

## Policy Statement

AHH Lifeskills is fully committed to upholding the rights of individuals with disabilities to exercise choice and control over matters that affect their lives. We deliver high-quality, person-centred services that empower individuals to make informed decisions about their care and wellbeing. Our approach ensures that services are culturally appropriate, flexible, and aligned with the diverse needs and preferences of each person we support.

We ensure that all decisions related to care, support, and service delivery are made with the full participation of individuals, respecting their autonomy, cultural values, and personal circumstances. Our goal is to maximise opportunities for people with disabilities to take control of decisions that impact their daily lives, fostering independence and dignity.

This policy supports AHH Lifeskills to apply the National Standards for Disability Services, in particular Standard 1: *Rights*. This policy guides staff to support people to exercise their rights and have choice and control over their services and decisions.

## Scope

All **employees, contractors, managers and volunteers** are expected to adhere to this policy, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are at the centre of decision-making processes and service delivery. This includes respecting each person's dignity of risk, acknowledging their right to make informed choices that involve potential risks, while ensuring they have access to the support and information necessary to make those decisions safely.

The policy applies to all service interactions, from initial client engagement to ongoing service provision, and recognises that individuals with disabilities have the right to exercise control over their lives, even when that may involve making decisions that carry personal risks. AHH Lifeskills is committed to supporting individuals in these decisions, while balancing the duty of care.

## Definitions

**Dignity of risk:** autonomy and self-determination used by a person when making decisions, including the choice to take potential risks in life.

**Informed consent:** The process of ensuring individuals understand and agree to the terms of a service, treatment, or decision after being provided with all relevant information about risks, benefits, and alternatives.

**Choice and Control:** The ability of individuals to make informed decisions about their own lives, including the services and supports they receive. It also refers to the active participation of individuals in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of their care.

**Person-Centred Approach:** A service delivery model that places the individual at the centre of all decisions and focuses on their unique needs, preferences, goals, and circumstances.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** The practice of recognising, respecting, and responding appropriately to the diverse cultural backgrounds, values, and traditions of individuals. It ensures that service delivery is respectful and aligned with the cultural preferences of each individual.

**Advocacy:** Supporting and empowering individuals with disabilities to express their preferences, needs, and rights. Advocacy can be self-advocacy, where individuals represent their own interests, or support provided by professionals, family members, or carers.

**Autonomy:** The capacity and right of individuals to make their own decisions without coercion or undue influence, particularly regarding matters affecting their personal life, health, and wellbeing.

**Duty of Care:** The legal and ethical obligation of **AHH Lifeskills** staff to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of individuals receiving support, while balancing this with the individual's right to make their own decisions.

## Principles

### 1. **Choice and Control:**

Individuals with disabilities have the right to exercise choice and control over decisions that affect their lives. This includes being fully informed and empowered to

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make decisions about their care and support, ensuring their voices are central in the decision-making process. AHH Lifeskills supports people with disabilities in making informed choices and encourages their active participation at every stage.

## 2. **Dignity of Risk:**

AHH Lifeskills respects the dignity of risk, recognising that individuals with disabilities have the right to take reasonable risks in pursuit of personal growth, independence, and self-fulfilment. We are committed to ensuring that individuals are empowered to make choices that may involve potential risks, while providing appropriate safeguards and support to balance these decisions with safety and wellbeing.

## 3. **Person-Centred Approach:**

Our services are designed with a person-centred focus, ensuring that the unique needs, preferences, and cultural values of everyone are respected. Every individual has the right to be involved in decisions that impact their lives, and we work closely with them to create personalised support plans that align with their goals and aspirations.

## 4. **Respect for Autonomy:**

AHH Lifeskills is committed to fostering independence and ensuring that individuals with disabilities maintain autonomy over their lives. We respect their ability to make decisions, and we provide the necessary information and support to help them exercise control over their personal and professional lives.

## 5. **Cultural Sensitivity:**

Services at AHH Lifeskills are responsive to the cultural backgrounds and individual circumstances of every client. We ensure that service delivery is respectful of cultural diversity, providing tailored supports that align with each person's values, traditions, and beliefs.

## 6. **Client Empowerment and Advocacy:**

AHH Lifeskills supports the rights of people with disabilities to advocate for themselves. We encourage individuals to be active participants in the planning and delivery of services, and we work collaboratively to ensure that their rights are respected and upheld. This includes providing opportunities for people with disabilities to make choices about the services they receive, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

## 7. **Continuous Improvement:**

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AHH Lifeskills is committed to continuous improvement, ensuring that feedback from individuals with disabilities and their families is incorporated into our service delivery. We regularly review our practices to ensure we are meeting the evolving needs and preferences of the people we support.

## **Non-Compliance with Policy:**

All employees, contractors, managers, and volunteers are expected to strictly adhere to this policy. Failure to comply with the principles and obligations outlined in the policy, including respecting the dignity of risk and supporting individuals with disabilities in making informed choices, may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal or written warnings.
- Re-training or additional supervision.
- Suspension from duties.
- Termination of employment or contract.
- Reporting to relevant external authorities where required (e.g., breaches of NDIS regulations).

In cases of serious breaches, particularly those involving misconduct, negligence, or violations of client rights, AHH Lifeskills reserves the right to take immediate and appropriate action to protect the safety and wellbeing of individuals with disabilities. This may include removing the employee or contractor from their duties pending further investigation.

Employees, contractors, and volunteers are encouraged to seek clarification from their managers or the Human Resources team if they have any concerns or questions about their responsibilities under this policy.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed and updated at least annually and in response to relevant legislative changes.

## **Relevant legislation and policy**

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- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Carer Recognition Act 2010
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Privacy Act 1988
- Disability Services Act 1993 (SA)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
- Carers Recognition Act 2005 (SA)
- Guardianship and Administration Act 1993 (SA)
- Advance Care Directives Act 2013 (SA)
- Mental Health Act 2009 (SA)
- NDIS Practice Standards
- National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS)
- South Australian Disability Inclusion Act 2018
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- National Disability Insurance Scheme 2013: Principles
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework

## Approvals

Date of approval: **28/10/2024**

Approved by: **Marci King, Human Resources Manager**

Date of review: **28/10/2025**

Version 1.0 – October 2024