

Theological Basis



Shared Values

Values are the principles, standards and qualities that characterise the way in which we do our work.

UnitingCare Queensland believes that our values are fundamental to the work we do and expresses the mission of God by being present in people's lives to offer hope, healing and transformation.

Compassion

Through our understanding and empathy for others we bring holistic care, hope and inspiration

This means:

I will be responsive to your needs
I will make time to listen to you
I will find ways to improve the wellbeing of others
I will appreciate the gift of volunteering

I will not ignore or dismiss you
I will not treat you as a burden

Respect

We accept and honour diversity, uniqueness and the contribution of others

This means:

I will be honest and truthful with you
I will encourage you to express your point of view
I will honour all information that is entrusted to me
I will speak respectfully to you and of you

I will not abuse, bully or harass you
I will not deny or denigrate your culture and beliefs

Justice

We commit to focus on the needs of the people we serve and to work for a fair, just and sustainable society

This means:

I will speak out if I see people being harmed or abused
I will be committed in making sure the people we serve, receive the best care possible
I will use all resources wisely and well
I will be open and transparent in my action and behaviour

I will not support a blame culture
I will not take credit for others contributions

Working Together

We value and appreciate the richness of individual contributions, partnerships and teamwork

This means:

I will share the load
I will work constructively with you, regardless of your position
I will take responsibility for my actions and be accountable to others
I will acknowledge my way is not the only way

I will not have an attitude of "it's not my job"
I will not exclude you

Leading through learning

Our culture encourages innovation and supports learning

This means:

I will foster a creative, fun, passionate and innovative working environment
I will share my experience and knowledge
I will nurture the skills and attributes of others
I will admit to what I do not know and seek assistance

I will not conceal or withhold knowledge and or information
I will not resist organisational changes which benefit the people we care for

Introduction to our values

*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it in abundance.
John 10:10*

The Uniting Church in Australia proudly shares the tradition of the Christian Church, and exists to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Through the word and teaching of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the gospels, the foundations are laid for the Church's understanding of its mission in community services. Jesus' ministry challenged people to give more serious attention to the nature of service to one another.

Therefore, the Uniting Church in Australia has a deep and abiding commitment to community services. The Church engages in this work because of its belief that the work of healing, growth and liberation is God's work in the lives of people and in the life of the world. The Church is called to participate in this work and to 'bear witness' to the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Uniting Church in Australia has a long tradition of this witness being about faith in action which brings to life the Church's mission. UnitingCare Queensland community services are a vital part of the Uniting Church's mission. These are expressed through the services of BlueCare, LifeLine Community Care, UnitingCare Centre for Social Justice, UnitingCare Health, Crossroads, and Wesley Mission Brisbane.

All of our values are deeply grounded in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. All five of the values convey one important message about the work we do, and that is the Christian revelation of the nature of divine love. Jesus said 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Luke 10:26-28. Our values come from this understanding that our care for others and ourselves is based upon these commandments. How we have compassion, respect, justice, work with each other, and be leaders through learning is by treating others as if we were an answer to prayer. In our community services we are called to be the 'good Samaritan', to care for and love the stranger among us. For it is only if we are a community of care that pledges not to fear the strangers among us, can we welcome the continued presence of the broken, marginalised, and ill in our midst.

These values act as a compass, pointing us back to our Christian origins and forward into our future, and assist us to navigate our way in working together for the benefit of those who use our services. The values will require each of us to have courage, commitment and innovation in how we live and work. The values are the vision for how we work together with compassion, respect and justice; where people care about each other, and community is formed.

Our values underpin, shape, and express the unique service which seeks to improve the wellbeing of all Queenslanders who use our services, because our focus is not only upon that which is broken, but also upon nurturing what is best in all people.

Compassion

Through our understanding and empathy for others we bring holistic care, hope and inspiration.

