternatives and gathers information to enable effective referral. Maintains communication with customers during complex problem resolution. Understands confidentiality and diversity aspects. Promotes individuals rights and allows freedom of decision making.	3.2.2 Works with customers to explore and resolve a variety of their complex needs, expectations, and goals in line with their NDIS plan. Has comprehensive knowledge of supports and services available within the community. Models a flexible and creative approach. Respects the customers legal and human rights and enables them to exercise informed choice and control over decisions. Suggests alternatives and organises referral. Promotes diversity awareness and confidentiality aspects with other staff.
3.3 Partnerships and collaboration	3.3.1 Develops models and protocols for working in formal and informal partnerships with other community service organisations to achieve customer outcomes. Involves people, encourages them and recognises their contribution. Consults and shares information and ensures others are kept informed of issues. Works collaboratively and operates as an effective leader and team member.	3.3.2 Negotiates and builds fruitful formal and informal partnerships to achieve strategic objectives and improve customer outcomes. Brings people together and encourages input from key stakeholders. Finds opportunities to share information and ensures that others are kept informed of issues. Fosters teamwork and rewards cooperative and collaborative behaviour. Resolves conflict using appropriate strategies.
3.4 Fairness	3.4.1 Models courtesy, respect and fairness in dealing with people. Supports equal and fair treatment and opportunity for all. Works effectively with people of all races, nationalities, cultures, disabilities, ages and genders. Recognises the positive benefits that can be gained from diversity and encourages the exploration of diverse views. Follows all organisational policies regarding providing a safe, respectful environment for all, which is free from discrimination, bullying or harassment.	3.4.2 Ensures equal and fair treatment for all in own area of organisational responsibility. Recognises the positive benefits that can be gained from diversity and encourages the exploration of diverse views. Harnesses understanding of differences to anticipate reactions and enhance interactions.

4. Exemplifies Personal Drive and Integrity	CLF 1	CLF 2
4.1 Authenticity	4.1.1 Actions are consistent with words. Acts in accordance with own and organisational values. Leads others with heart and mind.	4.1.2 Behaviour as a leader is congruent with private behaviour. Models organisational values authentically. Contributes to the development of policies that reflect organisational values.
4.2 Prioritising and decision-making	4.2.1 Attends first to what's most important. Acts decisively in uncertain circumstances. Takes responsibility for decisions and their implications.	4.2.2 Spends own time and the time of others on what's most important. Makes sound choices and reaches astute conclusions within an appropriate timeframe. Uses information from multiple sources to make critical decisions.
4.3 Self Development	4.3.1 Accepts and responds constructively to feedback. Reflects on feedback and experiences for insight into areas for self-development. Actively engages with opportunities for self-development. Is aware of own strengths and limitations and seeks help from others as required.	4.3.2 Asks for feedback from others, including direct reports. Seeks and utilises a variety of opportunities for self-development. Makes the most of own strengths. Seeks input and expertise from others to complement own capability limitations.
4.4 Sincerity and courage	4.4.1 Admits mistakes and accepts accountability for own behaviour and decisions. Is direct, yet considerate, in communications with others. Takes difficult and/or unpopular action when necessary. Is open to discussion of personal strengths, weaknesses, beliefs, and feelings. Expresses opinions with candor and says what needs to be said. Initiates challenging conversations without delay.	4.4.2 Is unafraid to show emotions, vulnerability and to connect with employees. Supports others to express their opinion and say what needs to be said. Openly discusses learnings from mistakes and assists others to do likewise. Encourages an organisational culture where people feel supported to learn from mistakes and to say what needs to be said.

5. Communicates and Collaborates with Influence		
	CLF 1	CLF 2
5.1 Communicates clearly	5.1.1 Confidently presents messages in a clear, concise, articulate and accurate manner. Focuses on key points and uses appropriate, unambiguous language. Selects the most appropriate medium for conveying information and structures written and oral communication to ensure clarity. Articulates clear, persuasive and relevant messages about key issues when advocating or negotiating for customers and on behalf of the organisation.	5.1.2 Confidently presents messages in a clear, concise and articulate manner. Focuses on key points and uses appropriate, unambiguous language. Selects the most appropriate medium for conveying information and structures written and oral communication to ensure clarity. Expresses confident and cogent public messages when advocating and negotiating for clients/ members and organisational issues.
5.2 Interpersonal Skills	5.2.1 Models self-awareness, self-management and social awareness in communications, problem solving and conflict resolution. Shapes responses to individuals based on perception of verbal and non-verbal cues. Listens attentively and has the patience to hear people out. Is approachable and easy to talk to. Demonstrates understanding of the impact of both spoken and written words.	5.2.2 Motivates others through personal interactions and mentor's development of emerging leaders. Demonstrates emotional maturity, cultural awareness and flexibility when dealing with individuals and situations. Provides a settling influence in a crisis - creates an emotionally safe space to enable exploration of critical issues, stressful situations, or other difficult circumstances.
5.3 Advocacy	5.3.1 Articulates clear and persuasive messages about key issues when advocating or negotiating for customers and on behalf of the organisation. Ensures care practices honour and uphold the preferences, needs and values of customers. Ensures customers are central to decision-making regarding their care.	5.3.2 Expresses confident and cogent public messages when advocating and negotiating for customers and organisational issues. Promotes care practices that honour and uphold the preferences, needs and values of customers. Develops service systems in partnership with customers and/or their carers. Co-ordinates service provision with other organisations, as required, to meet care recipients' needs.
5.4 Negotiates confidently	5.4.1 Approaches negotiations with a clear understanding of key issues. Understands the desired outcomes. Identifies relevant stakeholders' expectations and concerns. Discusses issues credibly and thoughtfully. Encourages the support of relevant stakeholders, including customers families where appropriate.	5.4.2 Approaches negotiations with a clear understanding of key issues. Understands the desired outcomes. Anticipates and identifies relevant stakeholders' expectations and concerns. Discusses issues credibly and thoughtfully and presents persuasive counterarguments. Encourages the support of relevant stakeholders, including customers families where appropriate.

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