



What AMSI Means by “Standards”

Foundational Note 1

A shared Whole Quality reference for support-service quality - not supervision or enforcement

American Support Standards Initiative (AMSI) is an applied initiative under the Whole Quality Institute (WQI).

Within WQI, AMSI applies the Whole Quality method to personal and social support services. AMSI standards help make support-service quality visible through intended function, work performed, results produced, service boundaries, context, evidence, and bounded quality claims.

This Foundational Note explains what AMSI means by the word “standard” in the WQS1 era. It also clarifies what AMSI standards are not.

1. A Standard Is a Voluntary Reference, Not a Mandate

In caregiving and support services, the word **standard** can feel intimidating. Many people associate it with inspection, compliance, supervision, or outside control. That concern is understandable - and it is not what AMSI standards are about.

At the American Support Standards Initiative (AMSI), a standard is a **shared, voluntary reference**. It is **not a regulation, not a mandatory service requirement, and not a certification or enforcement system**.

AMSI standards are intended to support shared understanding. They provide a common way to describe service quality, roles, work, results, evidence, and boundaries across different support settings, job titles, program models, and jurisdictions.

2. Grounded in the Support-Service Quality Object

Under WQS1, a support service may be treated as a Whole Quality object when it has an intended function, observable work activities, identifiable results, defined boundaries, identifiable interfaces, and evidence capable of supporting quality claims.

AMSI standards are therefore grounded in the real support-service object, not in abstract administrative labels. They begin with the work itself: what supporters do, how decisions are made, how safety and dignity are protected, how context changes practice, and how results are experienced by the person receiving support.

This grounding is important because a support service is not only a task list, a funding code, a compliance file, a technology platform, or an organizational chart. It is a real service condition created through work performed and results produced within a defined context.

3. Standards Describe Work, Results, Boundaries, and Evidence

AMSI standards support the foundational service logic used in WQS1:

Service = Work + Result

Quality of Service = Quality of Work + Quality of Result

These expressions are not simple arithmetic formulas. They are architectural statements. They remind users that quality cannot be determined from work alone or from a result claim alone. Both the work performed and the result produced must remain visible.

AMSI standards also help define Quality Factors, Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, evidence expectations, and bounded quality claims. They support transparent evaluation without turning AMSI into a regulator or enforcement body.

4. Voluntary and Non-Regulatory

AMSI standards are voluntary. They do not replace laws, regulations, licensure requirements, professional rules, funding requirements, employer policies, program rules, or clinical guidance. They do not create new legal obligations and do not require adoption by agencies, funders, workers, families, or individuals.

They are intended to be used, adapted, cited, discussed, or referenced as helpful tools. Their purpose is to support clarity and quality improvement, not to impose control.

5. Why Standards Still Matter

Across the United States, caregiving and support services operate in fragmented environments. States, programs, providers, and funding systems may use different terms for similar work. Job titles may differ even when the real support function is similar. Without shared language, quality becomes harder to explain, compare, verify, or improve.

AMSI standards exist to fill that gap - not by controlling practice, but by making expectations, roles, work, results, boundaries, evidence, and quality claims visible and understandable.

This approach is now described through Whole Quality in Support Services. Whole Quality recognizes that high-quality support depends on people, relationships, occupations, context, systems, evidence, and function realization - not only on procedures, documentation, funding, staffing, or technology.

6. How AMSI Standards May Be Used

AMSI standards may be used by:

- caregivers and support workers;
- individuals receiving support and families;
- service providers and agencies;
- educators and trainers;
- policymakers, funders, and oversight bodies;
- researchers, standards developers, and quality-improvement teams.

They can support learning, reflection, communication, service design, context-guide development, quality improvement, verification planning, and evidence-based quality claims. Use of AMSI standards does not imply compliance, certification, approval, accreditation, or endorsement by AMSI or WQI.

7. Relationship to WQS1, Core Standards, and Context Guides

WQS1 provides the Whole Quality hub architecture for AMSI. It explains how support services can be understood as bounded quality objects and how AMSI vocabulary, Core Standards, Context Guides, analytical publications, verification methods, and future guidance documents fit together.

Within that architecture, an AMSI Core Standard may define stable quality requirements for a service family. A Context Guide may then interpret those requirements for a specific environment, activity, setting, population, program model, or support situation.

This structure allows AMSI standards to remain stable while still respecting real-life variation. A common reference can exist without forcing every service context into one rigid delivery model.

8. A Shared Reference, Not a Hierarchy of Control

AMSI standards are designed to support conversation, understanding, visibility, and improvement across diverse service environments. They create a common reference point - not a hierarchy of control.

This Foundational Note applies to current and future AMSI standards and context guides. It defines what AMSI means by the term standard in the Whole Quality era: a voluntary, non-regulatory, evidence-oriented reference for making support-service quality clearer, more transparent, and more defensible.

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