A bruised reed God will not break, and a dimly burning flame God will not snuff out. In faithfulness God will bring forth justice. Isaiah 42:3

Key Words: The whole person, Hope, Care, Spirituality, Humanity, Inspiration, Love, Grace, Empathy

The Bible teaches that God is present with us, weeps with us, and does not stand outside of the range of human experiences. Jesus, the incarnation of the one God, did not stand outside of human suffering, but entered into its very depths. One way to describe compassion is to say that it is a 'suffering' with another where our concern motivates us to perform helpful actions. Every time we act with compassion and dare to travel alongside another, God is present in our world. As Jesus went about his ministry of healing and teaching he had compassion toward people. Matt 9:35-36. Jesus expressed his compassion in healing people emotionally, spiritually and physically.

The services UnitingCare Queensland offer are about working alongside those who are vulnerable, fragile, and in pain. This can be an affirming and even exhilarating experience; it can also be a devastating one. Often our ability to improve people's wellbeing, and alleviate isolation, marginalisation, and illness is remarkable. All the resources we have at hand can make our work a joy, and make us justifiably proud of our skills and abilities. At the same time, suffering continues, appearing in new ways that overwhelm us in their persistence. We can feel helpless and devastated by this.

We all need to recharge, or nurture our banks of compassion to continue the amazing array of services we offer. One vital way to do this is to ensure we contribute to creating a warm, friendly, and caring work environment. This in turn ensures that the services we provide are indeed based upon compassion, hope, and inspiration. As we offer the gift of compassion to others, we may influence them to find their own gift. These cascading gifts have the potential to change the world. Compassion is the necessary business of every member of the human community.

One way we can nurture our compassion capacity is to recognise our own spirituality. Spirituality is intensely personal, but it is also communal. We as individuals, who are also called to community services and healthcare have a spirituality, as does UnitingCare Queensland through its community of staff, volunteers, and partners. We must always ask; how is this Spirituality present in the working of our service? How do we include this in our decision making, in our identity? How is our value of compassion revealed in our care?

Compassion is not just feeling sorry for, or having sympathy and empathy with someone, but seeking to change the situation. Frequently people think compassion and love are merely sentimental. This is not the case. They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action!

Be kind and compassionate to one another... Ephesians 4:32

Respect

We accept and honour diversity, uniqueness and contribution

In the image of God humans were created; male and female God created them. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. Genesis 1:27 & 31

Key Words: Diversity, Honour, Acceptance, Inclusion, Dignity, Integrity

Respect is heavily embedded within the context of continuing the work of Christ in acknowledging the dignity of every human person, calling them to be fully alive, and reaching out in particular to those who are poor, vulnerable, marginalised, sick, as well as those who have become overburdened by life challenges. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly", John 10:10

The bible tells us that all people are created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 We have infinite respect for one another, for each of us is made in the image of God. Theologically we understand that our existence and the world's existence is created for relationship with one another, and God. Humans do not stand apart from each other, or use each other and the world as instruments. In Jesus Christ "God was reconciling the world to God's self" 2 Corinthians 5:19. Loving relationships are defined by the nature of God. This is the fundamental grammar of creation, or the language which defines for us how we are to be relational human beings.

The church is itself called to be a particular form of human community where conventional divisions, such as those based on cultural, sociological, gender, age, race etc; are reconciled. Therefore the church, of which UnitingCare is a part, is called to live as a community where we actively seek to heal such divisions. Such unity should be evident in the way in which we provide our services. With the great diversity of services we provide, we are certainly a diverse community, continually learning and truly exploring what it means to work together. We recognise all people have their place, all are unique, and contribute to the tapestry of life. Each person contributes their own thread by their life story, and this enhances the weaving of our own story.

In the stories of the Gospels it was not just the words of healing (physical, emotional, spiritual) that seemed to make the difference. It was the power of the encounter. Jesus discovered, looked, accepted and respected the whole person, whatever their current situation. Jesus conveyed the expectation that change was needed and possible, and that a choice and effort on their part following this encounter could lead to its accomplishment. Jesus restored their dignity and enabled them to move forward. It is this model of respect in our living and working that is our challenge. Where each of us becomes – if only a brief glimpse - the face and presence of Christ for all whom we encounter, regardless of their condition.

