



Independent Living Supports (ILS)

STAFF GUIDE & ORIENTATION MANUAL

2026 Edition

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Disclaimer

This manual is intended to provide general guidance for Inclusion Clare employees working within the Independent Living Supports Program. It supplements, but does not replace, organizational policies, applicable legislation, participant support plans, or supervisory direction. Where a conflict exists, organizational policies, legislation, and participant-specific plans take precedence.

Document Information

Document	Independent Living Supports (ILS) Staff Guide & Orientation Manual
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Approved By	Executive Director
Version	1.0
Published	July 2026
Document Owner	Inclusion Clare

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SECTION 1

WELCOME TO INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORTS (ILS)

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

Welcome to the Inclusion Clare Independent Living Supports (ILS) Program.

We are pleased to have you join a team dedicated to empowering people with different abilities to live meaningful, self-directed lives as active members of their communities.

Independent Living Supports is built on the belief that every person has strengths, abilities, goals, and dreams. Our role is not to do things for people, but rather to support them in developing the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to achieve their goals and live the life they choose.

As an ILS staff member, you play an important role in helping participants increase their independence, build confidence, strengthen community connections, and develop practical life skills.

Whether you are supporting someone to prepare a meal, learn to budget, attend an appointment, navigate public spaces, build relationships, or develop new skills, your work contributes directly to improving quality of life and promoting self-determination.

This manual has been developed to provide guidance, expectations, and resources to support you in your role. It outlines the philosophy of our program, staff responsibilities, participant rights, and best practices for delivering quality supports.

We encourage you to use this manual regularly and to seek guidance whenever you are uncertain about a situation.

Together, we are helping people build skills, confidence, independence, and opportunities for lifelong success.

Program Philosophy

At Inclusion Clare, we believe every person has the right to:

- Learn and grow throughout their life
- Make choices about their own lives
- Take reasonable risks
- Develop new skills
- Participate fully in their community
- Be recognized as valued and contributing members of their communities
- Pursue personal goals and dreams
- Be treated with dignity and respect

The purpose of Independent Living Supports is not to complete tasks for participants.

The purpose of ILS is to support people in developing the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to live as independently as they choose and are able, while maintaining meaningful connections and supports.

ILS staff serve as teachers, coaches, mentors, and supporters. Through individualized supports, practical skill development, community participation, and positive relationships, participants are encouraged to build independence while maintaining dignity, choice, and self-determination.

Success is not measured by how much support a person receives.

Success is measured by how much confidence, independence, skill development, and personal growth they achieve.

Vision

Communities are inclusive, people with disabilities are thriving.

Mission

Supporting adults with disabilities to achieve their full potential.

Values

Trust

Equity and respect

Community support

Culture

Innovations and growth

Our ILS Commitment

To provide person-centered supports that build practical life skills, confidence, independence, community connections, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Our ILS Goal

To empower people with different abilities to live meaningful, self-directed lives as active members of their communities.

The Inclusion Clare ILS Promise

We promise to:

- Teach rather than do
- Encourage rather than control
- Support rather than direct
- Build confidence rather than dependence
- Focus on abilities rather than limitations
- Respect choices while promoting safety
- Celebrate progress, no matter how small

The Inclusion Clare Independence Model

Learn

Participants gain knowledge and develop new skills.

Practice

Participants apply skills in real-life situations.

Build Confidence

Participants experience success and develop self-esteem.

Gain Independence

Participants require less support and complete more tasks independently.

Participate

Participants become more active in their homes, workplaces, and communities.

Thrive

Participants achieve personal goals and experience improved quality of life.

Program Motto

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

This statement reflects the purpose of the Inclusion Clare Independent Living Supports Program and serves as a reminder that participants are at the center of everything we do.

Staff Commitment

As an ILS staff member, I understand that my role is to teach, coach, encourage, and empower participants.

I will promote independence, respect participant choice, maintain professional boundaries, protect confidentiality, and support participants in achieving their personal goals.

I will focus on building confidence, skills, and community connections while treating every participant with dignity and respect.

Together, we are empowering people to live the life they choose.

What is Independent Living Support?

Independent Living Supports (ILS) is a person-centered service designed to help adults with disabilities develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to live as independently as they choose and are able, within their homes and communities.

SECTION 2

UNDERSTANDING INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORTS (ILS)

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

ILS recognizes that every person has unique strengths, abilities, interests, and goals. Supports are individualized and focus on skill development rather than task completion. The purpose of ILS is not to do things for people.

The purpose of ILS is to teach, coach, encourage, and support people in developing the skills they need to manage their daily lives, make informed choices, participate in their communities, and achieve their personal goals.

ILS supports may include assistance with:

- Budgeting and money management
- Grocery shopping
- Meal planning and meal preparation
- Household management
- Laundry and cleaning
- Personal organization
- Appointment management
- Community participation
- Transportation skills
- Internet and online safety
- Communication skills
- Healthy relationships
- Personal wellness and self-care

The ultimate goal of ILS is to increase independence and reduce reliance on supports whenever possible.

What ILS Is

ILS is:

- ✓ Teaching
- ✓ Coaching
- ✓ Mentoring
- ✓ Encouraging
- ✓ Supporting
- ✓ Skill development
- ✓ Goal-focused
- ✓ Person-centered
- ✓ Community-based
- ✓ Strength-based

ILS focuses on helping participants learn how to complete tasks and make decisions for themselves.

What ILS Is Not

ILS is not:

- ✗ Housekeeping services
- ✗ Personal assistant services
- ✗ Babysitting
- ✗ Primarily social or recreational services without a skill-development, participation, or goal-related purpose
- ✗ Therapy
- ✗ Financial management

- ✗ Case management
- ✗ Making decisions for participants
- ✗ Completing tasks participants can reasonably learn to do themselves

While staff may occasionally provide direct assistance when necessary, the primary focus should always remain on teaching and skill development.

The Role of ILS Staff

ILS staff are teachers, coaches, mentors, and supporters.

The role of staff is to help participants build the skills necessary to achieve greater independence.

ILS staff are expected to:

- Promote independence
- Support participant choice
- Encourage problem-solving
- Teach practical life skills
- Assist participants in setting and achieving goals
- Foster confidence and self-esteem
- Promote community inclusion
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Document progress and supports provided
- Advocate for participant rights

Staff should continuously ask:

"How can I help this participant learn to do this independently?"

The Role of the Participant

Participants play an active role in their own learning and development.

Participants are encouraged to:

- Identify personal goals
- Participate in planning
- Practice new skills
- Make choices

- Ask questions
- Provide feedback
- Take responsibility for their own growth

Participants are not expected to be perfect.

Learning occurs through practice, mistakes, successes, and experience.

Person-Centered Supports

Person-centered supports place the participant at the center of all decisions.

This means:

- Listening to the participant
- Respecting choices
- Focusing on strengths
- Supporting personal goals
- Recognizing individual preferences
- Respecting culture, language, beliefs, and identity
- Promoting self-determination

Staff should never assume they know what is best for a participant.

Instead, staff should work alongside participants to identify goals and support informed decision-making.

Participant Rights

All participants have the right to:

Dignity

To be treated with respect and valued as individuals.

Choice

To make decisions about their lives and supports.

Privacy

To have personal information protected.

Confidentiality

To have information shared only with authorized individuals.

Independence

To develop skills and make decisions for themselves.

Participation

To be included in community life.

Safety

To receive supports in a safe environment.

Self-Determination

To direct their own lives and pursue their own goals.

Participant Feedback and Complaints

Participants have the right to:

- Express concerns
- Make complaints without fear of retaliation
- Request changes to supports
- Participate in decisions that affect their lives
- Be heard and respected
- Provide feedback about services
- Speak directly with supervisors or management

Participants will not be penalized, treated differently, or experience a reduction in services for raising concerns or making complaints in good faith.

