

Academy Core Values and Expressions



Core Values

Our foundational shared principles that serve as our compass, guiding how we operate

The foundation of the Academy's identity is deeply rooted in our core values. They define the essence of our culture, shaping how we interact with one another and partners. Each core value has a set of expressions which are broad descriptions that convey their spirit or fundamental qualities. They set the tone for the overall attitude and approach that embody the values.

These expressions were developed with the purpose of integrating [culturally responsive and recovery-oriented practices](#) into our daily work, services, and interactions. When we are individually and collectively aligned with our core values, this is what healing, healthy relationships, and changed behaviors looks like.

Engaging in communal development of heart, mind, and practice and culturally responsive practice behaviors enhances our ability to live out our core values internally and externally. This is the most significant component in our System of Practice. It creates the conditions for us to deliver our promise and do it well.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Being reliable and responsive to partners and coworkers.

- Our decisions and actions are guided by the Academy's vision, promise, mission, and organizational priorities.
- We deliver quality work in a timely fashion that meets the agreed upon needs and expectations of our coworkers and partners.
- We continuously evaluate and take responsibility for the impact of our decisions and actions and remain open to feedback with a commitment to learning and seeking repair when there is disconnection.
- Clearly articulate our core values to partners and then set and honor boundaries in support of these values.

COLLABORATION: Achieving organizational goals through mutual sharing, teamwork, and cooperation with partners and coworkers.

- We communicate with transparency and approach planning and decision-making by involving those impacted in the process, keeping in mind the philosophy of "Nothing about us without us²."

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- We actively reach out to collaborate, within and between Academy teams, as well as with external partners, to offer and receive support and share resources to achieve common goals.
- We build spaces with co-creation and shared responsibility, where power and privilege are acknowledged and navigated thoughtfully, ensuring that relationships are balanced and we share in the risks and rewards of our work together.

²: "Nothing about us without us" - This phrase has been commonly used by Academy staff after being introduced by our RIHS colleagues who delivered peer support and mental/behavioral health services to our partners as well as by our CWDS colleagues while supporting child welfare workforce development. We also acknowledge the [origins of this term](#) as a slogan that was created by AIDS activists in 1983.

DIVERSITY: Creating an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment that appreciates and builds on the diverse talents, cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and opinions of coworkers and partners.

- We recognize that our worldviews are shaped by our own experiences, and actively explore our own assumptions to enhance our working relationships.
- We listen with intent and curiosity, valuing the unique perspectives and expertise of others, and use inclusive language that seeks to understand meaning and experiences beyond our own.
- We actively engage in learning about the intersectional identities that exist within our internal and external communities, showing a willingness to adapt and be responsive to our coworkers and partners.

FLEXIBILITY: Demonstrating openness, flexibility, and adaptability in thought and action.

- We are open to new ideas and ways of doing things.
- We are willing to shift plans as needed to be responsive to the needs of partners and coworkers.

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- We are willing to be with the discomfort of change, uncertainty, a different degree of control, and the need to adapt.

INNOVATION: Seeking ways to enhance the Academy's work and develop creative solutions to challenges encountered.

- We look for ways to enhance the flow and impact of our work that include time to reflect on implementation needs and space to evaluate their effectiveness.
- We engage in inquiry and meaningful consultation by actively seeking diverse ideas, perspectives, and strategies.
- We actively seek and implement creative solutions to challenges in work processes and interpersonal dynamics.

INTEGRITY: Being honest, ethical, fair, and considerate in interactions and decisions.

- We actively self-reflect and transparently communicate our needs, strengths, and boundaries to honor our whole selves and nurture healthy relationships.
- We dedicate time to understanding the needs and experiences of others, ensuring that our decisions and commitments respect everyone's workload and boundaries.
- We uphold confidentiality, discerning what information to share and seeking clarity when in doubt.

PROFESSIONALISM: Using expertise and the application of best practices to partner with partners and coworkers.

- We are the face of the Academy and acknowledge that each of us is an integral part of a whole; our community with a shared vision.

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- We respect and integrate diverse experiences and viewpoints as a form of expertise, acknowledging the richness that various types of lived experiences¹ bring to our practice.
- We commit to continuous personal and professional development, and adapting our approaches to meet the needs of those we serve with the most current and effective practices.

WELL-BEING: Seeking a state of work/life balance where we can function at our best, learn and grow, and find meaning in our work.

- We contribute to a safe and healthy workplace by engaging in culturally responsive and recovery-oriented practices with an understanding that being trauma-informed plays a vital role in our personal and communal well-being.
- We actively seek a work-life balance that aligns with our personal needs and honor the work-life balance of others.
- We leverage our strengths to achieve success and satisfaction in our work and strive to be aware of ways they may undermine our personal well-being if not attended to.

“Inquire. Inspire. Impact.” (I3)

Our tagline that represents the essence of our core values

Our I3 tagline captures the depth of our core value expressions and simplifies them into three actionable principles through a memorable and impactful message. It is what we can use to clearly and concisely communicate how we approach our work and engagement with each other, our partners, and our community. I3 is not a separate set of actions and behaviors. Instead, it is a

¹ We are working in a human service-oriented system seeking to address social, health, public health, or other issues. There are individuals who are directly affected by social, health, public health, or other issues and by the strategies that aim to address those issues. These individuals have lived experience, which means they have expertise based on their perspective, personal identities, and history beyond traditional professional or educational experience. Their knowledge, skills, abilities, and wisdom was/is gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by others. Examples are living/lived with behavioral/mental health issues, involvement in child welfare, involvement in adult protective services, being unhoused, being incarcerated, etc. Charmaine Utz adapted this definition from [Research Summary: Promising Practices for Integrating People with Lived Experience into the CWS Workforce](#) prepared by Karissa Hughes and Jocelyn Smith.

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summary of our foundational core values and is **appropriate to use in branded materials** to reference our CVs.

It's important to keep the explanation of our tagline brief and intertwined with our values to ensure it acts as a powerful, unifying force that amplifies the values' impact without overshadowing them or becoming a separate set of principles. This is especially crucial given our internal capacity-building efforts are focused on skill-building to live out our core values.

Inquire with Humility

We encourage a culture of curiosity, mutual respect, and continuous learning.

Inspire with Heart

We move people emotionally and spiritually to facilitate change, commitment, and connection.

Impact Mindfully

We keep ourselves intentional and thoughtful about the effects of our actions in a responsive manner.

When communicating I3 to people, it will be important to reference our core value expressions to capture the deeper meaning behind inquire, inspire, and impact. The explanations should align with the actions and behaviors we are very intentionally developing and strengthening.