

Code of conduct for disability service workers

Implementation instruction for employers

A toolkit for disability service providers

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Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

Available at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/disability-abuse-prevention>.

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Foreword

The *Code of conduct for disability service workers* is part of a range of strategies the Victorian Government is implementing to embed a zero tolerance of abuse of people with a disability across the disability service system.

The Victorian Government has funded the development of a range of resources for disability service providers and their staff to change workplace culture so that abuse of people with a disability is never tolerated. This instruction provides examples of some implementation strategies. A comprehensive list of resources and how to access them is also provided.

Implementing the code of conduct

This implementation instruction has been drafted to assist disability service providers to implement the Department of Health and Human Services' *Code of conduct for disability service workers* (2018).

The code of conduct:

- contains five obligations that all disability service workers must abide by
- explains each obligation and provides example behaviours that demonstrate what each obligation looks like in practice, and what it may look like if the obligation has been violated
- does not cover every possible situation but summarises the minimum standards of behaviour required by disability service workers to ensure a zero tolerance of abuse
- does not include all responsibilities of a disability service worker
- does not replace other codes of conduct, policies and guidelines that may apply in disability service provider organisations.

The following types of organisations must implement the code of conduct:

- disability service providers funded, delivered and registered by the Department of Health and Human Services
- Victorian-approved NDIS service providers registered under the *Disability Act 2006*.

If your organisation has an existing code of conduct, you must ensure it is consistent with the zero tolerance of abuse obligations in the department's *Code of conduct for disability service workers*.

The code has been provided to all disability service providers and is also available at the [department's website](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/code-of-conduct) <<http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/code-of-conduct>>.

The legislative and standards framework

Disability Act

The Disability Act provides a framework for providing high-quality disability supports and services and ensures that disability service providers are accountable to the people accessing those services. The Disability Act also protects and promotes the rights of people with a disability to enjoy the same rights as other members of the community and to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Disability Act was amended on 16 August 2017 to formalise a principle of zero tolerance of abuse. Sections 5(3)(ma) and (mb) state that services should be provided in a way that:

- promotes and upholds the rights, dignity, wellbeing and safety of people with a disability
- does not:
 - tolerate abuse, neglect or exploitation of people with a disability, or
 - normalise abuse, neglect or exploitation of people with a disability.

The requirement to demonstrate a commitment to the principle of zero tolerance has been included in the application process to register or renew registration to be a disability service provider in Victoria.

A disability service provider is required to deliver services in the manner described in ss. 5(3)(ma) and (mb) and to also ensure that all staff who will provide support and services to people with a disability are aware of, are provided with a copy of, and understand their obligations under, the code of conduct for disability service workers.

Human Services Standards and independent review

Generally, any department-funded or registered service working directly with people with a disability will need to comply with the Human Services Standards. This includes the need to be independently reviewed and accredited.

Independent reviewers may request evidence from disability service providers that they:

- have declared a commitment to zero tolerance of abuse
- can demonstrate that their disability service workers understand their obligations under the code of conduct
- have processes in place that describe systems for promoting a safe environment through the early identification and response to potential and actual risk of abuse, neglect and violence.

For more information please refer to the [Human Services Standards evidence guide \(September 2015\)](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards) on the department's website <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards>>.

Employer obligations

As an employer, you have obligations to effectively and fairly implement the code of conduct in your organisation. **While the code of conduct most directly applies to frontline workers who have regular direct contact with people with a disability, it is relevant to employees at all levels of the organisation who may come into contact with a person with a disability.**

Your obligations include, but are not limited to:

- not tolerating any form of abuse of people with a disability inflicted by workers or other people with a disability; you must promote zero tolerance of abuse (the minimum obligations of zero tolerance of abuse of people with a disability must be supported by clear rules to assist workers to identify and respond quickly and appropriately to allegations of exploitation, abuse, harassment or neglect)
- demonstrating at all levels within your organisation that abuse of people with a disability is not tolerated
- acting on all reported cases of abuse or suspected abuse
- never taking negative action against a person who reports abuse or neglect
- providing your workers with information to correctly apply the obligations of the code of conduct (this could include training to understand the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and how to identify and report abuse and suspected abuse)
- assisting workers to undertake their role, such as keeping support plans up to date and providing training opportunities so that workers can meet the needs of the people with a disability they support (such assistance can be formal training, mentoring or on-the-job supervision)
- having procedures and processes in place so staff can effectively implement individual client support plans (including behaviour support and communication plans)
- basing all necessary disciplinary action on the principle of procedural fairness if a worker violates the obligations of the code of conduct
- respecting, recognising and valuing the diversity of people and cultures, and creating an inclusive environment where it is safe for people with a disability to express their cultural identity
- actively maintaining a working environment in which the risks of abuse are minimised
- creating and maintaining a positive complaints culture in which people are not afraid to 'speak up' and foster a culture of zero tolerance of abuse of people with a disability
- ensuring staffing rosters support the safe delivery of services to people with a disability
- abiding by the department's incident reporting requirements.

As a registered disability service provider you are also required to meet the above obligations as part of demonstrating adherence to the Human Services Standards, in particular *Standard 3 Wellbeing – people's right to wellbeing and safety is promoted and upheld.*

Signing up to the code of conduct

Disability service provider obligations also include requiring all workers who fall within the following definition to sign up to the code of conduct and to keep a copy of this commitment on their human resources file.

Workers who must sign up to the code of conduct

Workers who must sign up to the code of conduct include workers¹ engaged by a disability service

provider who:

- provides, or supervises or manages a person who provides, direct support to a person with a disability
- has direct contact or access to a person with a disability.

Labour hire agency workers

For workers engaged through a labour hire agency, the disability service provider must ensure these workers are aware of their obligations under the code of conduct.

Organisations must also sign up to the code of conduct

Disability service providers must also sign up to the code of conduct, demonstrating your commitment to supporting employees to abide by and apply the code correctly.

Examples of a declaration for workers and a declaration for disability service providers can be found at the end to this document.

Where a disability service worker does not sign-up to the code of conduct

In the first instance, you should try to seek the workers reasons for refusal to see if these can be addressed.

Where a worker has not signed-up to the code of conduct, you should:

- explain the purpose of the code (to promote adherence to a zero tolerance of abuse of people with a disability) and the obligations by which workers must abide
- highlight that all disability service workers are obliged to abide by the obligations contained in the code
- ensure the worker understands that if they act in a way that violates the code of conduct, the organisations usual discipline procedures will apply.

Where a worker refuses to sign- up to the code of conduct, this should be addressed in line with your human resources processes, your organisation's own policies, obligations arising under contract law and industrial instruments.

¹ This definition of worker corresponds to the Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme (DWES) definition of workers who fall within the scope of the DWES. Therefore all workers who are within scope of the DWES need to sign up to the code of conduct.

Tips for effective implementation

To effectively implement the code of conduct, keep in mind the following points.

Lead from the top

Senior management is governed by the same minimum obligation for abuse prevention as all employees of the organisation. Setting an example at the top is a powerful way to encourage integrity and to give the code of conduct credibility in the minds of disability service workers and all staff.

National Disability Services have been funded to develop resources to assist boards of disability services to understand human rights and abuse prevention. A link to the video is included in the 'Resources' section of this document.

Inform your workers and the people you support

Integrate the code of conduct with existing resources for workers, including training for workers in understanding and applying the code in their daily work practice.

Ensure all the people with a disability who your organisation works with or supports, their families and carers are provided with information about the code of conduct in accessible formats.

Build workplace understanding and culture

Build a workplace culture where:

- workers and people with a disability speak up when they see abusive practice, without fear of reprisal
- reports of poor or abusive practice is viewed as an opportunity to improve the way support services are provided
- supervisors enforce the code of conduct and responses to violations in a consistent and transparent way – remember that violations of the code of conduct could be the result of gaps in a worker's knowledge, training or a lack of adequate supervision or support
- supervisors regularly check to ensure workers understand their obligations under the code of conduct.