Inclusion Clare values participant feedback and views concerns and complaints as opportunities to improve services and strengthen supports.

Supporting Choice

Choice is a fundamental principle of ILS.

Participants have the right to:

- Choose their goals
- Choose activities
- Choose how they spend their time
- Make decisions regarding their lives

Staff may provide information, education, and guidance but should not make decisions on behalf of participants.

Even when staff disagree with a participant's choice, participants retain the right to make decisions unless immediate safety concerns exist.

The Right to Take Reasonable Risks

All people take risks.

Learning, growth, and independence often involve risk.

Participants have the right to take reasonable risks that are consistent with their abilities and personal goals.

Examples may include:

- Trying a new activity
- Learning to cook
- Managing a budget
- Taking public transportation
- Making purchasing decisions

The role of staff is not to eliminate all risk.

The role of staff is to help participants understand risks, make informed choices, and develop skills to manage risks safely.

Dignity of Risk

All people learn through experience, including mistakes and setbacks.

Participants have the right to make choices, take reasonable risks, and learn from the outcomes of those decisions.

The role of staff is not to eliminate all risk or prevent all mistakes.

The role of staff is to help participants understand potential consequences, make informed decisions, and develop strategies to remain as safe as possible while pursuing their goals.

Supporting dignity of risk means balancing safety with personal choice, growth, and self-determination.

Teaching vs Doing

One of the most important concepts in ILS is the difference between teaching and doing.

Doing

Staff completes a task for the participant.

Example:

A staff member cleans the participant's apartment while the participant watches television.

Result:

The apartment gets cleaned, but the participant learns nothing.

Teaching

Staff supports the participant in learning how to complete the task.

Example:

A staff member teaches the participant how to create a cleaning schedule and complete one room at a time.

Result:

The participant gains skills and confidence.

The ILS Question

Before providing support, ask yourself:

"Am I helping this person learn, or am I simply doing it for them?"

Whenever possible, staff should focus on teaching rather than doing.

Building Independence

Independence does not mean doing everything alone.

Independence means having the skills, confidence, and supports necessary to make choices and participate in daily life.

Staff can promote independence by:

- Encouraging problem-solving
- Providing opportunities to practice
- Offering choices
- Using the least amount of support necessary
- Celebrating successes
- Gradually reducing prompts and assistance

Even small increases in independence should be recognized and celebrated.

Belonging and Community Connections

Independence does not mean being alone.

Participants have the right to meaningful relationships, friendships, family connections, community involvement, and natural supports.

A meaningful life includes more than learning skills. It also includes belonging, participation, connection, and having valued roles within the community.

Staff should support participants in:

- Building and maintaining friendships
- Strengthening family relationships when appropriate
- Participating in community activities
- Developing natural supports
- Exploring volunteer, recreational, educational, and social opportunities

- Becoming active members of their communities

Natural supports may include:

- Family members
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Coworkers
- Community groups
- Faith communities
- Clubs and organizations

Whenever possible, staff should help participants strengthen these connections rather than creating unnecessary dependence on paid supports.

Success is measured not only by skills learned, but also by increased belonging, participation, meaningful relationships, and overall quality of life.



Natural Supports

Natural supports are the relationships and connections that occur naturally in a person's life and community.

Examples of natural supports may include:

- Family members
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Coworkers
- Roommates
- Community members
- Faith communities
- Clubs and organizations
- Volunteer groups
- Recreational groups

Natural supports often provide friendship, encouragement, guidance, companionship, and a sense of belonging.

The goal of Independent Living Supports is not to replace natural supports, but to help participants strengthen and expand the relationships that are important to them.

Whenever possible, staff should support participants in:

- Building new relationships
- Maintaining existing relationships
- Participating in community groups
- Developing meaningful social connections
- Increasing community involvement

Strong natural supports can contribute to greater independence, increased confidence, improved quality of life, and reduced reliance on paid supports.

Success in ILS

Success looks different for every participant.

Examples of success may include:

- Preparing a meal independently
- Using a calendar consistently
- Managing personal spending
- Attending appointments independently
- Participating in community activities
- Making new social connections
- Learning to advocate for personal needs

Success is measured by progress, not perfection.

Every step toward greater independence is meaningful.

Key Takeaways

As an ILS staff member:

- ✓ Focus on abilities, not limitations.
 - ✓ Teach rather than do.
 - ✓ Respect participant choice.
 - ✓ Support informed decision-making.
 - ✓ Promote independence.
 - ✓ Encourage growth.
 - ✓ Celebrate progress.
 - ✓ Empower people to live the life they choose.
-

SECTION 3

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

Purpose

Professionalism is essential to providing high-quality Independent Living Supports.

Participants, families, community partners, and coworkers rely on ILS staff to provide supports that are respectful, ethical, reliable, and focused on participant outcomes.

As representatives of Inclusion Clare, ILS staff are expected to maintain professional standards at all times.

This section outlines the expectations for professional conduct, communication, confidentiality, boundaries, ethics, and accountability.

Professional Conduct

ILS staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on Inclusion Clare and promotes trust and confidence in the services provided.

Staff are expected to:

- Arrive on time and prepared for work
- Dress appropriately for the activities being completed
- Maintain a professional appearance
- Treat participants with dignity and respect
- Communicate respectfully with participants, families, coworkers, and community members
- Follow organizational policies and procedures
- Complete documentation accurately and on time

- Demonstrate honesty and integrity
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Seek guidance when unsure

Staff represent Inclusion Clare both within the workplace and throughout the community.

Respectful Communication

Communication should always be respectful, professional, and person-centered.

Staff are expected to:

- Use respectful language
- Listen actively
- Be patient and supportive
- Encourage participant input
- Speak directly to participants whenever possible
- Maintain a positive and supportive tone
- Use language that promotes dignity and inclusion

Staff should avoid:

- Gossip
 - Criticism
 - Sarcasm
 - Dismissive comments
 - Arguments
 - Negative discussions about participants
-

Person-First and Respectful Language

Language matters.

Staff should focus on the individual rather than a diagnosis or disability.

Examples:

Preferred:

- Person with a disability
- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Participant receiving supports

Avoid:

- Handicapped person
- Wheelchair-bound
- Labels that define a person solely by a diagnosis

When in doubt, follow the individual's preferred language.

Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries help create healthy, safe relationships between staff and participants.

Boundaries protect:

- Participants
- Staff
- Families
- Inclusion Clare

ILS staff are caring and supportive, but they are not friends, family members, therapists, or personal assistants.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

Staff shall not:

- Lend money to participants
- Borrow money from participants
- Accept loans from participants
- Give personal gifts of significant value
- Accept gifts of significant value
- Enter into business arrangements with participants
- Provide services outside approved work duties
- Share personal financial information
- Share personal relationship problems
- Develop romantic relationships with participants
- Engage in any activity that could create a conflict of interest

If uncertain about a boundary issue, consult a supervisor immediately.

Dual Relationships

A dual relationship occurs when a staff member has more than one type of relationship with a participant.

Examples include:

- Friend and support worker
- Family member and support worker
- Employer and support worker
- Business partner and support worker

Dual relationships can create confusion, favoritism, conflicts of interest, and professional concerns.

Staff should avoid situations that may compromise professional objectivity.

Social Media

ILS staff must maintain professional boundaries online.

Staff shall not:

- Add participants as friends on personal social media accounts
- Follow participants on personal accounts
- Share participant information online
- Post participant photographs without authorization
- Discuss workplace matters on social media
- Post confidential information

Staff are reminded that social media activity can affect professional reputation and public trust.

Confidentiality

Participants have the right to privacy and confidentiality.

All participant information is confidential and must be protected.

Confidential information includes:

- Personal information
- Medical information
- Support plans
- Behaviour support plans

- Financial information
- Family information
- Incident reports
- Personal goals
- Documentation and records

Confidential information may only be shared with authorized individuals who require the information to provide supports or fulfill their responsibilities.

