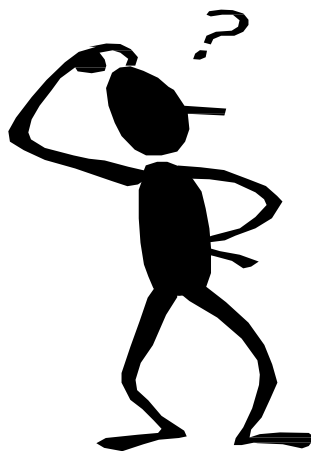


AMIDA

Action for More Independence and
Dignity in Accommodation

Decision Making & Choice Policy



Ross House,
1st Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

Contacts for Housing advocacy:

Phone: 9650 2722

Email: amida@amida.org.au

Contacts for NDIA appeals advocacy:

Phone: 03 9654 2103

Email: appeals@amida.org.au

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**This policy is regularly reviewed and
people using the service can have a say in
improving the policy.**

What is this policy about?

AMIDA believes disabled people should have a real say in running AMIDA, in making decisions about the advocacy work we do and in checking up on how we are going with this work.

This policy is about ensuring AMIDA provides ways for people who use our service have a say in how that service is run and are supported to decide about the service they receive.

AMIDA will work to ensure disabled people are involved in decision making at an individual and service level.

AMIDA takes a person-centered approach in relation to people we work with. This means in our advocacy work, we respect the wishes of the people we are working with and ensure, where possible, that our actions are directed by disabled people.

We aim to take the time to talk to disabled people to find out what their needs and wants are. This has helped us to work out what improvements we should be advocating for.

AMIDA is continuing this process of working for, and with disabled people, to help us make good decisions about what we will work on in the future.

AMIDA supports the seven decision making principles developed by the Victorian Department of Human Services in their document,

**“Supporting Decision Making” 2012
Published by Disability Services Division**

<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-07/Supporting-decision-making-quick-reference-guide.pdf>

The seven Principles are:

- 1. Everyone has the right to make decisions about the things that affect them.**
- 2. Capacity to make decisions must be assumed.**
- 3. Every effort should be made to support people to make their decisions.**
- 4. Capacity is decision specific.**
- 5. People have the right to learn from experience.**
- 6. People have the right to change their minds.**
- 7. People have the right to make decisions others might not agree with.**

AMIDA will also follow the Disability Advocacy Code of Conduct published by the Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) 2011.

www.daru.org.au

This means we will not:

- impose our own opinion or values to restrict, deny or unduly influence the choices of disabled people
- abuse our position of authority or
- make decisions on behalf of a disabled person

We will:

- remind disabled people (and their supporters) that they have a right to make decisions
- encourage disabled people to make decisions about what they want to happen in their lives and the advocacy we will provide
- respect the wishes of the person or people we are working with
- support the person to involve the important people in their life to support them in their decision making where required
- give clear and consistent messages to family members and supporters about discussing advocacy action with the disabled person
- meet with the person several times to get to know them and so they get to know us and feel comfortable with us
- minimise any conflicts of interest
- gather and present all relevant information in a way that the person is most likely to understand
- find out about how the person communicates and use this method

- support people to use experts if they require specific help or assistance with communication e.g. interpreters or facilitators
- provide additional time and discussion of options, thoughts and feelings and understand that it's normal not to have an answer straight away
- take into account knowledge about the person's preferences that has been gathered over time
- take the time to ask people their opinions and not assume what they want
- consider what other factors may affect a person's decision making temporarily such as stress, health, timing, familiarity with the subject, physical environment and any distractions
- find out how the person makes and communicates decisions, their decision-making experience and supports that may be required
- take care to avoid foreseeable risks without unduly limiting the ability of each person we work with to take responsibility for his or her own decisions
- be open and non-judgmental with regard to decisions made by disabled people
- explore both the good and bad things that may come from the advocacy actions we might take and ensure, where possible, the course of action is directed by the person with a disability
- AMIDA can choose to stop advocating if a person is making choices that pose unacceptable risk of harm, as we cannot provide this service safely.
- respond to any changed views and decisions by people with a disability with respect and without prejudice on future advocacy support
- assume a person has capacity to make decisions in the first instance but understand the concepts of decision-making capacity, take a considered view of a person's decision-making capacity based on documented evidence and ensure staff have discussed and explored all avenues of support before seeking substitute decision making
- where people have a guardian, administrator, co-decision maker, or an automatically authorised person with regard to health we will work with this person while still encouraging the person with a disability to make their own decisions where possible
- encourage service users to have their say about our policies and ways of working at AMIDA
- take into account the mandate of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, the Disability and Social Services Amendment Act 2023 and the Guardianship and Administration Act 2019

How do we make sure Disabled People have a Real Say about AMIDA's activities and the Advocacy we provide?

AMIDA aims for people who use a service to have a say in how that service is run. We found there are practical things groups can do to make sure disabled people are involved.

The things AMIDA will do are:

- **encourage** disabled people to be involved
 - **value** the things done by people
 - have **personal contact** with people so that they know what's going on
 - **share information** so everyone knows what's going on
 - give people **opportunities** to work on things that interest them
 - give people the **power** and opportunity to have a real say in the group
-

HAVE A REAL SAY!

There are many ways disabled people can get involved with AMIDA and have a real say in what happens at AMIDA.

Some of the ways people can get involved are:

- become a member of AMIDA
- members can join the Committee of Management

- use opportunities to tell us what you think about AMIDA's services - you could do this by answering a questionnaire or taking part in a review of the service and our policies
- view the Housing Know Your Rights video on our website and tell us what you think of it
- listen to "Raising Our Voices" and let us know what you thought of our radio program
- get involved in making our Radio Program, "Raising Our Voices"
- write or speak to the Committee of Management or a worker to let them know what you think about the service
- make a complaint if you are not happy about the service
- contact us through our Facebook page and let us know what you think of our posts
- come to general meetings, workshops or social functions and talk about your opinions
- come to a Planning Day
- give us feedback on this policy or any of our other policies

Contact AMIDA for Housing Advocacy by phone: 03 9650 2722

Email: amida@amida.org.au

Contacts for NDIA appeals advocacy:

Phone: 03 9654 2103 Email: appeals@amida.org.au

Or make an appointment to come to our office at:

AMIDA, 1st Floor Ross House
247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

webpage www.amida.org.au