Assisting workers to apply the code of conduct

A common understanding

Effective implementation is based on a common understanding of abuse and behaviours that are abusive.

There are many ways to help workers in your organisation to understand and apply the code of conduct. This can include:

- providing time for workers to do available online training on human rights and abuse prevention as part of induction programs
- using staff meetings to reinforce good practice
- developing or providing existing tools and resources for workers
- providing supervisors with resources so they can help workers recognise instances of good, poor and abusive practice.

Note: Using externally available tools and resources will assist your organisation to implement training programs that are evidence-based. This can be important because a worker may be employed by more than one disability service provider.

The 'Resources' section provides links to available training and information packages to help your staff to recognise abuse and to understand human rights.

Make the code of conduct visible to all workers at all times through a variety of formats. This could include:

- providing printed versions of the code of conduct to all workers and keeping copies in communal areas of your organisation
- displaying code of conduct posters listing the five obligations in staffrooms and offices.

A positive complaints culture

A positive complaints culture is a critical part of preventing abuse and promoting human rights. When people feel comfortable about speaking up, providing feedback and making complaints, they are more likely to report incidents before they escalate to abuse. Ultimately, this is about cultivating a workplace culture in which complaints are seen as an opportunity to improve service provision, rather than as a threat to workers and the organisation.

The Disability Act states that disability service providers must:

- develop and operate an internal process for managing complaints about the services they provide
- report annually to the Disability Services Commissioner about the number of complaints they receive and how these complaints were dealt with
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that a person using their service is not adversely affected by making a complaint.

The Disability Act includes a number of offences that protect whistleblowers, ensures the integrity of the Disability Services Commissioner's investigations and aims to drive service improvements.

Supporting workers to report abuse

The code of conduct requires workers to report abuse. It is therefore essential that your organisation has clear procedures for workers to follow to report abuse or other violations of the code of conduct. Workers

need to know they can make a complaint without fear of reprisal. Workers also have an obligation to use other avenues to report abuse if they do not consider their employer has addressed the abuse complaint and clients continue to be at risk.

There are a range of ways to support workers to report abuse or poor practice both within and outside the organisation.

To support internal reporting:

- Use an anonymous hotline, email address or suggestion box and encourage workers to use these methods of reporting.
- Assure workers that they will be protected if they report a violation of the code of conduct.

To support external reporting:

- Make clear the pathways that are available for workers to report outside your organisation, including the Office of the Public Advocate and the office of the Disability Services Commissioner. A list of external pathways to make complaints is included in the 'Resources' section of this instruction.

The *Service agreement information kit for funded organisations* contains a range of resources that can help you develop robust complaint handling procedures and to review existing practices. This includes templates for reporting feedback, a sample compliment and complaint management policy, and a list of organisations to go to for additional support.

The *Human Services Standards evidence guide and resource tool* also has useful information on evidence indicators that demonstrate that services are delivered in a safe environment that is free from abuse, neglect and violence.

Both documents are available on the department's [funded agency website](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agencies) <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/funded-agencies>>. The 'Resources' section of this instruction also contains links to these resources.

Enforcing the code of conduct

Enforcing the code of conduct is essential to its credibility.

Staff within your organisation are less likely to take the code of conduct seriously if no corrective actions are made in response to a violation.

Any **investigation** of a violation of the code of conduct needs to be based on the principle of procedural fairness.

Sanctions to proven violations should be consistent and appropriate to the violation. The sanction must be consistent with the principle of zero tolerance of abuse. This means that perpetrating abuse always has serious repercussions.

Disciplinary actions must be consistent across all levels of your organisation. This reinforces to workers that they will never be judged differently because of their position, status or personal attributes, but only based on the nature of a violation.