Maintaining Confidentiality

Staff shall not:

- Discuss participants in public places
- Leave documents unattended
- Share participant information with friends or family
- Discuss participant information on social media
- Access participant information without a legitimate work-related reason

Examples of inappropriate locations for discussions include:

- Restaurants
 - Coffee shops
 - Community events
 - Elevators
 - Hallways
 - Public waiting areas
-

Duty to Report

Confidentiality does not prevent staff from reporting concerns.

Staff have a responsibility to report:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Safety concerns
- Self-harm concerns
- Concerns involving harm to others
- Criminal activity
- Significant policy violations

Staff should follow Inclusion Clare reporting procedures.

Ethical Practice

Ethical practice means doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

ILS staff are expected to:

- Act honestly
- Be fair
- Respect participant rights
- Follow policies and procedures
- Maintain confidentiality
- Promote participant well-being

- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Maintain professional integrity

When faced with difficult decisions, staff should consider:

1. Is it legal?
 2. Is it ethical?
 3. Is it respectful?
 4. Is it in the participant's best interest?
 5. Does it support participant rights?
-

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when personal interests may interfere with professional responsibilities.

Examples include:

- Hiring family members without disclosure
- Accepting money or gifts that influence decision-making
- Using organizational resources for personal benefit
- Providing preferential treatment

Staff are expected to disclose potential conflicts of interest to their supervisor.

Workplace Relationships

Positive workplace relationships contribute to quality supports.

Staff are expected to:

- Treat coworkers respectfully
- Communicate professionally
- Support teamwork

- Address concerns appropriately
- Follow supervisory direction
- Contribute to a positive work environment

Disagreements should be addressed respectfully and professionally.

Reliability and Accountability

Participants depend on staff to provide consistent supports.

Staff are expected to:

- Arrive on time
- Complete assigned duties
- Follow schedules
- Communicate absences promptly
- Meet documentation expectations
- Participate in training
- Seek clarification when necessary

Accountability means taking responsibility for actions and learning from mistakes.

Continuous Learning

ILS staff are encouraged to continue developing their knowledge and skills.

Opportunities may include:

- Internal training
- Professional development
- Independence Academy training

- Workshops and conferences
- Online learning
- Mentorship opportunities

Learning supports better outcomes for participants and strengthens the quality of the program.

Professional Decision-Making Framework

When unsure about a situation, ask yourself:

Is it safe?

Is it respectful?

Is it ethical?

Does it promote independence?

Does it support participant goals?

Is it within my role?

Would I be comfortable explaining this decision to my supervisor?

If the answer to any of these questions is no or uncertain, seek guidance before proceeding.

Key Takeaways

As an ILS staff member:

- ✓ Maintain professional boundaries.
- ✓ Protect confidentiality.
- ✓ Communicate respectfully.
- ✓ Act ethically.

- ✓ Avoid conflicts of interest.
- ✓ Follow organizational policies.
- ✓ Be accountable for your actions.
- ✓ Represent Inclusion Clare professionally.

Professionalism builds trust, protects participants, and helps create positive outcomes for everyone involved.

SECTION 4

SUPPORTING PARTICIPANTS

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

Purpose

The purpose of Independent Living Supports is to help participants develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to achieve greater independence and participate fully in community life.

Every interaction with a participant should support learning, growth, self-determination, and skill development.

This section outlines the principles and strategies staff should use when providing supports.

Person-Centered Support

Person-centered support means placing the participant at the center of all planning, decision-making, and service delivery.

Participants are experts in their own lives.

Staff should:

- Listen to participants
- Respect individual choices
- Focus on strengths and abilities
- Support personal goals
- Encourage independence
- Respect cultural, linguistic, and personal preferences
- Promote self-determination

Person-centered support is based on the question:

"What matters to this person?"

rather than

"What is the matter with this person?"

Goal-Based Supports

Every participant receiving ILS services should have clearly identified goals.

All support activities should connect to one or more participant goals.

Before providing support, staff should ask:

What goal are we working toward?

What skill are we developing?

How does this activity support independence?

Examples:

Goal:

Learn meal preparation.

Support Activity:

Planning, preparing, and cleaning up after a meal.

Goal:

Improve money management.

Support Activity:

Creating a weekly budget and comparing grocery prices.

Goal:

Increase community participation.

Support Activity:

Attending a recreation program independently.

Building Independence

The purpose of ILS is to build independence, not dependence.

Staff should continuously look for opportunities to increase participant involvement and reduce unnecessary support.

Ask yourself:

"What can the participant do for themselves?"

Focus on abilities rather than limitations.

Even small increases in independence are meaningful achievements.

The Independence Ladder

Whenever possible, staff should support participants through the following progression:

I Do

Staff completes the task.

We Do

Staff and participant complete the task together.

You Do

Participant completes the task with support available if needed.

You Do Independently

Participant completes the task independently.

The goal is always to move toward greater independence.

Teaching vs Doing

One of the most important responsibilities of ILS staff is teaching rather than doing.

Example:

Laundry

Doing:

Staff washes and folds clothing.

Teaching:

Staff teaches the participant how to sort clothing, operate the washer, and fold clothes independently.

The goal is skill development rather than task completion.

The Prompting Hierarchy

Prompts are used to support learning.

Staff should always use the least intrusive prompt necessary.

Level 1 – Independent

Participant completes the task independently.

Level 2 – Visual Prompt

Pictures, schedules, checklists, labels, or written instructions.

Level 3 – Verbal Prompt

Simple spoken reminders or instructions.

Level 4 – Gesture Prompt

Pointing, nodding, or indicating an item or action.

Level 5 – Demonstration

Showing how to complete a task.

Level 6 – Physical Assistance

Hand-over-hand or direct physical support when necessary.

Whenever possible, staff should reduce prompts over time to encourage independence.

Encouraging Decision-Making

Participants have the right to make choices about their lives.

Staff should:

- Offer choices
- Explain options
- Discuss possible outcomes
- Support informed decision-making
- Respect participant decisions

Staff should not:

- Make decisions for participants
- Pressure participants
- Control participant choices

The goal is to help participants become confident decision-makers.

Supporting Reasonable Risk

Learning and independence involve risk.

Participants have the right to take reasonable risks.

Examples:

- Trying a new recipe

- Learning to use public transportation
- Joining a community group
- Managing a budget

Staff should help participants:

- Understand risks
- Develop safety strategies
- Make informed decisions

The goal is not to eliminate risk.

The goal is to support safe learning and growth.

Community Inclusion

Community inclusion is an important part of independent living.

Staff should encourage participation in:

- Recreation programs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Employment opportunities
- Community events
- Educational activities
- Social groups
- Cultural activities
- Faith communities if desired

Participants should be supported to build meaningful connections and relationships within their communities.

Staff should support participants not only to access community activities, but also to develop meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging within their communities.

Staff should actively look for opportunities to help participants develop natural supports within their communities. This may include connecting participants with clubs, volunteer opportunities, recreational groups, faith communities, educational programs, neighbours, coworkers, and other community connections that may continue beyond paid support hours.

Teaching Life Skills

Life skills may include:

Home Management

- Cleaning
- Laundry
- Organizing
- Home safety

Food Skills

- Grocery shopping
- Meal planning
- Meal preparation
- Food safety

Financial Skills

- Budgeting
- Saving
- Banking

- Comparing prices

Time Management

- Calendars
- Scheduling
- Appointment management

Community Skills

- Transportation
- Social interaction
- Community navigation

Personal Wellness

- Hygiene
 - Exercise
 - Healthy routines
 - Self-care
-

Positive Reinforcement

People are more likely to repeat behaviours that are acknowledged and encouraged.

Staff should recognize:

- Effort
- Progress
- Participation
- New skills
- Problem-solving

Examples:

- "You did a great job making that shopping list."
- "I noticed you remembered your appointment without a reminder."
- "You worked really hard on that."

