



Handbook for Clients

Southern Disability Advocacy Inc Reg No.: A0009334D
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Introduction

Southern Disability Advocacy (SDA) provides advocacy for people with a disability. SDA assists by helping you to:

- Stand up for your rights and to protect your rights;
- Overcome barriers, including abuse and neglect which effect your daily life
- Participate in the community
- Access the same freedoms, services and conditions enjoyed by other members of the community.

We work in the councils of Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Kingston Bayside, Frankston, Casey and Mornington Peninsula.

To make an appointment with SDA

- call us on 9533 5977
- Or write to us at PO Box 161 Bentleigh 3204
- Or fax us on 9923 6173
- Or email us at info@southernda.org.au
- Use the appointment booking link on www.southernda.org.au

Program Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Program is to provide advocacy for people with disabilities living in our catchment area. This is done by Individual Advocacy. Individual Advocacy is when SDA staff help a person by advocating on their behalf or help them to speak up for themselves.

We work with people with all disability.

The objective of all work done by the Program is to:

- Help people with a disability to have equal access and participation in the community;
- Educate people with disabilities about their rights;
- Encourage people with disabilities to make informed choices;
- Promote independence amongst people with disabilities;

- Help people with disabilities to have their wishes and needs recognized by the rest of the community and to see this happen in community structures and attitudes;
- Provide advocacy for people with disabilities;
- Publish the work and aims of Independent Advocacy to encourage support for these aims in the rest of the community;

- Improve public awareness of the issues faced by people with disabilities through community education programs;
- Encourage public assistance with Independent Advocacy programs;
- Maintain appropriate links with other relevant organisations.

The information provided in this handbook is general and you might need to have more information about your individual situation or needs. It is important to talk to the staff about your situation.

Advocacy is usually short-term, to work on a particular problem or issue for you. When we believe we have done everything reasonable to assist you, we will then cease working with you. Advocacy isn't case management or support coordination, and we don't do the work that should be done by other services or workers.

Who We Are

Southern Disability Advocacy is an Incorporated Association under the *Associations Incorporations Reform Act 2012*, and its work and decisions have to follow that law. This means we have to follow the law, the Articles of Association and our Constitution.

If you want a copy of the SDA Constitution you just have to ask an SDA staff member. You can have a copy of the Constitution of SDA at any time so you can understand what we do.

National Disability Standards

These are Standards that make sure those organizations which provide services to people with disability work well with you and assist you to achieve what you want in life.

The Standards are:

1. Rights
2. Participation and Inclusion
3. Individual Outcomes
4. Feedback and Complaints
5. Service Access
6. Service Management

SDA **must** follow the National Disability Standards when dealing with all clients.

In this handbook we have written down some of the ways SDA follows each of the standards.

Standard Number 1: Rights

This standard means you have the right to exercise choice and control over the advocacy that SDA does for and with you. You have the right to make your own decisions and to take risks and to not experience discrimination or harm from the advocacy we do for you.

It means that you can make choices about the services and supports you use, including those provided by SDA. It means when we work with you, we will respect you.

In our advocacy work we promote your human rights, such as the freedom of expression, self-determination and decision making, and we are will always act to prevent abuse, harm, neglect and violence against you.

SDA does not tell you what to do in your life.

SDA staff will explain the options that you have, and what will happen for every option. It is then up to you to choose what option you wish to take. SDA will support your choice, even if they do not agree with your choice.

The only time SDA staff and your Advocate will interfere with your choice is if they believe you are going to harm yourself seriously or harm someone else.

This standard is also about how SDA protects you from abuse and neglect and to uphold all your legal and human rights.

No one is allowed to neglect you or abuse you in any way.

Neglect means lots of things. Like telling someone you are:

- Sick
- Scared
- Being Bullied
- Hurt

And yet they do nothing to help you.

Abuse means things like:

- Being yelled at
- Hit
- Touching you when you do not want them to
- Taking your money
- Not giving you food, clean clothes or medicine you need

If the SDA staff or Committee of Management does not listen to you when you say you are being neglected or abused then you can ring:

- Disability Hotline for Abuse or Neglect on 1 800 880 052

Or

- Complaints and Resolution Referral Service on 1 800 880 052

Standard Number 2: Participation and Inclusion

This standard is about SDA supporting you to be part of your community. We support you to have contact with family, friends and community in the way you choose.

It means we advocate for you to follow your interests and activities, and that we work with you and the people you see as important in your life. We advocate for you to be included and to be a part of your community. Your community is where you live, who you live with, where you work and your friends, family and neighbours.

SDA will try to assist you to join in activities in your local community.

Remember you have a right to be involved in the community and to get help with that if you wish.

If you want SDA to work with you, we will ask you about what needs you have, and what your wishes and goals are for the future.

SDA and you talk about lots of things, and then together we write up a plan that sets out your wishes, goals and needs. The plan may change from time to time and this is okay.

SDA and you might talk about things like where you want to live, what you want to do in the day and what activities you want to do to make your life more meaningful and enjoyable to you.

Sometimes things in life change for all of us. SDA knows that this can happen and works to make sure we still provide the support that you need.

SDA does not tell you what to do in your life.

