

Advocacy

Independence through empowerment.

Advocacy is the process of guiding, supporting or acting on behalf of another person or group of people in order to obtain the best possible outcomes for that person or group.

Advocacy can relate to issues which affect people as individuals or an issue which is affecting a number of people. Advocacy assists people to obtain their rights in relation to issues that affect them.

Advocacy is important to:

- Address discrimination.
- Empower individuals.
- Provide community education, and
- Increase people's quality of life.

What do Advocates do?

- Work in partnership with you to assist you to resolve a particular issue.
- Provide information and support which can assist you to be in control of your circumstances.
- Inform you of your rights and responsibilities.
- Represent you when dealing with service providers.
- Mediate and negotiate on your behalf.
- Encourage you to develop skills in self-advocacy.
- Listen to you without judging your situation.

- Refer to the appropriate services as needed.
- Take issues to relevant authorities if necessary, and
- Provide community education about particular issues.

Self-Advocacy

- Remember to be positive, calm and clear on what you want.
 - Collect all relevant information that may be needed to support your case.
 - When advocating via phone, ensure you get the name and position of the person you are speaking with so you can follow up if needed.
 - Don't always anticipate that there will be conflict.
 - Don't let yourself be intimidated by others.
 - Don't turn advocating into personal attacks on individuals.
 - Request that important issues and decisions are recorded in writing.
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Advocacy Services:

- Rights Information & Advocacy Centre (RIAC) 1800 221 944
- Office of the Public Advocate 1300 309 337
- Seniors Information Victoria 1300 135 090
- Financial & Consumer Rights Council 1800 134 139
- Consumers Affairs Victoria 1300 558 181
- Health Services Commissioner 1800 136 066
- Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA) 1800 700 600 or visit www.era.asn.au
- LGBTQ Switchboard 1800 184 527
- National Aged Care Advocacy line on 1800 700 600 (free call) or visit the OPAN website <http://www.opan.com.au/>
- Disability Services Commissioner 1800 728 187 or www.odsc.vic.gov.au
- Association for Children with a Disability 1800 654 013 or www.acd.org.au
- Wellways 1300 11 400 or <https://www.wellways.org/>
- Children of Parents with mental illness (COPMI) <http://www.copmi.net.au/>
- NDIS <https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/disability-advocacy>

Who is entitled to Advocacy services?

Anyone who feels that have been unfairly dealt with or who feel their issues are not being heard, is entitled to contact an Advocacy service. The services will then listen to your case and work with you to decide on the most appropriate action to take in resolving your problem

Need help?

To find out more about Nexus, please contact us on:

t 1300 77 33 52

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