Recognition helps build confidence and motivation.

Supporting Motivation

Sometimes participants may not be interested in learning a new skill.

Staff should:

- Explore participant interests
- Connect activities to personal goals
- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Celebrate small successes
- Be patient

Motivation often increases when participants experience success.

Supporting Different Learning Styles

People learn in different ways.

Some participants learn best through:

Visual Learning

Pictures, charts, schedules, and demonstrations.

Auditory Learning

Discussion, verbal instructions, and repetition.

Hands-On Learning

Practice and real-life experiences.

Written Learning

Checklists, notes, and written instructions.

Staff should adapt teaching methods to meet individual learning needs.

Supporting Participants During Challenges

Participants may experience:

- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Low confidence
- Refusals
- Setbacks

Staff should:

- Remain calm
- Offer encouragement
- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Focus on strengths
- Adjust expectations when needed
- Celebrate effort

Learning often occurs gradually.

Respecting Participant Choice

Participants may choose not to participate in an activity.

When this occurs:

- Remain respectful
- Explore reasons
- Offer alternatives
- Document refusals
- Notify supervisors if concerns become ongoing

Participants have the right to make choices, even when staff would choose differently.

Measuring Progress

Progress looks different for every participant.

Examples of progress may include:

- Fewer prompts required
- Increased confidence
- Improved decision-making
- New skills learned
- Greater participation in community activities
- Improved organization
- Increased independence

Progress should be documented and celebrated.

The Role of Encouragement

Encouragement helps participants build confidence and self-belief.

Staff should:

- Focus on strengths
- Celebrate successes
- Encourage effort
- Promote self-confidence
- Create opportunities for success

People are more likely to learn when they feel supported and capable.

Key Takeaways

As an ILS staff member:

- ✓ Focus on participant goals.
- ✓ Teach rather than do.
- ✓ Promote independence.
- ✓ Respect participant choice.
- ✓ Use the least intrusive support necessary.
- ✓ Encourage decision-making.
- ✓ Build confidence.
- ✓ Support community inclusion.
- ✓ Celebrate progress.

Every interaction is an opportunity to help someone learn, grow, and move closer to achieving their goals.

SECTION 5

DAILY OPERATIONS

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

Purpose

This section outlines the day-to-day operational expectations for Independent Living Supports (ILS) staff.

Consistency in service delivery helps ensure participants receive high-quality supports while maintaining safety, professionalism, accountability, and effective use of available resources.

All staff are expected to follow Inclusion Clare policies, procedures, participant support plans, and supervisory direction while carrying out their duties.

Scheduling

ILS supports are provided according to approved schedules developed in collaboration with participants, the ILS Manager, and funding authorities when applicable.

Schedules are developed based on:

- Participant goals
- Approved support hours
- Participant availability
- Staff availability
- Community opportunities
- Safety considerations

Staff are expected to:

- Arrive on time

- Follow approved schedules
- Notify supervisors of delays
- Communicate scheduling concerns promptly
- Remain flexible when appropriate

Participants depend on staff being reliable and consistent.

Support Sessions

Each support session should have a purpose.

Before beginning a session, staff should know:

- Which participant they are supporting
- What goals are being addressed
- What activities are planned
- Any safety considerations
- Any updates from previous visits

Staff should review participant information regularly to ensure supports remain goal-focused.

Preparing for a Visit

Before arriving for a scheduled support session, staff should:

- ✓ Review participant goals
- ✓ Review previous support notes
- ✓ Review any recent updates
- ✓ Ensure required materials are available
- ✓ Confirm planned activities

- ✓ Be prepared to adapt if needed

Preparation helps ensure supports are meaningful and productive.

Home Visits

When providing supports in a participant's home, staff should remember:

It is the participant's home.

Staff are guests in the participant's living space.

Staff should:

- Respect privacy
- Respect personal belongings
- Knock before entering private spaces
- Ask permission before moving items
- Maintain professionalism
- Support participants in maintaining their home

Staff should never take control of a participant's living space unless immediate safety concerns exist.

Entering and Leaving a Home

When Arriving

- Announce yourself
- Follow participant preferences when possible
- Observe for immediate safety concerns

When Leaving

- Confirm the participant is safe
 - Review any follow-up plans
 - Ensure documentation requirements are completed
 - Lock doors if directed by participant procedures
-

Community Supports

Community-based supports provide valuable opportunities for skill development and inclusion.

Examples include:

- Grocery shopping
- Banking
- Recreation activities
- Volunteer opportunities
- Community events
- Library visits
- Educational opportunities
- Social activities

When supporting participants in the community, staff should focus on:

- Skill development
- Community participation
- Building confidence
- Promoting independence

The goal is active participation, not passive attendance.

Transportation

Transportation is often an important component of Independent Living Supports and can provide valuable opportunities for skill development, community participation, and increased independence.

Transportation should always support participant goals and approved activities.

Staff must follow Inclusion Clare transportation policies and procedures at all times.

The purpose of transportation within ILS is not simply to drive participants from place to place. Transportation should be used as an opportunity to teach planning, decision-making, budgeting, community navigation, and independence skills.

Transportation Responsibilities

Before transporting participants, staff should:

- Ensure transportation is connected to approved supports and participant goals
- Confirm that all required authorizations are in place
- Ensure vehicle safety requirements are met
- Ensure all passengers wear seatbelts
- Follow all traffic laws
- Drive safely and responsibly
- Avoid distractions while driving
- Ensure emergency contact information is available

Safety is always the priority.

Personal Vehicles

Staff may only use personal vehicles if authorized by Inclusion Clare policy and supervisory direction.

If personal vehicle use is approved, staff must ensure:

- Appropriate insurance coverage is maintained
- Required documentation has been submitted
- Vehicle registration is current
- Mileage reporting requirements are followed

Staff shall not transport participants without appropriate authorization.

Community Safety During Transportation

When transporting participants, staff should:

- Ensure passengers enter and exit vehicles safely
- Assist participants only as required
- Follow participant-specific support plans
- Be aware of weather and road conditions
- Carry a charged cell phone for emergencies
- Know emergency contact procedures

If a safety concern arises during transportation, staff should pull over safely and follow emergency procedures as necessary.

Transportation, Mileage, and Responsible Use of Supports

Transportation funding is intended to help participants access activities and opportunities that support their goals, independence, and community participation.

Each participant has a limited transportation and mileage budget available through Independent Living Supports.

At Inclusion Clare, participants generally have a maximum transportation and mileage budget of **\$150 per month**.

Because transportation funding is limited, staff are expected to help participants use these funds responsibly and efficiently.

Transportation decisions should support both participant goals and long-term sustainability of supports.

Teaching Responsible Planning

One of the goals of ILS is helping participants develop the skills needed to plan ahead and make informed decisions.

Staff should support participants in learning how to:

- Plan errands in advance
- Combine activities into a single outing
- Create shopping lists
- Plan meals in advance
- Consider transportation costs when making decisions
- Balance wants, needs, and available resources

Learning to manage transportation and community access is an important independent living skill.

Grocery Shopping Expectations

Grocery shopping is an important life skill and should be approached as a learning opportunity.

Staff should encourage participants to:

- Review available food before shopping

- Plan meals in advance
- Create shopping lists
- Write down ingredients needed for recipes
- Purchase enough food to meet their needs until the next planned shopping trip
- Compare prices and make informed purchasing decisions

In most cases, grocery shopping should occur no more than once or twice per week.

Frequent grocery trips can:

- Increase transportation costs
- Reduce available mileage funding
- Limit opportunities for other community activities
- Encourage impulsive spending

The goal is to teach planning, organization, budgeting, and responsible decision-making.

