



Multicultural Peer Network

Peer facilitator training manual



For equality
of life.

SSI acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australian and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay respect to Elders past and present and recognise their continuous connection to Country.

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Introduction

This guide is a compilation of resources that can be used by Peer Facilitators to run a peer group.

Multicultural Peer Network (MPN)

MPN program

In 2020, SSI created a successful model for running disability support groups in multicultural communities across NSW called the Multicultural Peer Network (MPN). The program was funded through the Department of Social Services (DSS).

During the MPN program, SSI found tailoring disability support groups to different cultures, languages and interests had a vastly positive impact on people with disability in these spaces.

With the program coming to an end, SSI is sharing resources from the MPN program so community leaders and organisations can start their own peer groups.



Self- advocacy

“
Self-advocacy is about making change for yourself by speaking up.
”

What is self-advocacy?

Advocacy means **speaking up**. It is about making change for yourself by speaking up.

Types of self-advocacy



Ask: What are the types of self-advocacy?

Your own rights

- > Self-advocates speak up for themselves, including their own rights
- > They believe that every person should be treated as an **equal**
- > Self-advocacy also includes the right to make **choices**

Another person's rights

- > Self-advocates can also advocate for and defend **someone else's rights**

An issue in the community

Examples:

- > **lack of accessible facilities** — e.g. train stations/trains that do not have suitable access such as an accessible ramp or lift
- > **parking** — e.g. not enough accessible spaces or parking spaces being taken by people without a Disability Permit
- > **lack of inclusive activities or events** — e.g. activities that exclude people who live with a disability because of issues involving access
- > **discrimination and negative stigma** — e.g. stereotypes and negative beliefs about people who live with a disability in the community

Group advocacy

Group advocacy can involve an **individual advocating for a group** or a **group advocating together**.



Ask: Does anyone have examples of their own experiences of self-advocacy?

“
Self-advocacy
also includes
the right to
make choices.
”

Your rights



Ask: What are your rights as a person?

- > **Human rights** and **freedoms** are things we all share
- > We all have **options** and **choices** about the life we want to lead
- > People who live with a disability have the **same rights** as people who do not live with a disability
- > Every person should be **treated equally**



“
Self-advocacy is the ability to speak up for what you want or need.
”

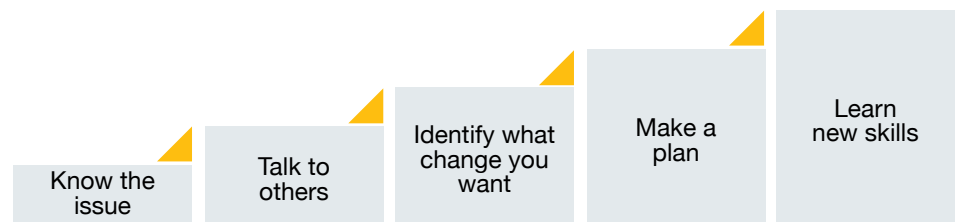
Being a self-advocate



Ask: What do you think it might be like to be a self-advocate?

Being a **self-advocate** involves speaking up. Issues will present themselves in everyday life and you can use self-advocacy skills to take control.

There are a series of simple steps you can follow:



Veronica is a high school student with ADHD who struggles to pay attention during class.

- > **Know the issue** — Veronica has ADHD and struggles to pay attention in class. She is easily distracted and misses some of the material covered. She also forgets to take notes.
- > **Talk to others** — Veronica could talk about her struggles with someone that she trusts (e.g. family, friend, colleague etc) and prepare what she wants to say when self-advocating.
- > **Identify what change you want** — Veronica could think about what changes could be made to support her learning in class. She could talk with her teacher to make a plan: e.g. moving to the front of the class and being given a copy of the notes.
- > **Make a plan** — Veronica needs to have a plan, and preferably a back-up plan in case her first plan doesn't work. She needs to be clear about what she needs and wants. Where the outcome is different, she can accept the alternative outcome or go to her back-up plan. Knowing she has a plan will give Veronica a say and some control over how she would like to be supported.
- > **Learn new skills** — Veronica can also consider the possible benefits of learning new skills to help her focus, as well as communication and interpersonal skills.