See the 'Resources' section of this guide for links to resources about conducting investigations.

Checking that the code of conduct is working effectively

It is important to monitor whether the implementation of the code of conduct within your organisation is supporting a zero tolerance of abuse culture. Here are some ways to do this:

- **Get regular feedback** from your staff to ensure they understand the code of conduct and what is expected of them.
- **Monitor violations** of the code of conduct to help identify the circumstances and service settings in which workers are not meeting their obligations under the code of conduct.
- **Address areas that workers don't fully understand** by providing new training or improving existing resources. Consider revising and refining the code of conduct based on the particular circumstances of your organisation and staff.
- **Regularly check** with people with a disability and their natural supports to ensure they are aware of the obligations of disability support workers and service providers in relation to preventing abuse. This also helps reinforce what standards of behaviour the person with a disability can expect from your staff.

Resources

Abuse prevention and human rights resources

There are many useful resources available for free online that relate to abuse prevention and human rights. Materials and information are available for people with a disability, their families, carers and advocates, as well as for service providers and support workers. A summary of useful materials, including a brief description and link, is shown in Table 1. The resources have been categorised based on whether they are from government and statutory bodies, peak bodies, advocacy organisations or service providers.

Table 1: Resources that relate to abuse prevention and human rights

Government and statutory bodies

Source	Resource	Description	Link
Department of Health and Human Services	Disability abuse prevention – information hub	Contains resources for individuals, families and carers, and resources for service providers that form part of the <i>Dignity, respect and safer services: Victoria’s disability abuse prevention strategy</i> .	Website
	<i>Dignity, respect and safer services: Victoria’s disability abuse prevention strategy</i>	This document is the Victorian Government’s first disability abuse prevention strategy. It outlines a zero tolerance approach to abuse and provides a framework to understand, promote and enhance safeguards and prevent abuse.	Document
	<i>Code of conduct for disability service workers: zero tolerance of abuse of people with a disability</i>	This document applies an obligation of zero tolerance of abuse of people with a disability and prescribes the behaviour expected of disability service workers and the requirements of disability service provider organisations.	Document
	Service agreement information kit for funded organisations	This website contains a range of resources that can help you develop robust complaint handling procedures and review existing practices. This includes templates for reporting feedback, a sample compliment and complaint management policy, and a list of organisations to go to for additional support.	Tools and resources
	<i>Responding to allegations of abuse involving people with disabilities guidelines</i>	These guidelines have been developed to support disability service providers and Victoria Police to more effectively respond to people with disabilities who have been victims, witnesses or alleged perpetrators of abuse.	Guideline
	<i>Client incident management guide</i>	The department has developed a new client incident management system (CIMS) that focuses on the safety and wellbeing of clients.	Website

		The CIMS outlines the approach and key actions to manage a client incident. The <i>Client incident management guide</i> describes each of the actions and responsibilities of service providers and the department when managing client incidents.	
	<i>Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>	This document assists people with a disability, their families and carers to become more familiar with the rights and obligations set out in the <i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> . It also provides guidance about practical measures support services might take to give effect to these rights and obligations.	Plain English version
Department of Health and Human Services	Disability advocacy and self-help website	The department's advocacy and self-help website provides links to disability advocacy organisations and contains information on the Disability Advocacy Innovation Fund.	Website
	Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme	The link provides information on the expansion of the Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme (DWES) and how it works so that pre-employment screening occurs and unsuitable workers are excluded from the disability service sector workforce.	Website
	Amendments to the Disability Act, including enhancement of the Disability Services Commissioner's oversight powers	The link includes information about the amended Disability Act, which formalises the principle of zero tolerance of abuse and neglect and strengthens the Disability Services Commissioner's oversight of the disability sector.	Website
Disability Services Commissioner	<i>Everything you wanted to know about complaints...</i>	This booklet provides advice and tips for service providers in preparing for, resolving and reviewing the handling of complaints about their services.	Booklet
	<i>10 useful tips for an effective complaints policy and procedure</i>	Service providers can use this checklist to review their existing practices for receiving and dealing with complaints.	Checklist
	<i>After a complaint</i>	Service providers can use this checklist to review their existing processes for handling complaints.	Checklist
	<i>Good practice guide and self audit tool</i>	This tool assists service providers to develop and review their complaints management process to ensure that it is responsive and accessible to people with a disability and forms part of a broader quality culture.	Tool
	<i>Investigations: guidance for good practice</i>	This booklet provides guidance to disability service providers undertaking investigations of staff-to-client assaults and unexplained injuries.	Booklet Factsheet 1 Factsheet 2