Upholding respect for our agency, our colleagues, our clients, and ourselves, fulfils our calling to enable people to recognise and live out their potential in life in a true spirit of hope.

Show proper respect to everyone.. 1Peter 2:17

Justice

We commit to focus on the needs of the people we serve and to work for a fair, just and sustainable society

Do not neglect the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. Matthew 23:23

Key Words: Serving All, Transformation, Caring for the world, Sustainability, Beliefs of Others, Cultural, Equality, Access and Equity, Participation, The Common Good, Stewardship, Reconciliation

Our ongoing Christian tradition sees the creating of a just society as part of the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ; its essence is a positive concept of life as it should and could be. Jesus clearly demonstrates this in that his love and healing His love and healing of people were acts of compassion that challenged the established attitudes and customs of his society: he was definitely on about more than 'band-aid welfare'. He did not avoid conflict, or people who were regarded as 'beyond help', and while he washed the disciples' feet, he also threw people out of the temple and told confronting stories about costly acts of love and forgiveness.

Justice is multi-faceted. A contemporary theological approach to justice is not only Biblically or Gospel informed. It must be developed contextually cognisant of political, social, ecological and economic realities. It is understanding that we all have the right to live in healthy relationships, with ourselves, others and the world around us and to have access to the benefits of our society. For the Uniting Church it is the emphasis upon the centrality of social justice as a fundamental element of its belief and practice, its faith in action. It is not an optional extra for Christians or the Church. This means that at times, it will be impossible to remain silent on some issues as we seek to see God's realm, which embodies justice in all its forms, expressed in the world around us. Justice in our context of community services may be understood from four perspectives. We strive for justice in our work ensuring that we reach out to people at their point of need, especially those that are disadvantaged and marginalised. We may not be perfect, we may not live up to everyone's expectations, but we will act with integrity. We also understand that we must strive for justice in society, and we live this out through political advocacy, health-based advocacy, and working with other faith-based services to provide unique and extraordinary care. Finally there is justice in the world – we must strive to uphold our commitment to the global perspective, and many of our services include involvement with special projects to overseas communities, or to the environment. Therefore, working for justice in all of its elements, is not an optional extra for UnitingCare but a priority in all its work.

We are called to be exemplary caretakers of the earth's resources, of our time, energy, talents and money; it is about how we live our lives in the world as God's people. The necessity and possibility for justice arrives out of the limitations of our existence on a planet of finite resource. Justice involves a judgement about how limited resources are to be shared fairly. Sustaining our services is vitally important, so that the work gone on for decades before us still remains long after we are no longer contributing to it.

In many ways we are defined by our commitment to justice. We are committed not only to meeting people and communities at their points of need, but to advocating for just systems, structures, and caring for the environment. We can help create the conditions necessary for peace and justice, while realising the choices of others can be influenced and responded to, but never controlled. Our advocacy is grounded in our theology, our enormous experience in working for and being in solidarity with people doing it tough, and their lived experiences of poverty, exclusion, ill-health, increasing frailty, and family and personal breakdown. Justice therefore is to be understood as the development of a society which is just, participatory and sustainable. It is grounded in transforming society, reconciling humanity, & cherishing creation.

I will sing of your love and justice; to you O Lord, I will sing praise...Psalm 101:1

Working Together

We value and appreciate the richness of individual contributions, partnerships and teamwork

There are different kinds of service, but the same God. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. 1Corinthians 12

Key Words: Trinity, Partners, You & Me, Colleagues, Shared Values, Team, Uniting

The very name of our Church, The **Uniting** Church gives basis to this value. We are all in this messy beautiful life together. Working together, we all operate in faith. Faith in our processes, our approach to our work, faith in our co-workers, faith that our care leads to the improvement of life for those we have responsibility for. This task is ongoing, we are far from finished in understanding or being united. Working together means we will be continuously learning about ourselves, others, our areas of speciality, and our personal and professional conduct. Overall, we want to have faith that the part we play in life contributes to the common good. "There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all people. Now to each one the Spirit is given for the common good."

