



Define Mindset

Lead With Optimism

WHY OPTIMISM DRIVES POSSIBILITY

Human-Centered Design (HCD) is rooted in the belief that we can make things better—no matter how complex or challenging the problem. Leading with optimism means approaching problems with hope, creativity, and confidence in people’s ability to create meaningful change. It’s not blind positivity—it’s a commitment to possibility.

WHAT IT MEANS TO LEAD WITH OPTIMISM

- **Believe in Better:** Trust that improvement is possible, even when the path isn’t clear.
- **Focus on Potential:** Look for what could be, not just what’s broken.
- **See Strengths:** Recognize the resilience, resourcefulness, and wisdom in communities and individuals.
- **Inspire Others:** Use optimism to energize teams, patterns, and participants toward shared goals.

BENEFITS OF LEADING WITH OPTIMISM

- Fuels creative problem-solving and innovation
- Builds momentum and motivation in complex work
- Strengthens collaboration by focusing on shared purpose
- Encourages resilience through setbacks and uncertainty

HOW TO PRACTICE THIS MINDSET

- **Start with “How Might We?”**
Frame challenges as opportunities for improvement and innovation.
- **Celebrate Small Wins**
Acknowledge progress, learning, and moments of impact along the way.
- **Look for Bright Spots**
Identify what’s already working and explore how to build on it.

IN SUMMARY

Optimism is a powerful driver of change. When we believe in people and their potential, we create the energy and creativity needed to design solutions that make a real difference.