Coffee Shops, Restaurants, and Treat Outings

Coffee shops, restaurants, fast-food establishments, and similar outings can provide valuable opportunities for:

- Community participation
- Social interaction
- Communication skills
- Budgeting practice
- Decision-making

Community outings such as coffee shops, restaurants, and social activities can also provide meaningful opportunities for relationship building, community participation, communication, and belonging. Staff should balance these benefits with transportation budgets, participant financial goals, and the responsible use of available support resources.

However, these outings should generally be viewed as occasional treats rather than routine activities.

Staff should consider:

- Transportation costs
- Participant budgets
- Participant goals
- Available monthly mileage funding
- The educational value of the outing

Frequent visits to coffee shops or restaurants may significantly impact both transportation funding and personal spending money.

When appropriate, staff should use these outings as opportunities to teach:

- Budgeting
- Cost comparison
- Financial planning
- Responsible spending

Maximizing Community Outings

Whenever possible, staff should encourage participants to combine multiple errands and activities into a single outing.

For example, rather than making separate trips for:

- Grocery shopping
- Banking
- Prescription pickup
- Community participation

Staff should help participants plan one organized outing that addresses multiple needs.

This approach helps participants develop:

- Planning skills
- Organizational skills
- Time management skills
- Budgeting skills
- Problem-solving skills

It also helps maximize available transportation funding.

Supporting Participant Choice

Participants have the right to make choices regarding how they use their available supports and transportation funding.

The role of staff is not to make decisions for participants.

The role of staff is to:

- Provide information
- Teach planning skills
- Encourage thoughtful decision-making
- Explain potential consequences
- Support informed choices

Staff should help participants understand that transportation funding is limited and that choices made today may affect opportunities later in the month.

Questions to Consider Before Planning an Outing

Before scheduling a community outing, staff should ask:

Does this activity support a participant goal?

Is transportation funding being used responsibly?

Can multiple errands be combined?

Is there a more efficient option?

Does the participant understand the financial impact of this choice?

Does this activity promote independence and skill development?

If the answer to these questions is yes, the activity is likely an appropriate use of transportation supports.

Communication

Effective communication supports quality service delivery.

Staff are expected to communicate professionally with:

- Participants
- Families when authorized
- Supervisors
- Coworkers
- Community partners

Communication should be:

- Respectful
- Professional

- Timely
 - Accurate
 - Confidential
-

Communication During Scheduled Support Hours

During scheduled support hours, the assigned ILS staff member is responsible for communicating with supervisors, managers, and other Inclusion Clare personnel regarding questions, concerns, scheduling issues, transportation matters, participant supports, and requests for guidance.

Staff should be the primary point of contact during support sessions to ensure accurate communication, effective problem-solving, and appropriate use of support hours.

Whenever possible, staff should encourage participants to discuss concerns with them first so they can work together to find solutions.

If management or supervisory support is required, the staff member should make the contact on behalf of the support session.

This helps ensure:

- Clear communication
 - Accurate information sharing
 - Consistent support
 - Appropriate use of scheduled support time
 - Opportunities for participants to develop problem-solving skills
-

Participant Rights

Participants always retain the right to contact management directly if they:

- Wish to make a complaint
- Have concerns about services

- Wish to provide feedback
- Request a private conversation
- Feel uncomfortable discussing a matter with staff

Staff should never discourage participants from exercising these rights.

Participants will not experience negative consequences, reduced services, or retaliation for expressing concerns, providing feedback, or making complaints.

Communication with Families

Family involvement varies depending on participant preferences, consent, and support plans.

Staff should:

- Respect participant confidentiality
- Follow communication agreements
- Refer concerns to supervisors when appropriate

Staff should not share confidential information without authorization.

Documentation

Documentation is an important part of service delivery.

Documentation helps:

- Track progress
- Monitor goals
- Support communication
- Demonstrate accountability
- Meet organizational requirements

- Support quality assurance

If it is not documented, it may be difficult to demonstrate that support occurred.

Documentation Standards

Documentation should be:

Accurate

Record facts.

Objective

Avoid personal opinions.

Respectful

Use professional language.

Timely

Complete documentation as soon as possible.

Relevant

Focus on participant goals, supports provided, and significant observations.

Progress Notes

Support notes should generally include:

- Date
- Time
- Activity completed
- Goals addressed
- Supports provided

- Participant response
 - Progress observed
 - Significant concerns
 - Staff name
-

Incident Reporting

An incident report should be completed according to Inclusion Clare policies when required.

Examples may include:

- Injuries
- Medical concerns
- Behavioural incidents
- Property damage
- Missing participant situations
- Safety concerns
- Vehicle incidents

Completing an incident report does not replace routine documentation.

Both may be required.

Reporting Concerns

Staff must report concerns involving:

- Participant safety
- Abuse
- Neglect

- Exploitation
- Significant health concerns
- Self-harm concerns
- Threats to others
- Environmental safety concerns

If unsure whether something should be reported, consult a supervisor.

Cancellations

Participant cancellations should be documented according to program procedures.

When a participant cancels:

- Record the cancellation
- Notify appropriate staff
- Follow scheduling procedures
- Discuss rescheduling when appropriate

Patterns of cancellations should be reported to the ILS Manager.

Staff Absences

Staff who are unable to attend scheduled supports must:

- Notify the appropriate supervisor as soon as possible
- Follow attendance procedures
- Provide necessary information for coverage

Timely communication helps minimize disruptions to participants.

Time Sheets and Payroll

Staff are responsible for:

- Recording hours accurately
- Following payroll procedures
- Submitting required forms on time
- Reporting discrepancies promptly

Submitting inaccurate information may result in payroll delays.

Professional Appearance

Staff should dress appropriately for planned activities.

Clothing should:

- Be clean
- Be safe
- Be practical
- Reflect professionalism

Different activities may require different attire, but staff should always present themselves professionally.

Use of Technology

Technology should support service delivery.

Staff should:

- Protect confidential information

- Follow organizational technology policies
- Use organizational systems appropriately
- Avoid personal use during support sessions except when necessary

Participant information should never be stored on unauthorized devices.

End of Shift Responsibilities

Before ending a shift, staff should:

- ✓ Ensure participant safety
- ✓ Complete required documentation
- ✓ Communicate important updates
- ✓ Report concerns
- ✓ Confirm follow-up actions
- ✓ Submit required information

A well-documented and organized shift supports continuity of service.

Key Takeaways

As an ILS staff member:

- ✓ Be prepared.
- ✓ Be reliable.
- ✓ Be professional.
- ✓ Focus on participant goals.
- ✓ Use transportation funding responsibly.
- ✓ Encourage planning and budgeting.

- ✓ Document accurately.
- ✓ Communicate effectively.
- ✓ Follow procedures.
- ✓ Prioritize safety.

Daily consistency helps create positive outcomes for participants and supports the overall success of the Inclusion Clare Independent Living Supports Program.

SECTION 6

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

Purpose

The safety and well-being of participants and staff is a priority of the Inclusion Clare Independent Living Supports Program.

While ILS focuses on skill development, independence, and community participation, staff must be prepared to respond appropriately to emergencies, safety concerns, and unexpected situations.

This section provides general guidance for responding to emergencies and safety-related incidents.

In all situations, staff should follow Inclusion Clare policies, participant support plans, supervisory direction, and emergency procedures.

General Emergency Response Principles

In any emergency situation:

1. Stay Calm

Participants often look to staff for reassurance and direction.

Remaining calm helps reduce panic and supports effective decision-making.

2. Ensure Immediate Safety

Protect yourself, the participant, and others from immediate harm.

3. Call for Help

Contact emergency services when necessary.

4. Notify Appropriate Personnel

Contact your supervisor, manager, or on-call staff according to organizational procedures.

5. Document the Incident

Complete required documentation as soon as possible.

Emergency Contact Information

Staff should always have access to:

- Emergency Services (911)
- On-Call Staff
- ILS Manager
- Participant Emergency Contacts
- Relevant Health Information
- Participant Support Plans

Emergency contact information should be readily available during all support sessions.

