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RESPONSIBLE MANAGER:	Manager - Disability Support
CATEGORY:	Disability Support
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RELATED DOCUMENTS:	Legislation: Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) National - Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth) United Nations Charter of Human Rights
	Documents: PPP013 Inclusion and Diversity Policy PPP052 Duty of Care of Students Guidelines PPP083a Code of Conduct -Child Safety Valid - List of Victoria Advocacy Organisations

1. Introduction

South West Disability Services (SWDS) and South West TAFE (SWTAFE) recognise the importance of empowering participants to be the leader in their own life and promote the use of Self-Advocacy where possible. SWDS understand that not all participants have the ability to self-advocate and may require assistance to increase their voice and influence direction that is in the participants best interest. SWDS will activity promote the use of advocacy in decision making, communication and person-centered care.

2. Responsibility

All employees involved in providing services within the Disability Support Depart Department and Key Management Personal hold a responsibility to support a participant in accessing and advising of advocacy services available.

3. Definitions

Advocacy Advocacy is acting, speaking or writing to promote and protect the human rights and welfare of a vulnerable person or group of people. Examples of vulnerable people include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, children and their families, refugees, the elderly, the LGBTQIA+ community, the homeless, and people with disability.

Participant A person with a disability that accesses SWDS at SWTAFE.

Nominee The person identified as being legally responsible for the participant, as nominated through the use of an active National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan (e.g. parent, guardian, or carer).

4. Advocacy Commitment

- Upon commencing services with SWDS, new participants will be informed of the role of advocates within the Participant Handbook, their right to use advocates and advocacy services, and how to contact and involve advocacy agencies.
- SWDS will actively promote and empower participants to self-advocate in all areas of their support, including in relation to the choice to change advocates, or withdraw their authority for an advocate.
- If a participant requests an advocate and a family or carer cannot provide the service, SWDS will attempt to introduce an advocate chosen by the participant.
- If a participant requests a SWTAFE or SWDS employee to be an advocate, their authority to act is recorded along with the issues important to the participant and their goals and not apply their own views, opinion or ideas.
- SWDS will work with the advocate chosen by a participant and involve the advocate in all areas of the participant's service planning and decision making, as per the choice of the participant.
- Whenever a participant is assisted by an advocate, SWDS will document this within their Client Management Profile (Supportability)

5. Role of an Advocate

The role of an advocate will vary based on the participant, taking into consideration their own dignity of risk, choices, goals and personal circumstances. A participant may choose to use one or more of the following:

- **Individual Advocate:** one-on-one advocacy aimed to prevent or address instances of discrimination or abuse to a person with disability
- **Systemic advocacy:** advocacy to influence or secure long-term changes to ensure the collective rights and interests of people with disability
- **Family advocacy:** a parent or family member advocates with and on behalf of a participant with disability
- **Group advocacy:** advocacy for a group of people with disability, such as a group of people living in shared accommodation
- **Citizen advocacy:** where community volunteers advocate for a person with a disability over the long-term, supported by a citizen advocacy organization
- **Legal advocacy:** where a lawyer provides legal representation, pursues positive changes to legislation, or gives legal advice to people with disability about discrimination and human rights.

6. Limitations of an Advocate

Where an advocate is chosen by a participant SWDS will take active measures to ensure that during engagement with the services, the advocate does not engage in the below:

- Counselling
- Influencing decisions that can have a personal incentive
- Provide their personal opinion

7. Nominated NDIS Nominee- Supported Decision Making

- A participant may elect to have an appointed plan nominee for their NDIS plan decisions, this is formally recorded with the NDIA via formal application and request.
- SWDS will record this information within the Client Management System (Supportability) and ensure communication and decision-making documents are shared with all parties. The participant will remain at the forefront of supports.
- SWDS recognise the importance of ensuring conversations and decisions are made with the participant present and active in all correspondence. Where correspondence may be harmful to the participant or others, SWDS will apply discretion.

8. Access and Equity

SWTAFE is committed to adhering to access and equity in the implementation for these guidelines. For more information please visit: [SWTAFE's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives](#).