1Corinthians 12:6-7. We are all on this journey of faith together. Many times throughout the Gospels, Jesus seeks to engage others in his ministry such as the call of Peter to leave his boats and fish for people. Matthew 4:18-20. He also surrounds himself with the disciples to assist in the every day tasks of reaching out to, healing, and teaching as many people as possible, offering a sense of belonging and purpose.

It is the nature of humans to want to belong to something that gives us purpose. Our lives are enriched by working with others and belonging. When we do not have this sense of purpose or belonging, we are diminished as whole people. When those who we care for feel they are only an interesting case or client, or worse, a boring routine case or client, the sense of isolation and marginalisation intensifies. When we work hard to be creative, innovative, and to build strong teams, and do not receive recognition or believe we are not appreciated, the call to continue to work in that environment diminishes to the point we can no longer stay. Recognition of working together may be on many levels, but it cannot be denied that our community services, as large and diverse as they are, are created and sustained by the effort and talent of dedicated people working together.

The inclusion of the value of 'working together' implies that there is an integration of personal and organisational values for those who choose to work within UnitingCare Queensland. For UnitingCare Queensland this is essential in order to hold to our understanding of delivering compassionate, respectful, and just care for our clients. In this way UnitingCare Queensland wants to create an inclusive work environment that while being distinctly Christian, recognises that the sharing of values, rather than religious beliefs is vital. The goal is to work with each other and in a particular way which cradles, nurtures and expresses our common grace-filled humanity.

We ought therefore to show hospitality to people so that we may work together for the truth...3 John 1:8

Leading through Learning

Our culture encourages innovation and supports learning

Instruct a wise person and they will be wiser still; teach a righteous person and they will add to their learning... Proverbs 9:9

Key Words: Skill, Imagination, Experience, Communication, Innovation, Trust, Relational, Teamwork, Creativity, Discovery

Each of us are uniquely and creatively made in the image of God. Genesis 1:27. If we understand that God is our divine creator, then we understand that we are called to be God's covenant partners in creation. We will therefore strive to be creative in our professional and personal life. We will always strive to experiment, invent, discover more about ourselves and others, and will share our creativity with those we work alongside, and wider community, including our global community. Our creativity means that we will always be committed to improving the services we provide.

In the Gospels we also read that Jesus taught many people. Sometimes just to one, at other times to many thousands. Teaching was a fundamental part of his ministry. He not only fed them physically as in the feeding of the 5000, but taught them about life in abundance. He was passionate about people discovering who they could be, personally and in all elements of life. Jesus cared for people in a new way, offered to them a new beginning, no matter where they may have been, or what they had done. This included healing that was physical, emotional, social and spiritual. It is important for UnitingCare Queensland to therefore provide services that are founded on our understanding of our call to live out the holistic healing ministry of Christ. An emphasis upon continuous learning and research into all phases and stages of life, the physical, social, emotional and spiritual makes us leaders in the services we provide.

Our mission to express faith in action will by its nature promote life giving learning and leading qualities. Faith in action is about the spirited, compassionate, respectful and just attitudes and actions that we express to show we care for clients, patients, colleagues, the community and ourselves. Our leadership will be sustained by sustaining leaders themselves. Leading through learning will have an outward focus and an open attitude to alliances for the sake of the mission and in the interest of the common good.

We are challenged to find better ways of practising what the Church teaches in terms of equality, justice, and human rights and responsibilities, and to renew a radical community-based tradition that brings together people from different backgrounds and world views to develop a grassroots vision of liberation and care for all people.

We therefore offer a unique service which improves the wellbeing of Queenslanders because our focus is not only upon that which is broken, but upon nurturing what is best in people.

*Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.
Proverbs 1:5*