	<i>Complaints systems and practice self-audit – quick checklist</i>	This checklist provides service providers with a snapshot of their progress in developing a positive complaints culture.	Checklist
	Complaints culture surveys	These surveys support providers to identify the degree to which the message 'It's OK to complain' applies to their organisation, based on feedback from people with a disability, their families, carers, advocates and staff at all levels of an organisation.	Staff survey Client survey Families and advocates survey
Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)	<i>Interagency guideline for addressing violence, neglect and abuse</i>	This is a good-practice guideline for organisations, staff members and volunteers working with adults who are at risk of violence, neglect or abuse.	Guideline
Disability Advocacy Resource Unit	Rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability	This short video explains rights under the <i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability</i> . It is presented by people with a disability.	Video

Peak bodies

Source	Resource	Description	Link
National Disability Services	<i>Safeguarding for boards guide</i>	The guide includes a checklist for boards and recommended actions that organisations can take to embed a zero tolerance approach and a video with advice for boards about adopting a human rights-based approach in their organisations.	Guide Video
	<i>Understanding abuse</i> downloadable worksheets	These worksheets promote reflection, team discussion and action through simple personal and team exercises. They include checklists to help support workers to recognise instances of good, poor and abusive practice.	Worksheets Guide for supervisors Course preview
	<i>Human rights and you</i>	This video-based e-learning program educates disability support workers about why human rights matter when supporting people with a disability.	Workbook Accessible version Animation
	Adopting a human rights based approach	This short video is intended for boards of service providers and contains information and strategies to embed a human rights approach in their organisations.	Video
	<i>Conducting investigations: responding to disclosed, reported or observed abuse of people with disability by members of staff</i>	Comprehensive guide developed to assist Victorian disability service providers when conducting investigations into alleged abuse, neglect and violence towards people with a disability by service provider staff.	Online booklet

	<i>Safer recruitment and screening</i>	The practice advice highlights the importance of service user involvement in recruitment, values-based recruitment and the limitations of police checks alone.	Practice advice
Australasian Disability Professionals	<i>A worker's guide to safe-guarding people living with disability from abuse</i>	This resource for worker explains what abuse is and strategies to prevent abuse. It also provides information on the kinds of restrictive practices that are acceptable.	Guide
Queensland Council of Social Service	<i>Multicultural resource book for disability service providers</i>	This resource book provides information, ideas and contacts that will help to identify and support people with a disability from culturally and linguistically diverse and non-English speaking backgrounds. Pages 14-15 contain a checklist of steps disability service organisations can follow to meet the needs of diverse communities.	Book
Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet	Disability health promotion resources and practice resources	This website provides links to further information on health promotion resources, practice resources and journals associated with disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Website
	Disability within the Indigenous community	This information provides an overview of indigenous disability, with a focus on barriers that that exist to accessing disability support services.	Website

