

Objective:

CODA Inc. supports the right of clients to request an advocate of their choice at any time, to be fully informed and to be involved in decisions about their care.

Scope:

All CODA Inc. staff and Board

Policy Statement:

CODA Inc. will ensure that clients are informed of their right to access an advocate to speak on their behalf. Disability advocacy plays an important role in making sure that the rights and interests of people with a disability are respected and realised.

The organisation is proactive in representing the needs of clients and their families and carers in service planning and improved service delivery through participation in local and regional networks and partnerships and/or direct consultation. Advocacy organisations form part of our regional networks.

Definition:

An advocate can be defined as someone who pleads for, intercedes, or speaks on behalf of individuals or groups.

Responsibilities:

An advocate can assist by:-

- Ensuring the client's rights are maintained
- Ensuring the client actively participates in decision-making processes where the outcomes affect their lives
- Resolving problems or complaints in relation to services.

Types of Advocacy:

Self Advocacy - plays an important role in making sure that people with a disability get the skills they need for making sure that their rights and interests are respected and realised. For people with a disability self-advocacy is about:-

- Speaking up for yourself
- Understanding your rights
- Making real choices
- Learning new skills

Group Advocacy- intends to assist members of a group, within a specific target population to further understand and access services. They may also work with groups to represent their special needs.

Systemic/Structural Advocacy- is intended to influence change in policies and practises of government and service providers to bring about social change.

Individual Advocacy- involves seeking a solution with and on behalf of people with special needs so that they can gain/obtain the most relevant and appropriate service to meet their needs. Advocacy activities may be provided internal or external to the agency and include the following:-

- providing information
- advocating and negotiating on behalf of clients
- assisting clients to gain self advocacy skills
- fostering client participation in service planning
- providing language support or communication needs
- developing links in service networks.

CODA Inc. will assist clients access an advocate of their choice.

Quality Document References:

- Behaviour Support & Restrictive Interventions: Policy -(CO) Client Support
- Behaviour Support & Restrictive Interventions: Policy -(CO) Client Support
(Not Issued - In Draft)
- Planning for people with a disability: Policy -(CO) Client Support
- Advocacy: Procedure -(CO) Client Support
- Behaviour Support & Restrictive Interventions: Procedure -(CO) Client Support
- Behaviour Support & Restrictive Interventions: Procedure -(CO) Client Support
(Not Issued - In Draft)
- Planning for people with a disability: Procedure -(CO) Client Support

External Files/Links:

- Legislation and Policy Vic State Disability Plan

References to Standards and Legislation:

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| VDS Standard 1: Service Access | 1.3: Accurate and accessible information |
| VDS Standard 2: Individual Needs | 2.4: Engage others to provide communication support |
| VDS Standard 3: Decision-Making and Choice | 3.3: Exercise control over choice |
| VDS Standard 7: Complaints and Disputes | 7.5: Provide support to raise concerns |
| VDS Standard 7: Complaints and Disputes | 7.6: Information in accessible format |
| VDS Standard 8: Service Management | 8.11.9: Access to advocacy support |
| VDS Standard 8: Service Management | 8.13: Consumer feedback process |
| VDS Standard 9: Freedom from Abuse and Neglect | 9.8: Supports to understand abuse/neglect |
| VDS Standard 9: Freedom from Abuse and Neglect | 9.9: Accessible information about abuse and neglect |

Other Information:

This policy must be read in conjunction with all other related documentation including the Advocacy procedure.