Medical Emergencies

A medical emergency is any situation that may pose an immediate threat to life or health.

Examples include:

- Unconsciousness
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Severe allergic reactions

- Serious injury
 - Severe bleeding
 - Seizures outside normal patterns
 - Stroke symptoms
 - Significant head injuries
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Any life-threatening situation
-

Responding to a Medical Emergency

Step 1

Assess the situation.

Step 2

Call 911 immediately if required.

Step 3

Follow first aid procedures within the scope of your training.

Step 4

Remain with the participant whenever possible.

Step 5

Contact the supervisor or on-call support.

Step 6

Complete required documentation.

Never delay contacting emergency services when immediate medical attention may be required.

Participant Illness

Participants may occasionally become ill during support sessions.

Examples:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Flu-like symptoms
- Sudden weakness

Staff should:

- Monitor symptoms
- Follow support plans
- Seek medical advice when necessary
- Contact supervisors when concerns arise

If symptoms appear serious, seek emergency medical assistance.

Mental Health Concerns

Staff may support participants who experience mental health challenges.

Examples may include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Emotional distress
- Panic attacks
- Mood instability

- Trauma-related concerns

Staff are not therapists.

The role of staff is to provide support, maintain safety, and follow support plans.

Responding to Emotional Distress

When a participant is upset:

Remain Calm

Listen Respectfully

Avoid Judgment

Offer Support

Follow Support Plans

Report Significant Concerns

Supportive listening can often help participants feel heard and understood.

Suicidal Statements or Self-Harm Concerns

All statements involving self-harm or suicide must be taken seriously.

Examples:

- "I wish I were dead."
 - "I don't want to live anymore."
 - "Everyone would be better off without me."
 - Statements about self-harm.
-

Staff Response

Stay Calm

Do not panic.

Take the Statement Seriously

Do not dismiss or minimize concerns.

Stay with the Participant

If immediate risk is suspected.

Notify Appropriate Personnel Immediately

Follow organizational procedures.

Contact Emergency Services if Required

If immediate safety concerns exist.

Complete Documentation

Document factual observations and statements.

Staff should never promise to keep self-harm or suicide-related information secret.

Participant safety always comes first.

Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

All participants have the right to be safe and free from abuse.

Examples include:

Physical Abuse

Hitting, pushing, inappropriate physical force.

Emotional Abuse

Threats, intimidation, humiliation.

Financial Exploitation

Misuse of money or property.

Neglect

Failure to provide necessary care.

Sexual Abuse

Any unwanted sexual activity or exploitation.

Staff Responsibilities

If abuse, neglect, or exploitation is suspected:

Ensure Immediate Safety

Report Concerns Immediately

Follow Reporting Procedures

Document Facts

Do Not Investigate Independently

The role of staff is to report concerns, not conduct investigations.

Missing Participant Procedures

A participant may become separated from staff during a community outing or may be unexpectedly absent from an expected location.

Immediate Response

Remain Calm

Search Nearby Areas

Contact the Participant if Possible

Follow Support Plan Procedures

Notify Supervisors

Contact Emergency Services if Necessary

Participant-specific support plans may contain additional instructions.

Fire Safety

Staff should be familiar with:

- Emergency exits
 - Evacuation procedures
 - Fire safety equipment
 - Participant-specific evacuation needs
-

If a Fire Occurs

Remove People from Danger

Call 911

Evacuate Safely

Move to Designated Safe Area

Do Not Re-enter the Building

Notify Supervisors

Life safety is always the priority.

Community Emergencies

Community emergencies may include:

- Motor vehicle accidents
- Public safety incidents
- Severe weather
- Power outages
- Community evacuations

Staff should:

- Prioritize safety
 - Follow emergency instructions
 - Seek safe shelter when necessary
 - Notify supervisors
 - Follow organizational procedures
-

Severe Weather

Examples:

- Snowstorms
- Hurricanes
- Extreme heat
- Flooding
- Ice storms

Staff should:

- Monitor weather conditions
- Avoid unnecessary travel
- Follow organizational directives
- Adjust activities when necessary

Safety should guide decision-making.

Vehicle Accidents

If involved in a motor vehicle accident:

Ensure Safety

Contact Emergency Services if Required

Follow Organizational Procedures

Exchange Information as Appropriate

Notify Supervisors

Complete Required Documentation

Never leave the scene of an accident unless directed by emergency personnel.

Aggressive or Unsafe Behaviour

Participants may occasionally display behaviours that create safety concerns.

Staff should:

Remain Calm

Maintain Safe Distance

Use De-escalation Techniques

Reduce Environmental Stressors

Follow Support Plans

Request Assistance if Necessary

Staff should never place themselves in danger.

De-escalation Strategies

Examples include:

- Speaking calmly
- Reducing demands
- Offering choices
- Allowing time and space
- Moving to a quieter environment
- Using supportive communication

The goal is to reduce stress and restore safety.

Staff Safety

Staff safety is essential.

Staff should:

- Trust their instincts
- Follow safety procedures
- Maintain communication when working alone
- Report unsafe situations
- Seek assistance when necessary

No staff member is expected to remain in a situation where personal safety is at risk.

Communicable Illness

Staff should follow Inclusion Clare infection prevention practices.

Examples include:

- Hand hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Following public health guidance
- Reporting illness
- Staying home when required

Protecting participant health is a shared responsibility.

Documentation Following an Emergency

Following an emergency or significant incident:

Staff should document:

- What happened
- Who was involved
- Actions taken
- Notifications made
- Outcomes

Documentation should be factual, objective, and completed as soon as possible.

After an Incident

Following significant incidents, staff may require:

- Debriefing
- Additional support
- Follow-up training
- Review of procedures

Learning from incidents helps strengthen the quality and safety of services.

Emergency Response Checklist

In any emergency:

- ✓ Stay calm.
 - ✓ Ensure safety.
 - ✓ Call for help.
 - ✓ Follow procedures.
 - ✓ Notify supervisors.
 - ✓ Document the incident.
 - ✓ Participate in follow-up as required.
-

Key Takeaways

As an ILS staff member:

- ✓ Safety comes first.
- ✓ Take all concerns seriously.

- ✓ Follow support plans.
- ✓ Report concerns promptly.
- ✓ Protect participants and yourself.
- ✓ Document accurately.
- ✓ Seek help when needed.

No staff member is expected to handle emergencies alone. When in doubt, prioritize safety and contact a supervisor or emergency services.

SECTION 7

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

Purpose

This section provides guidance for common situations encountered by Independent Living Supports (ILS) staff.

The answers provided are intended to support good decision-making, consistency, and professional practice.

If a situation is not addressed here or if you are uncertain about how to proceed, consult the ILS Manager, supervisor, or applicable policies and procedures.

Remember:

When in doubt, ask.

Understanding Your Role

What is my role as an ILS staff?

Your role is to teach, coach, encourage, and support participants in developing the skills needed to live as independently as possible.

You are not expected to do things for participants that they can learn to do themselves.

Always ask:

"Am I teaching or am I doing?"

What is the difference between ILS and traditional support services?

Traditional support services often focus on helping people complete tasks.

ILS focuses on teaching people how to complete tasks independently.

The goal is skill development and increased independence.

What if I am not sure whether something falls within my role?

Consult the ILS Manager or supervisor.

It is always better to ask questions than make assumptions.

Supporting Participants

What if a participant asks me to do something for them?

Ask yourself:

Can the participant do this independently?

Can the participant learn this skill?

If yes, focus on teaching and supporting rather than doing the task yourself.

What if a participant says, "Just do it for me"?

Encourage participation.

Examples:

- "Let's do it together."
- "I'll help you learn."
- "Show me what you can do first."

The goal is to build skills and confidence.

What if a participant refuses to participate?

Participants have the right to refuse.

Staff should:

- Remain respectful
- Explore reasons
- Offer alternatives
- Document the refusal
- Notify the supervisor if concerns become ongoing

Do not force participation.

