

VALUES PROMOTED BY IOWA'S

DISABILITY COMMUNITY

1. People with disabilities are not “special.” Disability is a normal, natural part of life. Typically, disability occurs in old age, but some of us have life-long or adult onset disabilities.
2. Discrimination, prejudice, isolation, stereotyping, and oppression are **REAL**, and experienced by a majority of people with disabilities.
3. It is OK to have disabilities. We don't need to be “fixed” or “cured” to be whole (as in a “medical model” that implies that we are not OK if we have disabilities). We do want our physical pain managed, our mental health serene, and to have access to services and supports to have a quality of life equal to every other citizen.
4. Even people with the most profound disabilities can make their needs and wants known if they have the right supports.
5. The ADA must remain intact and must be fully implemented.
6. **NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US!!** People with disabilities are the experts at living with disabilities. On an individual basis, this means that whenever our well-being is being discussed, we should be present and involved in the conversation.

On a systemic level, this means that people with disabilities should be “at the table” as active, equal partners for every policy decision that is made that affects people with disabilities. This includes funding decisions and decisions affecting the service delivery system structure. Adults with disabilities should not be “represented” by others (parents, providers, professionals, policymakers, etc.).

- 7. People First Language shows respect for people with disabilities. Our disability is only one part of who we are. We are also people with jobs, friends, homes, hobbies, feelings, desires, etc.**
- 8. Services and supports for people with disabilities (including direct financial assistance and health care) are not “welfare.” People with disabilities will give back to society if we are given the opportunity.**
- 9. People with disabilities should have services rendered in the “least restrictive environment” possible (as required by the 1999 Supreme Court decision known as “Olmstead”). It is about choice. Individuals with disabilities should have a genuine choice between receiving long-term care and treatment in an institutional setting or in a community setting.**
- 10. People with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens. We want EQUAL ACCESS, not SPECIAL ACCESS. If something is fair and right for people without disabilities, it should be fair and right for people with disabilities.**
- 11. People with disabilities can and should live in the community of their choice. Iowa’s institutions should be downsized and closed, and services should be made available in every part of the state (every county). “Community-based services” does not mean sheltered workshops and group homes. “Community-based services” does NOT mean segregated.**
- 12. People with disabilities should have “careers” (as opposed to “a job”) with all the same benefits as others in the same profession.**
- 13. Funding for services should follow the person. The type and scope of services should be controlled by the individual. “Individualized budgets” should be in place so that people with disabilities can get the supports they need and want, instead of being required to pick from a menu of services.**

14. **People with disabilities should not be forced to live in an institution (of any size). Services should be available where the person wants to live. People with disabilities should be able to buy a home (as opposed to living in someone else’s house), and have access to all community goods and services.**
15. **The lack of consumer-responsive public transportation, or funding for personal transportation, is a major barrier for many people with disabilities. It impacts the ability to access jobs, health care, community services, and recreation.**
16. **“Cross-disability” perspectives are important. People with disabilities gain a great deal of understanding and peer support from being around people with different types of disabilities.**
17. **Consumer-controlled PAS (personal assistance services), AT (assistive technology), and peer support are considered state-of-the-art services. PAS and AT are called the “great equalizers.”**



(Graphic of scales of justice not available in alternative formats.)