Ask: Have you ever tried to be a self-advocate?

Speaking up for yourself

Self-advocacy involves making **informed choices** about the supports required to meet your needs as an individual.



Ask: Can you think of someone who spoke up or took a stand?

Examples:

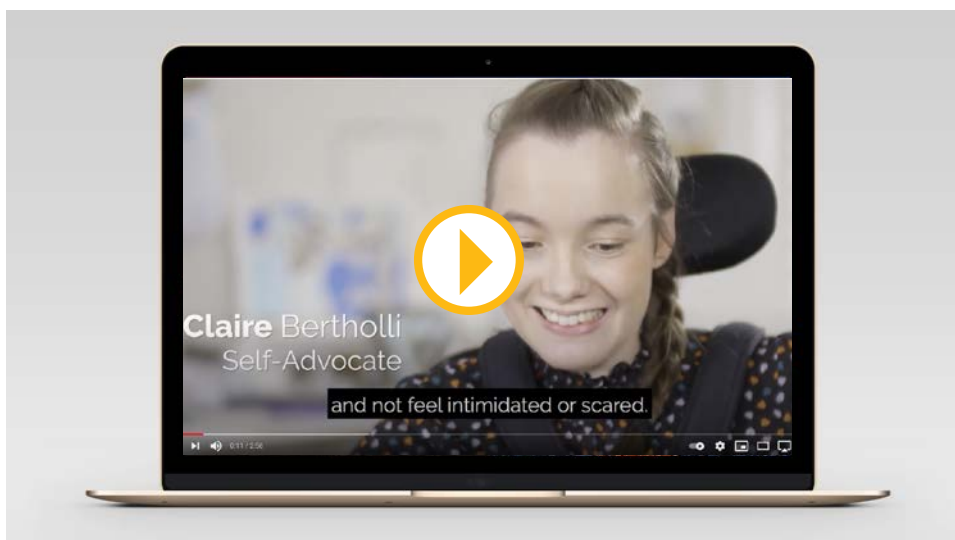
- > Charles Perkins fighting for social change with his Freedom Ride through NSW towns in 1965.
- > Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat on the bus and challenging racial segregation law in the USA.

You can speak up for yourself if:

- > someone treats you badly
- > a service does not support you the way it should
- > an organisation does not give you the opportunity to have your say
- > information is difficult to read or a website is hard to use
- > you just want to change something in your own life

Watch the following video: Claire Bertholli, Self-advocate

<https://youtu.be/2TkOdFOcdPQ>



Being a self-advocate involves speaking up to take control.

“
It is important to be prepared when speaking up for yourself.
”