What if a participant refuses every visit?

Discuss concerns with the ILS Manager.

The participant's goals, interests, schedule, or support approach may need to be reviewed.

Can I make decisions for participants?

No.

Staff may provide information, education, and support.

Participants should make their own decisions whenever possible.

What if I disagree with a participant's choice?

Participants have the right to make choices, including choices staff may not personally agree with.

Staff should:

- Provide information
- Discuss possible consequences
- Support informed decision-making

Unless there is an immediate safety concern, participant choice should be respected.

Money and Finances

Can I lend money to a participant?

No.

Staff must never lend money to participants.

Can I borrow money from a participant?

No.

Borrowing money creates inappropriate boundaries and conflicts of interest.

Can I hold participant money?

Only if specifically authorized through approved organizational procedures.

Staff should not routinely hold participant funds.

What if a participant spends all of their money?

Use the situation as a teaching opportunity.

Discuss:

- Budgeting
- Saving
- Needs versus wants
- Financial planning

The goal is education, not control.

Can I go shopping for a participant without them?

Generally, ILS focuses on participant involvement and skill development.

Whenever possible, participants should actively participate in shopping activities.

Exceptions may occur based on approved plans or supervisory direction.

Community Supports

Can participants choose where they want to go?

Generally yes, provided the activity:

- Supports approved goals
 - Falls within approved services
 - Is safe and appropriate
 - Fits within scheduled support hours
-

Can I take participants out for coffee?

Coffee shop outings can also support relationship building, community inclusion, communication skills, and belonging when connected to participant goals.

Yes, if the activity supports participant goals and community participation.

The focus should remain on skill development rather than socializing alone.

Can I transport participants?

Only according to Inclusion Clare transportation policies and approved procedures.

Can I use my personal vehicle?

Only if authorized by Inclusion Clare and all required documentation has been completed.

What if a participant wants to visit a friend?

Support should be guided by participant goals, approved services, and safety considerations.

Consult the ILS Manager if unsure.

Professional Boundaries

Can I give a participant my personal phone number?

Only if approved through organizational procedures.

Personal boundaries should be maintained.

Can I add participants on Facebook or social media?

No.

Staff should not connect with participants through personal social media accounts.

Can I accept gifts?

Small tokens of appreciation may be acceptable depending on organizational policies.

Staff should not accept expensive or significant gifts.

When unsure, consult a supervisor.

Can I buy things for participants?

No.

Staff should not use personal funds to purchase items for participants.

Can I become friends with participants outside work?

No.

Professional boundaries must be maintained.

What if a participant asks me to keep a secret?

Never agree to keep secrets involving:

- Safety concerns
- Abuse
- Neglect

- Self-harm
- Harm to others

Explain that some information must be shared to ensure safety.

Documentation

Why is documentation important?

Documentation helps:

- Track progress
 - Support communication
 - Demonstrate accountability
 - Meet organizational requirements
 - Support participant outcomes
-

What should I document?

Document:

- Activities completed
 - Goals addressed
 - Supports provided
 - Participant progress
 - Significant concerns
 - Refusals
 - Incidents
-

What should I not document?

Avoid:

- Personal opinions
- Assumptions
- Judgments
- Gossip

Documentation should remain factual and objective.

What does objective documentation mean?

Objective documentation describes facts and observations.

Example:

Good:

"Participant completed laundry with one verbal prompt."

Poor:

"Participant was lazy and did not want to do laundry."

When should I complete documentation?

As soon as possible following the support session.

Timely documentation is more accurate and reliable.

Safety

What if a participant falls?

Assess the situation.

Determine if medical attention is required.

Follow emergency procedures and complete documentation.

What if a participant becomes ill?

Follow support plans and organizational procedures.

Seek medical assistance if necessary.

Notify supervisors as required.

What if I feel unsafe?

Your safety is important.

If necessary:

- Leave the area
- Contact a supervisor
- Contact emergency services if required

Staff should never remain in situations that place them at risk.

What if there is a fire?

Follow emergency procedures.

Call 911 if necessary.

Evacuate safely.

Notify supervisors.

Do not re-enter the building.

Mental Health

What if a participant appears depressed?

Listen respectfully.

Document concerns.

Notify appropriate personnel according to procedures.

What if a participant talks about self-harm or suicide?

Take all statements seriously.

Remain calm.

Follow organizational procedures immediately.

Contact appropriate personnel.

Contact emergency services if immediate risk is suspected.

Participant safety comes first.

What if a participant is crying or upset?

Remain calm.

Listen respectfully.

Offer support.

Follow support plans.

Document significant concerns when appropriate.

Confidentiality

Can I discuss participants with my family?

No.

Participant information is confidential.

Can I discuss participants in public places?

No.

Confidential information should never be discussed where it may be overheard.

Can family members ask me for information?

Only according to approved communication procedures and participant consent.

When unsure, consult a supervisor.

Scheduling

What if I am running late?

Notify the participant and supervisor as soon as possible.

What if a participant cancels?

Follow program procedures.

Document the cancellation.

Notify appropriate personnel if required.

Can I change my schedule?

Schedule changes must be approved according to program procedures.

Goals and Progress

What if a participant wants a different goal?

Goals should reflect participant interests and needs.

Discuss the request with the participant and ILS Manager.

What if I don't understand a participant's goal?

Ask for clarification.

Staff should understand the purpose of the supports they are providing.

How do I know if progress is being made?

Progress may include:

- Increased independence
- Fewer prompts required
- Improved confidence
- New skills learned
- Greater community participation

Progress looks different for every participant.

Quick Reference Guide

Question	Quick Answer
Can I lend money?	No
Can I borrow money?	No
Can I add participants on social media?	No
Can participants refuse supports?	Yes
Should refusals be documented?	Yes
Can I keep safety concerns secret?	No
Can I transport participants?	Follow policy
Can I accept expensive gifts?	No
What if I am unsure?	Ask your supervisor

The ILS Decision-Making Tool

Before making a decision, ask yourself:

Is it safe?

Is it respectful?

Does it promote independence?

Does it support participant goals?

Is it within my role?

Would I be comfortable explaining this decision to my supervisor?

If the answer to any question is no or uncertain, seek guidance before proceeding.

Key Takeaways

As an ILS staff member:

- ✓ Ask questions.
- ✓ Maintain boundaries.
- ✓ Respect participant choice.
- ✓ Focus on skill development.
- ✓ Document accurately.
- ✓ Protect confidentiality.
- ✓ Promote independence.
- ✓ Prioritize safety.

When in doubt, seek guidance and remember the purpose of ILS:

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose.

SECTION 8

REAL LIFE SCENARIOS AND HOW TO RESPOND

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose

Purpose

Independent Living Supports staff encounter a wide variety of situations while supporting participants in their homes and communities.

This section provides examples of common situations and outlines responses that are consistent with the philosophy of Inclusion Clare's ILS Program.

The goal of these examples is not to provide a script for every situation, but rather to demonstrate how ILS principles can be applied in practice.

Remember:

Teach.

Coach.

Encourage.

Support.

Not:

Do.

Fix.

Control.

Rescue.

Scenario 1

"Can you clean my apartment for me?"

Situation

A participant says:

"I don't feel like cleaning today. Can you just do it for me?"

Response

Instead of cleaning the apartment yourself, encourage participation.

Examples:

- "Let's do it together."
- "Which room would you like to start with?"
- "Let's make a plan."

Why?

The goal is skill development and independence, not task completion.

Scenario 2

Participant refuses to do laundry

Situation

The participant says:

"I hate laundry. I'm not doing it."

Response

Remain respectful.

Explore barriers:

- Is the task overwhelming?
- Is the participant unsure how?
- Is there a sensory concern?

Break the task into smaller steps.

Examples:

- Sort clothing
- Start one load
- Fold five items

Why?