SDA staff will explain the options that you have, and what will happen for every option. It is then up to you to choose what option you wish to take. SDA will support your choice, even if they do not agree with your choice.

The only time SDA staff will interfere with your choice is if they believe you are going to harm yourself seriously or harm someone else.

Staff should make you feel comfortable and treat you as an equal. They should help you take part in activities in your community, if that is what you want. This means they might tell you about things that are going on, or help you use a service or join a club.

Standard Number 3: Individual Outcomes

This standard is about how SDA tries to help you achieve what you want and get what you need to live the life you want.

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Standard Number 4: Feedback and Complaints

This standard is about how SDA responds to the situation where someone from SDA has said or done something that you don't think is right or that has made you angry or upset.

If you want to complain about SDA you can tell them yourself - if you want to.

If that is too difficult to do, you may ask to speak to someone on the Committee of Management. The Committee of Management is the boss of SDA staff. You can do this by telephoning 9533 5977 and asking for someone from the Committee to call you. The member of the Committee that is to call you must contact you quickly and will work to sort out your complaint. If talking to someone at SDA about your complaint is too difficult you can put your complaint in writing to us. You can do this by sending us a letter or completing our Complaint Form. Phone 9533 5977 and ask for it to be sent to you.

You can have assistance from someone else, such as a family member, a friend, carer or advocate in making a complaint about SDA.

Another way to make a complaint about SDA is to speak to people outside of SDA and ask for their help in sorting out the problem with SDA. If you are not happy with the way SDA handles your complaint or dispute you can speak to outside people as well.

This is a list of organisations that can help you with a complaint you may have about SDA:

- The Office of the Public Advocate: Phone: 1800 309 337
- Villamanta Legal Services: Phone: 1800 014 111
- Victorian Advocacy League for Intellectual Disability VALID 9416 4003
- Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC) 9387 8317
- Department of Social Services. Phone: 1800 634 035
- Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline: Phone: 1800 880 052
- Complaints Resolution & Referral Service Phone: 1800 880 052

Remember:

- Your complaint is only between you and the people you tell.
- You won't get into trouble for speaking up.
- Southern Disability Advocacy will make sure your complaint is sorted out within the time everyone agreed on.

- Your complaint will be kept confidential in your secure file in the office.
- You can see it at any time if you wish. Simply talk to the Program Manager to arrange a time.
- The Committee of Management is the boss of SDA staff. They must be told about complaints about SDA staff so the problem can be sorted out. This means your complaint will be included in the report written by staff to the Committee of Management. You can request that your complaint be reported to the Committee without your name.
- If you are upset about the way someone outside SDA is treating you, then you can tell the SDA Program Manager.

Standard Number 5: Service Access

This standard is about how we decide which people will be able to receive the services of Southern Disability Advocacy (SDA), and how we accept people as clients.

Someone may tell the staff about you or you may approach us yourself. These are the guidelines about who we can help.

1. You have a disability.
2. You live in one of the council areas that we work in.
3. You want to have an Advocate to assist you.
4. You and the staff member agree that you are in need of assistance after meeting to discuss the issues you are facing.
5. The assistance we can give someone depends on the resources we have available at the time. SDA will continue working with you until we agree everything has been done to solve the issue, according to the resources SDA has available.

Standard Number 6: Service Management

This standard is about the way SDA is managed by its Committee of Management. We work for people with disability. This is where decisions are made about how SDA does its work.

There are up to 6 people on the Committee.

There is A Chairperson,
 A Secretary,
 A Treasurer, plus
 Other people

The Committee meets with the staff every 2 months to:

- Talk about Southern Disability Advocacy
- Talk about important things (like money)

The Committee

- Chooses the staff
- Pays the staff
- Works with the staff
- Is responsible for the program.

Privacy Collection Statement

Southern Disability Advocacy has to collect information about you, so that we can advocate for you. The information we need will be related to your life, the services you receive and things that are related to your advocacy issue that we are working on for you.

You don't have to tell us about anything you don't want to

You don't have to provide any information that you don't want but if you don't tell us about something it might mean we can't do our work for you. That is ok: we will discuss this with you and we will respect your decision to not tell us information.

How we keep information about you

We store information about you on our computer and in a file in the office. The file is kept safe, in a locked filing cabinet that only staff can access. Your information on the computer is protected by a password.

We use a type of computer storage that means information is stored on someone else's computer. Even though it is stored on someone else's computer, and this computer might even be overseas, only staff from Southern Disability Advocacy

can access. This is called “cloud computing” and lots of organisations use it. If you don’t want us to store your information in this way, please tell us and we will ensure your information is only stored on our computer. This might mean some restrictions on how we work with you, for example we can only access your information when we are in the office.

For your files that we have stored in “the cloud”, we have used some special computer software that locks it up in a way that means only we can access it, so it is very secure. This is called encryption software, and we believe this means your files that are stored in this way are very secure.

We need your permission to talk to other people in your life

We ask you to sign our Exchange of Information form, so we can show people that you have given us permission to talk to them about you. You can cancel this permission at any time: you just have to tell us. That is ok. We will discuss this with you and always respect your decision.