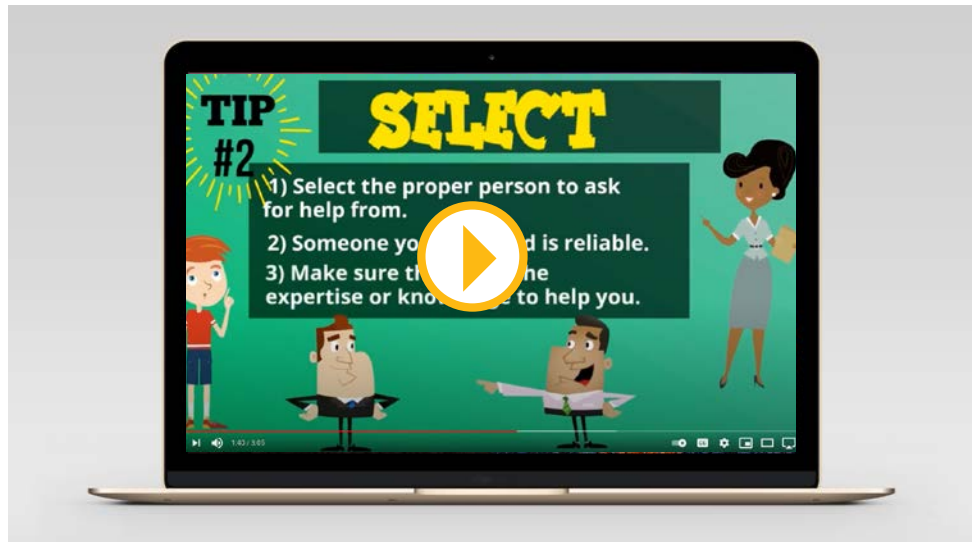


Ask: Have you ever spoken up about what you want or need in your daily life?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

Watch the following video: Self-advocacy skills – Self-advocacy strategies

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74G_Zpz-7Bk&t=97s



Ask: What are the main points raised in the video?

Making a plan



Ask: How do you make a plan to advocate for what you want? How will you know that you have achieved your goals?

Be prepared when speaking up for yourself about your needs and goals.

Think about your situation and be clear about what you want and what you need. If you are clear about the support you need it will be easier for others to help you to achieve your goals.

What is the problem you want fixed?

Example:

- > You have moved to a new area and want to meet new people, make new friends, and be invited to share in sporting and leisure activities.

What do you want to change?

Example:

- > The desired change is to make new local friends and community connections with the goal being to create a new social group who share the same interests, sports and social activities.

What support do you need?

Example:

- > You may benefit from having a support person, or group of individuals such as your circle of support (discussed in the next part, **Circles of support**) who can help you look for social groups or community organisations in your local area. They can also be with you when you are meeting new people.

What is the best way to communicate what you want? Is it better to use the phone or email, or would you be more successful talking to someone in person?



In person — organise a suitable time to have a discussion with everyone involved.



Phone — think about who you need to call (e.g. local sports organisations, the person running groups or programs at local centres, etc) and when would be the best time to call (e.g. during business hours or after business hours).



Email — find the name of the best person to contact. Decide in advance if you think someone else needs to be included or copied into the email (e.g. your trusted support person).

“
Speak up for yourself if a service does not support you the way it should.
”

“
Ask someone you trust what they think about your plan.
”



Ask: Why do you think it is important to make a plan?

Ask someone you trust what they think

Ask someone you trust (e.g. family, friends, support person) what they think about your plan.

Practise your self-advocacy skills with a family member, friend or support person — they could role play the person you are going to call or meet.