Advocacy organisations

Source	Resource	Description	Link
Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV)	<i>Our right to safety and respect: guidelines for developing resources with women with disabilities about safety from violence and abuse</i>	These guidelines are designed to assist a range of Australian organisations that either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek to support women with disabilities who may have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, violence and abuse • are developing a resource on violence and abuse for women with disabilities • wish to identify opportunities to enhance existing resources on violence and abuse to ensure their relevance and accessibility to women with disabilities. 	Guidelines
	Factsheets	These factsheets contain information about the experiences of women with a disability, with specific information about violence and abuse.	Factsheets
	WDV YouTube Channel	Range of YouTube videos by WDV discussing issues relevant to women with disabilities.	Videos
	Information resource page	This page contains a range of information specific to women with disabilities	Factsheets

		highlighting particular high-impact issues including violence against women with a disability and access to inclusive health care.	
Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALiD)	Staying Safe Project	VALiD has developed a training package for people with a disability about identifying, preventing and responding to abuse. Service providers can support people with a disability to access these training packages, which aim to empower individuals to understand and speak up for their rights as a powerful means of preventing abuse from occurring, as well as ensuring that situations can be dealt with before they escalate to abusive practice.	Website
	Self-advocacy resources catalogue	This catalogue contains a range of VALiD's posters for services (including residential settings) to promote understanding about making complaints, accessing advocacy services and rights and responsibilities.	Catalogue
	<i>Key groups – resource sheet</i>	This resource sheet contains a list of key Victorian groups providing advocacy, information and complaint handling services for people with a disability.	Factsheet
Association for Children with a Disability (ACD)	PEP Talks – Keeping children safe	ACD has developed online resources for parents and guardians of children with a disability to assist when: choosing a service provider for their child; supporting their child's emotional, physical and sexual development; and promoting healthy and respectful relationships.	Website
	Resources	Includes information about services and supports for children with a disability and their families living in Victoria. View the resources online or request a printed copy.	Resources

Service providers

Source	Resource	Description	Link
Scope	Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse – communication toolkit and resources	<p>This communication toolkit provides resources for people with complex communication needs to assist individuals to identify and report abuse.</p> <p>The Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse resources are also designed to build the capacity of service providers to support people who have experience of, or are at risk of, abuse to tell their story.</p> <p>The toolkit contains a set of communication boards, a communication book, record sheets, posters and factsheets, most of which are available on</p>	Website

		the website.	
	Easy English information	These factsheets contain information about Easy English – a style of writing that has been developed to provide understandable materials for people with a limited ability to read and write words.	Factsheets
	<i>Augmented and alternative communication strategies for the healthcare setting</i>	This factsheet informs about resources and services that support augmentative and alternative communication and communication access in healthcare settings.	Factsheet
	<i>Connecting me</i> toolkit	This toolkit increases community inclusion for people with a disability and their families, using a co-design model. Part 1 contains strategies and resources that can be used to plan individualised services. Part 2 contains factsheets, examples and templates about a range of communication aids.	Toolkit
Tipping Foundation	Zero tolerance to abuse	This booklet is designed for people with a disability to stop abuse and neglect from happening. It provides strategies to use in abusive situations.	Website

External pathways to make a complaint or seek advice

If workers see, suspect or are told about a case of abuse, they must take immediate action. This includes reporting the abuse to their manager or supervisor. It may also be necessary to report the matter to an external authority. For instance, if a senior staff member is suspected of committing abuse, or if the senior staff member does not adequately respond to the incident, the worker should seek advice or make a complaint through an external pathway (see Table 2). Disability service providers should ensure their staff are aware of these external pathways.

