



Human Rights Policy

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Contents

Human Rights Policy	3
1.1. Purpose	3
1.2. Application of Policy	3
1.3. Procedures	4
1.4. Performance Standards	4
1.5. Review of the Policy	4

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote the human rights of Down South Therapy (DST) clients
- Create and maintain a service culture which promotes the rights of all people, including freedom of expression; choice making, and freedom from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Create a service where risks to the rights and well-being of clients are minimised; and
- Ensure that if Down South Therapy becomes aware of an instance of abuse, neglect or exploitation, that Down South Therapy responds professionally and compassionately to address the situation in accordance with the requirements of:
 - NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
 - NDIS Act 2013
 - NDIS Code of Conduct
 - NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
 - UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability

“Rights: The service promotes individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making and actively prevents abuse, harm, neglect and violence”

This policy relates to all Down South Therapy activities and applies to all employees, contractors, students, advocates, Directors and others who may act on behalf of Down South Therapy.

1.2. Application of Policy

Down South Therapy affirms the rights of all people including people with disability to be respected, to have their dignity and privacy upheld, to have their right to expression and decision-making opportunities safeguarded, and that they are not exposed to any form of abuse or neglect while using our service, so they can feel safe from harm, as far as possible.

We expect that everyone who is associated with Down South Therapy will share our commitment to maintaining an organisational culture that:

- upholds the value and dignity of our clients;
- Ensures all clients and families/carers are treated with courtesy and respect;
- Builds trusting relationships with our clients, their families and carers;
- Provides services in an environment that is safe and welcoming for everyone;
- Advocates for the rights of people with disabilities and their families/carers.
- Supports and encourages people to express their views and wishes of the service
- Supports people to make choices about the services they receive
- Empowers our clients by helping them to understand their rights and providing information about service options and community supports;
- Makes everyone feel safe to raise concerns;
- Responds proactively to concerns and complaints when they arise; and
- Fosters collaboration with other organisations in upholding clients’ human rights and preventing abuse and neglect.

1.3. Procedures

Staff, contractors and Directors of Down South Therapy will –

1. Treat all clients and their families/carers with dignity and respect.
2. Uphold the rights of clients and their families/carers to express their views, choices and concerns, in relation to the service and effects it has on their lives.
3. Recognise the role of families, carers and other advocates in safeguarding the rights and well-being of people with disabilities.
4. Ensure that staff does not speak about clients/family members in front of them, but always discuss issues with clients/family members.
5. Support clients and their families/carers to make decisions about their lives by providing accurate, timely information about their rights and responsibilities; and the responsibilities of the service.
6. Work to prevent, as far as possible; any abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harm to its clients and their families/carers.
7. When it is made aware of any breach of human rights of a client or family/carer; respond promptly with strategies to address the issue; including reporting incidents and putting safeguards in place. (Policy and Procedures 1.4 Freedom from Abuse and Neglect)
8. Provide clients and their families/carers with information about other supports, and when needed, access to advocacy support and/or referral to legal advice.
9. Respect the privacy of people with disabilities and their families/carers.
10. Keep personal information about clients and families/carers confidential.
11. Provide services in ways that pose the least restrictions on clients and their families/carers; whilst still implementing safeguards to ensure their well-being is protected.

1.4. Performance Standards

The following performance standards must be met and implemented effectively:

1. Our clients and their families/carers report they feel respected and welcomed by all service staff.
2. Clients and families/carers freely express their needs and wishes about the service
3. Clients and families/carers report trusting our service to advocate for their rights and the meeting of their needs
4. Clients and Families/carers raise concerns and issues as they arise within the service.
5. Clients and families/Carers are aware of other services available to them in the community.

1.5. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.