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**Independence and Informed Choice Policy and Procedure**

**Purpose**

CAPS will abide by relevant regulations related to the rights of people with disabilities.

This Policy outlines how the organisation will assist participants in making informed choices, exercising control, and maximising their independence.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all staff and participants

**Policy**

It is assumed that all participants have the capacity to make their own decisions unless proven otherwise. We acknowledge that participants have varying capacities.

All participants have dignity of risk in making their own decisions. If a participants decision making capacity is doubted, this policy will provide direction on how to respond.

This policy aims to ensure that decisions regarding the participants life are not made without their knowledge or involvement or against their anticipated wished.

Control and choice are placed with the participant and their families/carers.

**Definitions**

Decision-making:

The process of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values, preferences and beliefs of the decision-maker.

Informed choice:

A person chooses services based on knowledge of diagnostic tests or treatments, knowing the details, benefits, risks and expected outcomes of their choice.

Dignity of Risk:

The right to take risks when engaging in life experiences and the right to fail in taking these.

Advocate:

A person who puts a case on someone else's behalf.

Autonomy:

The capacity to decide for oneself and pursue a course of action in one's life, often regardless of any moral content.

**Procedure**

Advocate

All participants will be made aware of their right to access an advocate. More information can be found in the Advocacy Policy and Procedure.

Decision making and choice

CAPS employees will:

* Provide clear information on all support options
* Provide information on risks surrounding each option
* Provide all current and relevant information to assist with a participant’s decision
* Provide the participant with time to abord and understand information during decision-making processes
* Provide information in a way that suites the participants communication needs
* Asses a participant’s needs and collaborate with participants, their family/carers and advocate in designing appropriate strategies to support these needs
* Conduct review meetings with the participants and all relevant parties
* Create a plan in collaboration with the participant and other relevant parties through transition or exit from service

In supporting a participant’s dignity of risk, CAPS will advise participants of all relevant options, the benefits of each option and the relevant risks of each option.

If a participant decides to undertake an activity that CAPS deems to be a risk, we will:

* Inform the participant that it is their choice if they wish to continue
* Form a risk management plan
* Record that the participant has been informed of the risks associated with their decision and store the document in their personal file

Autonomy

Staff must respect that all participants have the right to autonomy. This means that participants are free to make their own decisions and pursue their desired actions. They can make decisions based on who they are and what they want, and workers must allow them to express themselves freely. Front-line workers must allow the participant their right to intimacy and sexual expression (in the context of lawful behaviour).

Time

Staff will not rush participants to make decisions and will respect the time that each participant requires to understand information and review options. Participants can seek advice from whomever they choose.

Documentation

CAPS will record all information and options given to participants and the participant final decision. This will be stored in the participants personal file.