Small successes build confidence.

Scenario 3

Participant spends all their money on snacks

Situation

The participant receives money and spends it all on chips, candy, and pop.

Response

Use the situation as a teaching opportunity.

Discuss:

- Budgeting
- Saving
- Needs versus wants

- Planning for future purchases

Avoid

- Taking control of finances
- Criticizing the participant

Why?

Participants learn through experience.

Scenario 4

Participant asks to borrow money

Situation

"Can I borrow \$20 until next week?"

Response

Politely decline.

Example:

"I'm sorry, but staff are not allowed to lend money."

Why?

Professional boundaries must be maintained.

Scenario 5

Participant asks staff to make decisions

Situation

"You decide what I should buy."

Response

Encourage decision-making.

Ask:

- "What are your options?"
- "What do you think would work best?"
- "What are the pros and cons of each choice?"

Why?

ILS supports informed decision-making and self-determination.

Scenario 6

Participant wants staff to do all the grocery shopping

Situation

Participant gives staff a list and wants staff to shop alone.

Response

Encourage involvement.

Examples:

- Help create a shopping list.
- Practice comparing prices.
- Locate items together.
- Use self-checkout.

Why?

Shopping is an important life skill.

Scenario 7

Participant refuses to attend an appointment

Situation

The participant says:

"I'm not going."

Response

Discuss concerns respectfully.

Ask:

- "What is making you uncomfortable?"
- "Is there anything we can do to make it easier?"

Offer support and information.

Document the refusal if the participant chooses not to attend.

Why?

Participants have the right to make choices.

Scenario 8

Participant becomes overwhelmed in a grocery store

Situation

The store is busy and noisy.

The participant becomes anxious.

Response

Reduce demands.

Move to a quieter area.

Take a break.

Offer reassurance.

Return to the activity when the participant is ready.

Why?

Supporting regulation helps support learning.

Scenario 9

Participant becomes emotional during support

Situation

The participant begins crying.

Response

Remain calm.

Listen.

Allow the participant time to express feelings.

Ask:

"How can I support you right now?"

Avoid

- Dismissing feelings
 - Rushing the participant
 - Trying to solve everything immediately
-

Scenario 10

Participant says they are lonely

Situation

The participant expresses feeling isolated.

Response

Explore opportunities for connection.

Examples:

- Recreation programs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Community groups
- Social activities

Why?

Community inclusion is an important ILS outcome.

Scenario 11

Participant wants staff to stay beyond scheduled hours

Situation

"Please stay another hour."

Response

Acknowledge the request.

Explain scheduling requirements.

Example:

"I understand you'd like me to stay, but I need to follow the approved schedule."

Why?

Boundaries and approved service hours must be respected.

Scenario 12

Participant asks staff to keep a secret

Situation

"Promise you won't tell anyone."

Response

Explain that safety concerns cannot be kept secret.

Example:

"If someone could be hurt, I may need to share information to keep people safe."

Why?

Participant safety comes first.

Scenario 13

Participant asks staff to lie

Situation

"Tell my father I cleaned my apartment."

Response

Remain honest.

Example:

"I can't tell someone something that isn't true."

Why?

Trust and integrity are essential.

Scenario 14

Participant refuses a goal repeatedly

Situation

Participant refuses to work on budgeting during every visit.

Response

Explore why.

Questions may include:

- Is the goal meaningful?
- Is it too difficult?
- Is another goal more important?

Discuss concerns with the ILS Manager.

Why?

Goals should remain person-centered.

Scenario 15

Participant asks staff to order food for them

Situation

At a restaurant, participant asks staff to order.

Response

Encourage self-advocacy.

Example:

"Would you like to tell the server what you'd like? I can help if needed."

Why?

ILS promotes confidence and independence.

Scenario 16

Participant struggles with personal hygiene

Situation

The participant has noticeable body odor and appears to be neglecting personal care.

Response

Approach respectfully and privately.

Focus on health and wellness.

Discuss routines and supports.

Avoid embarrassment or judgment.

Why?

Respect and dignity must always be maintained.

Scenario 17

Participant becomes angry

Situation

The participant begins raising their voice.

Response

Remain calm.

Reduce demands.

Offer choices.

Allow time and space if appropriate.

Follow support plans.

Why?

Calm responses help reduce escalation.

Scenario 18

Participant wants staff to attend a family disagreement

Situation

The participant asks staff to take sides in a conflict.

Response

Remain neutral.

Listen respectfully.

Avoid becoming involved in family disputes.

Refer concerns to supervisors when necessary.

Why?

ILS staff are not family mediators.

Scenario 19

Participant misses multiple appointments

Situation

The participant forgets appointments repeatedly.

Response

Work on skill development.

Examples:

- Calendars

- Phone reminders
- Appointment books
- Visual schedules

Why?

The goal is improved independence.

Scenario 20

Participant asks to connect on social media

Situation

"Can I add you on Facebook?"

Response

Politely decline.

Example:

"Staff are not allowed to connect with participants on personal social media."

Why?

Professional boundaries must be maintained.

Scenario 21

Participant asks staff to move furniture

Situation

Participant wants staff to completely rearrange the apartment.

Response

Determine whether the activity supports participant goals.

Encourage participation whenever possible.

Why?

ILS focuses on participant involvement.

Scenario 22

Participant says, "I can't do it."

Situation

Participant lacks confidence.

Response

Provide encouragement.

Break the task into smaller steps.

Focus on previous successes.

Why?

Confidence develops through success.

Scenario 23

Participant wants staff to complete paperwork for them

Situation

Participant hands paperwork to staff.

Response

Support understanding and participation.

Encourage the participant to complete portions they are able to manage.

Why?

Paperwork can be a valuable life skill.

Scenario 24

Participant refuses community activities

Situation

Participant prefers staying home.

Response

Explore interests.

Start with small activities.

Respect participant choice while encouraging participation.

Why?

Meaningful participation looks different for everyone.

Scenario 25

Participant discloses possible abuse

Situation

The participant reports being hurt or mistreated.

Response

Remain calm.

Listen.

Do not investigate.

Follow reporting procedures immediately.

Why?

Staff are responsible for reporting concerns, not investigating them.

Scenario 26

Participant wants to quit a skill they have been learning

Situation

The participant says:

"I'm done. I don't want to learn this anymore."

Response

Explore reasons.

Discuss options.

Review goals.

Involve the ILS Manager if needed.

Why?

Goals should reflect participant priorities.

Scenario 27

Participant repeatedly watches television during supports

Situation

The participant chooses TV instead of goal-related activities.

Response

Respect choice while encouraging participation.

Example:

"Would you like to watch your show first and then work on your meal planning goal?"

Why?

Supports should remain participant-centered while maintaining a focus on goals.

Scenario 28

Participant wants staff to take responsibility for their choices

Situation

"You decide for me."

Response

Support decision-making rather than taking control.

Ask guiding questions.

Encourage reflection.

Why?

Self-determination is a core principle of ILS.

Scenario 29

Staff are unsure what to do

Response

Use the Inclusion Clare Decision-Making Tool:

Is it safe?

Is it respectful?

Does it promote independence?

Does it support participant goals?

Is it within my role?

Would I be comfortable explaining this decision to my supervisor?

If uncertain, seek guidance.

Scenario 30

Participant achieves a goal

Situation

The participant successfully completes a skill independently.

Response

Celebrate the achievement.

Acknowledge effort.

Discuss next steps.

Document progress.

Why?

Success builds confidence and motivation.

Final Reminder

Every interaction with a participant is an opportunity to:

- ✓ Teach a skill
- ✓ Build confidence
- ✓ Promote independence
- ✓ Support choice
- ✓ Encourage growth

✓ Strengthen community connections

The role of ILS staff is not to create dependence.

The role of ILS staff is to empower participants to develop the skills and confidence needed to live the life they choose.

Empowering People to Live the Life They Choose