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## → Lay Out the Welcome Mat

Open hearts...Open minds...Open doors is our slogan here at ADEC. "Open doors" is something we want for our consumers in the community but how do we reciprocate that? We expect people with disabilities to have access in the community but do we give the community access to us?

Is there anything different about your program when people visit? Admittedly, there was a time in ADEC's program history that we stepped up our service when we knew state surveyors, CARF, etc. would be in our program. That's not to say we were doing anything wrong when they weren't around but we did want them to see us at our best. The problem with this is we're not here to serve the state, CARF or guardians. We're here to serve our consumers.

One method we have used to maintain consistency in the quality of service is through becoming more transparent to the community, guardians and other providers. When we know someone can walk in at any moment we tend to be more aware of what we're doing. If we require a guardian, case manager or others to call ahead before visiting, then we're more likely to be at our best only during those times. It's human nature to want to be at our best when we know there's a chance we're being watched.

We have become more transparent in all our locations but none more obvious than our coffee shop/day program in downtown Goshen. Throughout the day people walk in and see how we conduct ourselves. It helps us to be more aware of our activities, and how we interact with consumers. At ADEC, we make efforts to be more transparent in all our day program locations. Even this newsletter is a way of being more transparent in what we do. We have to live up to the standards we set for ourselves.

Clearly, there are situations that require privacy such as medications, personal care, etc. We sometimes tend to use this as an excuse for keeping our programs closed but in reality, confidentiality applies to everyone, other consumers and the public alike. When we know someone is visiting do we run around and hide all our confidential material? Of course not, these items are concealed regardless.

For the most part, we do what everyone else does. We exercise, build furniture, sew, bake, paint, talk about the news, and much more. When you have consumers using computers, helping to run groups and DSPs working alongside it projects a positive image of all of us. This is what the community needs to see.



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Opening our doors to our community helps open doors for us in the community.

## ➔ What to Expect with an Open Door

1. **Challenge management and DSPs** - When people see what goes on in a day program we are naturally more conscious of the quality of service we provide. When we are hidden we're more likely to let things go, not follow our schedule or not treat people with the respect they deserve. With an open program you naturally start to see things through the eyes of others and make improvements as a result.
2. **Educate the community** - Letting the community into our programs allows them to see our consumers abilities and what they CAN do. It diminishes stereotypes. It also showcases the abilities and skills of our DSPs and helps them earn the respect they deserve for the work they do.
3. **Build relationships** - It helps our consumers and us build more relationships with others. We shouldn't limit relationship building to just the community; having people in gives us more opportunity and a controlled environment conducive for our consumers to succeed.
4. **Increase resources** - Opening your doors more to the community gives the opportunity for people to see the great things you do each day with those we serve. It shows people that their tax dollars and donations are used wisely and it helps you secure more resources. People invest in programs they can see, that are well-run and worthwhile. It can also help in recruiting quality employees.
5. **Reduce stress** - It sounds like it might create more anxiety but, ultimately, the opposite is true. An open door takes pressure off management and DSPs. When you're used to the community being in your program, quality becomes consistent and you don't worry as much about someone being treated inappropriately. Knowing you are always working at the highest level brings satisfaction and pride to your day program.

## Why the Newsletter?

We are strong believers that day programs can dramatically change the lives of those we serve. What people do during the day defines who they are and should provide a sense of purpose and self-worth.

We have seen the remarkable results that come with productivity and want to share our challenges, successes and innovations. We also want to hear about your challenges and success. The more we help each other succeed the better off we all are.

When we demonstrate that investment in our programs yield significant results, support increases. The more successful we are as a whole the more we can justify increased funding statewide.

Let's give those we serve a purpose in life and give others a reason to invest in what we do. We ask that you join us in making Indiana a leader in day services for people with disabilities.

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