



## **Independence and Informed Choice**

Version 1.2  
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## Independence and Informed Choice Policy

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### 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the clients of Down South Therapy (DST) can participate as fully as possible in decision-making relating to the services that they need, want and receive in accordance with:

- The NDIS Code of Conduct
- UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- NDIS Act 2013

This policy relates to all of 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 is committed to ensuring that all clients of the organisation retain maximum control over their own lives by having primary involvement in, and influence over, decisions that affect them.

Facilitation of this commitment in relation to Independence and Informed Choice is supported by:

- The Policy on Independence and Informed Choice is made available to members, families, staff and contractors both on the DST portal, DST website and in the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.
- Staff have been provided with training in person centred practices and are familiar with the concepts that support individual decision making and choice.
- Members and their families/carers (when appropriate) have been involved from the outset in designing the individual service plan.
- The organisation's services have been structured in a way as to permit maximum flexibility and responsiveness to individual preferences and choices.
- A written, current individual service plan has been developed for all members in accordance with the Policy on Person Centred Supports and a copy has been provided to the member, family members and advocates, where the client chooses to have one completed.
- Written individual services plans have been countersigned by the member, family members and/or advocates.
- Individual services plans have been jointly reviewed at least annually or more frequently if requested by the member, family members or advocates.
- Members, families or advocates have participated in Down South Therapy strategic planning activities.

### 1.3. Procedure

The following procedures are to be implemented to enable Down South Therapy to meet its policy objective of ensuring that clients have primary involvement in, and influence over, decisions that affect them.

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Down South Therapy will:

- 1) Structure and develop its services to be flexible and responsive to the individual needs and preferences of current and future clients.
- 2) Ensure that clients are informed of the range of services available and consult with them in the development of individualised services that meet their unique circumstances.
- 3) Ensure that clients are always in control of their funding and where Down South Therapy has access to a clients funding through the NDIA portal or other property, processes to ensure that it is managed, protected and accounted for are developed, applied, reviewed and communicated.
- 4) Ensure that a client's funds or other property is only used with the consent of the participant and for the purposes intended by the participant.
- 5) Ensure each client's right to the dignity of risk in decision-making is supported. When needed, each participant is supported to make informed choices about the benefits and risks of the options under consideration.
- 6) Ensure that services offered will provide as wide a choice as possible so as to enhance life experiences, with the organisation taking reasonable care to avoid foreseeable risks without unduly limiting the rights of each member to take responsibility for their own decisions.
- 7) Access to supports required by the participant will not be withdrawn or denied solely on the basis of a dignity of risk choice that has been made by the participant
- 8) Involve the client, their family and/or advocates in the development of an individual service plans and provide them with the necessary information, time and resources to make informed decisions about the outcomes the organisation will work on in partnership with the client and their family, friends and community.
- 9) Jointly review the clients individual service plan regularly and ensure any changes are agreed with the client.
- 10) Seek the formal authorisation of the client, family or advocates by having them countersign the agreed individual service plan
- 11) Continue to respect, promote and support clients being self-determining wherever possible, by informing clients of their rights and responsibilities, and providing access to information that will facilitate effective decision making and choice by individuals.
- 12) Encourage and support clients to develop their capacity and confidence to make decisions that affect their lives.
- 13) Respect that clients have the right to choose an advocate to participate in appropriate decision making at all service levels. Those not able to make informed choices will receive advocacy as required. A current list of Advocates can be found on the NDIS Commission Website (<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/participants-get-help>) which takes clients through to an advocacy directory <https://askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder>
- 14) Ensure clients, their families and/or advocates are included in the selection process of new Staff who provide services to them, wherever possible to the level they desire.
  - a) Involve clients, families and advocates in the organisation's strategic planning activities.
  - b) Involve clients, families and advocates in the development of the organisation's service policies and procedures.
- 15) Ensure all staff are given adequate training with regard to organisational policy and how to fulfil these objectives effectively in practice.
- 16) Continue to explore new and innovative individual service delivery options within the constraints of available resources.