

Independence and Informed Choice Decision Making Policy and Procedure



PURPOSE

All About Care Australia's (AACCA) policy is underpinned by International, National and State obligations concerning the human rights of people with disabilities.

AACCA will provide support and opportunity for all participants, families/carers to make informed choices, exercise control and maximise their independence relating to the supports provided.

Quality decision-making will underpin the long-term effectiveness of participant supports and agreements. It facilitates the achievement of strategic goals, maximises participant involvement, ensures collaboration with participant families/carers, enhances participant outcomes and encourages the well-being and productivity of staff and volunteers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all AACCA participants and their families/carers accessing our services, staff and volunteers.

POLICY

This policy refers to situations where a participant has decision-making capacity unless proven otherwise and acknowledges that each participant's capacity varies for each decision and situation. All participants have the dignity of risk to make their own decisions.

In instances where a participant's decision-making capacity is limited, this policy provides direction regarding the determination of capacity and consent, supporting and facilitating decision-making on behalf of the participant, where required.

This policy mitigates the risk of decisions being made about a participant's life without their involvement or against their actual or anticipated wishes. Decisions are only to be made with the consent of the participant or where appropriate their representative, e.g., family, carer, or advocate.

AACCA puts choice and control primarily in the hands of people with disabilities, their families and carers or advocates.

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Definition

| Terminology | Definition |
|------------------------|---|
| Decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The action or process of making important decisions.• Process of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the decision-makers values, preferences and beliefs. |
| Informed choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A person chooses services based on quality information that has been provided to them that meets their individualised communication needs. |
| Dignity of risk | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The right to take risks when engaging in life experiences and the right to fail in taking these risks. |
| Advocate | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A person who represents a participant's issues, preferences or circumstances when the participant is unable to do so. |
| Autonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The capacity to decide for oneself and pursue a course of action in one's life. |

PROCEDURE

Advocate

AACA will inform all participants from their first contact with AACA that they have the right to access an advocate (including an independent advocate) of their choosing. They will be advised that it is their right to have the advocate present whenever they are in contact with AACA.

Decision-making and choice

During the development of the Service Agreement and Support Plan and all relevant interactions with each participant, their family or carer, AACA will:

- inform the participant, their family/carer or their advocate of their options regarding their supports
- advise the participants, their family/carer or their advocate of any risks to themselves or others regarding their options
- consult and collaborate with the participants, their family/carer or their advocate by providing current and relevant information to allow the participant to make decisions
- allow the participant enough time to absorb and understand all relevant information before and during the decision-making process
- provide information in an Easy Read format when requested
- undertake review meetings where the participant, family/carer and advocates have input
- plan with the participant, family/carer and advocates when the participant decides to exit from AACA.

AACA recognises that participants have the right to dignity of risk in their decision-making.

Participants will be advised of the:

- various relevant options that may support their needs before any decisions are made
- benefits of each relevant option

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- risks, if any, linked to each relevant option

Participants will be provided time to absorb information and make the appropriate decisions based on the risks involved. If the participant wishes to undertake an activity that has been deemed by AACCA as a risk to the health and safety of the participant, then our staff will:

- inform the participant that if they wish to continue that it is their choice
- develop a Risk Management Plan to identify and reduce the possible risks
- keep notes in the participant's file recording the participant was informed that the activity had identified risks and could be dangerous
- AACCA reserves the right to prioritise duty of care over the dignity of risk if the degree of risk involved in the participant's preferred activity is too extreme

Autonomy

All participants have the right to autonomy; all staff will respect this. Participants can make decisions for themselves and pursue the actions that they determine. Participants have the right to make choices based on who they are and what they want to do. Support workers must allow the participant their right to intimacy and sexual expression (in the context of lawful behaviour and the support workers' degree of professional capacity and comfort).

Time

AACCA recognises that the participant may require time to make some decisions so they can review the various options available to them. Participants may also need to seek advice from their networks and relevant stakeholders.

Staff must not rush participants at any stage during the support provision and decision-making process.

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RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Practice Standards and Quality Indicators) 2018

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Service Agreement
- Support Plan
- Individualised Support-Customer Experience Policy
- Service Transition and Exit Policy and Procedure
- Participant Access Transition and Exit Policy and Procedure
- Responsive Support Provision and Support Management Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Plan