Table 2: External pathways to make a complaint or seek advice

Complaint/ advice pathway	When this pathway is appropriate	Contact information
Disability Services Commissioner (DSC)	The DSC can take complaints about the way a disability service provider is providing its services in Victoria. The DSC complaints service is independent and confidential and can respond to complaints or provide advice on further steps to assist the person.	1800 677 342 complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au Online complaints form
Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)	The OPA has a focus on improving organisational responses to violence and abuse, and on better understanding violence against women with a disability. The advice service can be contacted during business hours if a worker has questions about responding to an instance of abuse or suspected abuse.	1300 309 337
Health Complaints Commissioner	Complaints can be made to the Health Complaints Commissioner about health services that breach the <i>General services code of conduct</i> . The commissioner has powers to investigate a breach of the code and, if satisfied that a person has breached the code (or committed a prescribed offence), the commissioner may make an order to prevent a serious risk to the life, health, safety or welfare of a person or the public. An order may prohibit a person from continuing to providing a health service. Breaching an order is a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment.	1300 582 113
Victorian Ombudsman	The Victorian Ombudsman hears complaints about state government departments and local councils. The Ombudsman may be contacted if a worker is not confident about the timeliness, independence and integrity of a non-police investigation into an alleged case of abuse, neglect or violence.	1800 806 314 Online complaints form
Chief Psychiatrist	A complaint can be made to the Chief Psychiatrist if a person alleges violence, neglect or abuse in relation to a publicly funded clinical mental health service.	1300 767 299
Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA)	If a sexual assault has occurred or is suspected, CASA can provide advice and support.	1800 806 292
1800 RESPECT – National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling	If sexual assault or family violence has occurred or is suspected, advice may be sought from the National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service.	1800 737 732

Service		
Safe Steps: Family Violence Response Centre	If family violence has occurred or is suspected, support can be sought from Safe Steps. The centre provides crisis support services, safe house accommodation, refuge accommodation, safety planning, outreach services, information and advocacy.	1800 015 188

Facilitating access to independent support

Disability service workers should be encouraged to facilitate access to independent supports, including advocacy organisations, if a person's rights are not being upheld or where the person expresses the desire to access independent supports.

Table 3 provides a list of organisations that workers can contact to support a person with a disability to access independent supports. This list is not comprehensive but aims to provide information about a range of services that cater to diverse groups of people with a disability, including groups at higher risk of abuse.

Table 3: List of organisations workers can contact to support a person with a disability

Independent support pathway	When this pathway is appropriate	Contact information
Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)	The OPA provides advice, assistance and advocacy regarding complaints on behalf of people with a disability. The OPA's advocacy services include advocating for people who are at risk of abuse, exploitation or neglect, advocating for best interests of clients and providing advice on rights.	(03) 9603 9500 1300 309 337 (toll free) publicadvocate@justice.vic.gov.au
Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALiD)	VALiD provides advocacy support for adults with an intellectual disability and provides a range of information resources about statewide, regional and local advocacy services and self-advocacy services.	(03) 9416 4003 1800 655 570 (toll free) office@valid.org.au
Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)	ADEC provides information, referrals and advocacy for people with a disability and their families from non-English speaking backgrounds. ADEC employs bilingual ethnic disability workers.	(03) 9480 1666 1800 626 078 (toll free) info@adec.org.au
Association for Children with a Disability (ACD)	ACD provides information, advocacy and support for families of children with a disability.	(03) 9880 7000 1800 654 013 (rural callers) mail@acd.org.au ; acdsupport@org.au
Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV)	WDV provides systematic advocacy on behalf of women with disabilities.	(03) 9286 7800 wdv@wdv.org.au
Communication Rights Australia	Communication Rights Australia advocacy aims to ensure that the rights of people with little or no speech are upheld and that these people are supported to make their	(03) 9555 8552 (03) 9555 8948 1300 666 604 info@communicationrights.org.au

	own decisions, particularly those where the outcomes affect their lives.	
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Declaration for Thumbs Up Community Services Pty Ltd Workers

I _____ have been informed of and understand the obligations in the *Code of conduct for disability service workers* agree to abide by the code of conduct.

Signature of employee

Date:

Signature of employer or employer representative

Date:

Declaration for disability service provider - Thumbs Up Community Services Pty Ltd.

I, Niydalh Elbouch, on behalf of Thumbs Up Community Services Pty Ltd, acknowledge and am committed to supporting the employees of Thumbs Up Community Services Pty Ltd to abide by the obligations outlined in the *Code of conduct for disability service workers*.

Signature of disability service provider representative

Date:

Position of disability service provider
representative