

Client Rights and Dignity Policy

SAMPLE

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Purpose

The purpose of this Client Rights and Dignity Policy is to ensure that all clients of [Company Name] are treated with respect, fairness and dignity, and that their legal and human rights are upheld at all times. This policy sets out how [Company Name] will protect and promote client rights within disability and aged care services, in compliance with Australian work health and safety (WHS) legislation, the NDIS Practice Standards, the Aged Care Quality Standards, and relevant anti-discrimination and privacy laws.

This policy recognises that protecting client rights and dignity is a fundamental WHS obligation. Psychological safety, freedom from abuse and neglect, and involvement in decision-making are essential to a safe and healthy environment for clients, workers and visitors.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All workers, including employees, contractors, agency staff, labour hire workers, students and volunteers engaged by [Company Name].
- All services and supports provided by [Company Name] in disability and aged care settings, including in-home care, residential services, day programs, respite, community access and allied health services.
- All clients, their families, carers, advocates, substitute decision-makers and visitors who interact with [Company Name].

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- WHS Policy
- Incident Management and Reporting Policy
- Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practices Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Code of Conduct

Definitions

Term	Definition

Key Definitions

- **Client:** Any person who receives services or supports from [Company Name], including participants in disability services and recipients of aged care services.
- **Dignity:** The inherent worth of every person, requiring that they are treated with respect, courtesy, privacy and consideration, regardless of age, disability, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or any other attribute.
- **Rights:** Legal, human and service-related entitlements that clients hold, including the right to safety, autonomy, privacy, information, participation in decisions, and freedom from abuse, neglect, discrimination and exploitation.
- **Psychological safety:** A state in which a person feels safe, respected and able to express concerns, preferences and complaints without fear of humiliation, punishment or retaliation.
- **Worker:** Any person who carries out work in any capacity for [Company Name], including employees, contractors, labour hire workers, volunteers and students.
- **Substitute decision maker:** A person legally authorised to make decisions on behalf of a client who has impaired decision-making capacity (e.g. guardian, attorney, enduring power of attorney, person responsible).
- **Restrictive practice:** Any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person, including seclusion, chemical, mechanical, physical or environmental restraint, and psycho-social restraint.

Legislative and Standards Framework

[Company Name] will implement this policy in alignment with, but not limited to, the following legislation, standards and guidance (as applicable in each state/territory):

- Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations (jurisdiction-specific)
- NDIS Act 2013 and NDIS (Quality Indicators) Guidelines
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
- Aged Care Act 1997 and Aged Care Quality Standards
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles
- Guardianship and Administration legislation (state/territory)
- Charter of Aged Care Rights
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- United Nations Principles for Older Persons

[Company Name] will monitor updates to legislation and standards and revise this policy as required.

Principles

The following principles underpin this policy and guide all decision-making and practice:

Respect and Dignity

- Every client has the right to be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times.
- Workers must use respectful language, tone and body language, and avoid infantilising, dismissive or discriminatory behaviour.
- Personal care, clinical procedures and daily living supports must be delivered in a manner that maximises the client's privacy, comfort and control.

Person-Centred Practice

- Services are designed around the client's goals, preferences, values and cultural identity.
- Clients are supported to participate actively in planning, delivering and reviewing their supports.
- Workers must not impose their own values or preferences on clients.

Autonomy and Self-Determination

- Clients have the right to make choices about their own lives, including decisions that involve some level of risk (dignity of risk), provided appropriate risk assessments and controls are in place.
- Clients are supported to exercise legal capacity to the greatest extent possible, with supported decision-making preferred over substitute decision-making.

Safety and Protection from Harm

- Clients have the right to receive services in an environment that is physically and psychologically safe.
- [Company Name] recognises that abuse, neglect, exploitation and bullying are serious WHS hazards that must be identified, reported and controlled.

Equity and Non-Discrimination

- Clients have the right to equitable access to services, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate disability, cultural, religious, language and communication needs.