

CODE of PRACTICE for DISABILITY PRACTITIONERS

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Introduction

This document contains a proposed Code of Practice for National Disability Practitioners (NDP) members. It sets out standards of conduct and practice within which NDP members should work when supporting people with disability.

What is the Code?

NDP's *Code of Practice for Disability Service Practitioners* (the Code) follows an outcomes-based approach. It identifies best outcomes for people with disability and highlights standards and responsibilities disability service practitioners (practitioners) should meet to attain these outcomes. The Code is intended to reflect existing standards of best practice. It is anticipated that workers and employers will recognise in the Code the shared practice standards to which they already aspire.

How to use this Code

The Code complements and builds upon the National Standards for Disability Services¹.

As a practitioner, the Code will provide a guide to standards of conduct you are expected to meet. You are encouraged to use the Code to examine your own practice and reflect on areas of opportunity to better your practice.

As a user of disability supports, family member, carer or member of the public, this Code will help you understand how a practitioner should behave towards you to do their jobs well.

Why have a Code?

The purpose of this Code is to outline the standard of conduct that is expected of practitioners and to inform people with disability, families, carers and the public about the standards of conduct they can expect from practitioners. It complements the wider package of legislation, practice standards and employers' policies and procedures that practitioners must meet. Practitioners are responsible for making sure that their conduct does not fall below the standards set out in this Code and that no action or omission on their part harms the dignity, safety or well-being of participants, the community or colleagues, family and friends.

NDP expects all of their members to adhere and meet or exceed this Code. NDP may take action if members knowingly or wilfully fail to do so.

¹ <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/standards-and-quality-assurance/national-standards-for-disability-services>

1. I will protect, respect and promote the human rights of people with disability.

Outcome: Participants have the right to exercise choice and control in all aspects of life.

You will recognise and ensure the following rights are upheld:

- To be treated with respect.
- To freely express themselves.
- To make their own life decisions and choices.
- To control their life's direction.
- To be free from discrimination.
- To be free from harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- To take risks.
- To dignity and privacy while maintaining confidentiality.
- To choose their own supports.
- To participate in their chosen community.
- To decide how they have contact with family, friends and the community.
- To full and forthright disclosure of all information pertaining to their support and that it is made readily available in an accessible format.
- To effective service planning and capable service support.

This includes:

- Promoting and assisting a person to understand and exercise their rights.

2. I will work to maximise access and participation of people with disability in society and the community.

Outcome: People with disability are able to participate in the community in a way that is meaningful to them.

This means:

- Understanding that a person has a right to take informed decisions about risks and are allowed to make mistakes.
- Respecting and being responsive to a person's preferences and choices while keeping them and others safe.
- Promoting and maximising a person's independence.
- Valuing and supporting a person's chosen role in the community.
- Working together with others and organisations to promote the active inclusion, diversity and participation of people with disability into the community.
- Conducting services that recognises the role of families, friends, and carers and advocates (Circle of Support).
- Seeking successful resolution to all potential conflicts that might arise between the desires and goals of the participant, and their Circle of Support.

3. I will provide safe and ethical support.

Outcome: People with disability are supported in a way that is ethical, meets quality, safety and operational standards and are reflective of current best practices methodologies and approaches.

This means:

- Conducting supports that are in accordance with current legislation.
- Meeting or exceeding all relevant standards of practice.
- Working in a lawful and safe way.
- Providing services in accordance with existing employer code of practice / conduct / ethics.
- Providing services that refrain from any form or type of discrimination.
- Refraining from putting yourself or other people at unnecessary risk.
- Addressing risk of abuse and neglect.
- Providing services with care and professionalism.
- Delivering supports that are free from discrimination.
- Working openly and collaboratively with colleagues and treating them with respect.
- Complying with employer's work, health and safety policies.
- Not being impaired or affected by alcohol, prescription drugs or unlawful substances while at work.
- Respecting people's personal privacy including not discussing a person's situation with others without their consent.
- Being accountable for your work.
- Keeping accurate records and implementing and maintaining proper reporting processes and procedures.
- Making all reasonable efforts to provide people with the supports they seek.
- Establishing and maintaining clear personal and professional boundaries with people you support.
- Undertaking relevant training to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and contributing to the learning and development of others.
- Declaring and addressing any conflicts of interest you may have when supporting particular people Reporting difficulties or barriers that might get in the way of the delivery of safe support.

4. I will communicate in an appropriate, open and accurate way.

Outcome: Participants have the right to receive services, information and materials pertaining to their supports in a respectful, accessible and forthright manner that is free from discrimination.

This means:

- Ensuring a person has access to all information regarding their support and that it is readily available in a suitable and accessible format.
- Communicating in a form, language, and manner that enables people you are supporting to understand information provided.
- Giving opportunity for people and their families and carers to ask questions, seek clarifications or explanations.
- Speaking to people respectfully, in an age appropriate way.
- Not talking about a person's private circumstances in front of others.
- Being honest and trustworthy and refraining from making false or misleading claims.
- Providing supports that are responsive to diversity, including disability, age, gender and sexual identity, culture, heritage, language, faith, relationship status or personal beliefs or values.
- Delivering supports that are responsive to diverse needs.
- Participant choices regarding intimacy and sexuality are supported in a manner that ensures their rights and privacy are recognised and protected.

5. I will commit to a zero tolerance approach to abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.

Outcome: Participants are treated with respect and are free from harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

This means:

- Delivering supports that are free from harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect.
- Recognising and using responsibly the power that comes from your work with people with disability and carers.
- Not engaging in any form of intimate or sexual activity with people you support, regardless of consent.
- Respecting personal and professional boundaries in relationships with a person you are supporting regardless of consent.
- Speaking up and responding as appropriate to any actions that restrict a person's human rights or make them feel or be unsafe.
- Following practice and procedures designed to keep you and other people safe from violent and abusive behaviour at work.
- Challenging and reporting behaviours or practices that may be seen as dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative.
- Supporting people with disability, their families and carers to make complaints.
- Responding to complaints respectfully, seriously and in a timely manner.
- Informing your employer and if needed an appropriate authority where the practice of colleagues may be unsafe or adversely affecting standards of care.

6. I will promote and respect people's right to decide their individual outcomes and goals.

Outcome: People with disability receive services that are responsive to their choices and based on their individual preferences, strengths, needs and goals.

This means:

- Being responsive to a person's choice while recognising and managing risk.
- Actively involving a person in the decision-making process relating to their own support.
- Ensuring participants' wishes, choices and decisions are documented and acted on.
- Respecting a person's right to involve family, friends, carers and advocates in their support.
- Planning, implementing and reviewing supports based on a person's choice and takes into account the person's strengths, needs and individual goals.
- Promoting and enabling a person's right to take informed risks.