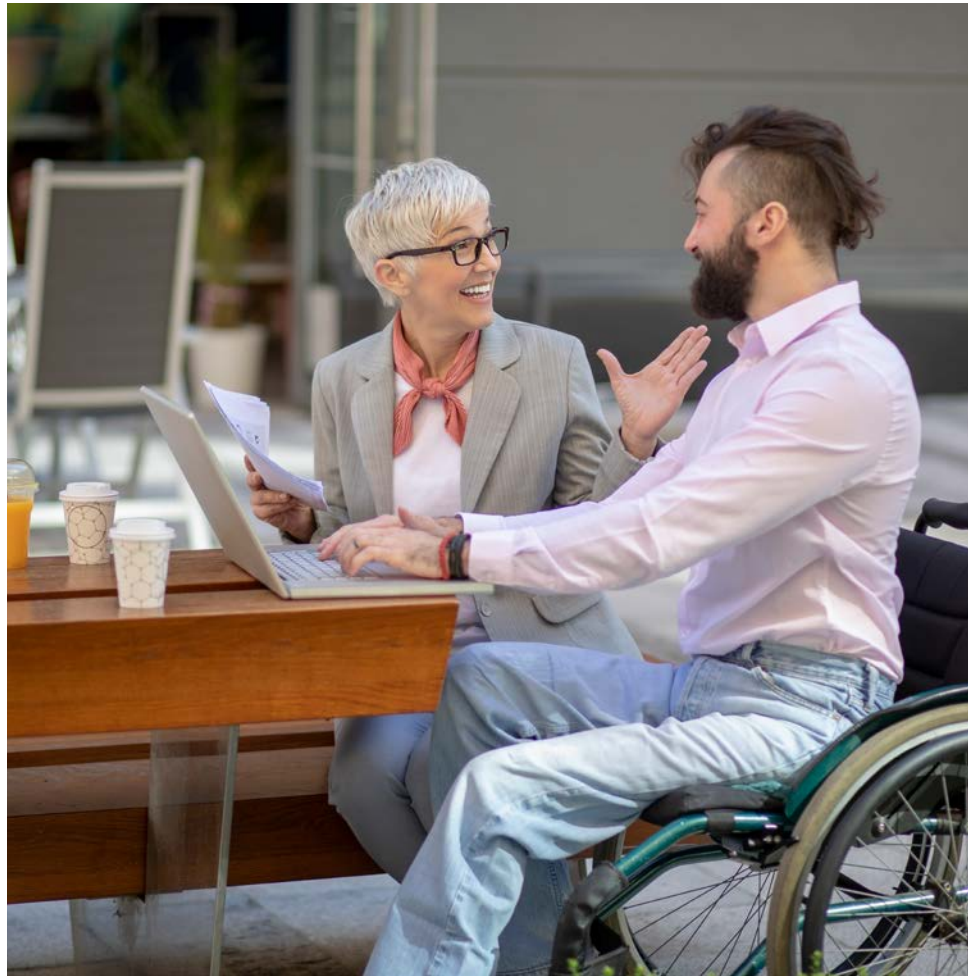
Take someone with you

Take someone you trust with you.

Make sure they know why you're meeting the other person, so they can back you up.



Ask: Who would you trust to support you?



Effective communication

Effective communication occurs when the receiver **understands** the sender's message in the way the sender intended.

“
It is important
to be prepared
when speaking
up for yourself.
”



Ask: What are the two different types of communication?

Verbal communication means using your voice. This includes tone of voice.

Non-verbal communication includes body language, gestures (e.g. a thumbs up, nod or shrug), facial expressions (e.g. smile, frown), using Auslan and even communication using other senses such as sight, smell and touch. Non-verbal communication can also include:

- > **written communication** — email, text messages, hand-written notes and documents
- > **visual communication** — pictures, movies, YouTube, internet-generated images, artworks etc.

Clear communication is important. It may be a good idea to practise using your communication skills with someone you trust. Your support person can give you feedback and ensure that your message is clear.



Ask: What are the key things to remember in effective communication?

Active listening

When we actively listen, we put our focus of attention onto the speaker.

Examples:

- > **repeating content** (e.g. “What I heard you say was ... ”)
- > **responding supportively** (e.g. “How did you feel about that?” or “How did that affect you?”)
- > **verbally acknowledging** (e.g. “mm”, “Ah-ha”, “I see”)
- > **physically acknowledging** (e.g. nod or appropriate facial expression)

“
When it comes to self-advocacy, clear communication is important.
”

Open and closed questions

Examples:

- > “Did you have a good weekend?” (closed question)
- > “What did you do on the weekend?” (open question)

Closed questions require a brief, definitive response — e.g. “yes”, “no”. Closed questions often start with: Can ...? Did ...? Will ...? Have ...?



Ask: What is an example of a closed question?

Open questions require an explanation or a more detailed response. They may start with: How... ? Why...? What...? Tell me more/about ...?



Ask: What is an example of an open question?

Support people



Ask: Who would be the best person or people to ask for support?

Examples:

- > **Friends or family** — trusted friends and family members who know you and will support you every step along the way
- > **Someone you trust** — colleagues, peers, neighbours
- > **Teachers** — teachers who understand the challenges you face and who are supportive and encouraging
- > **Support workers** — support workers will work with you to prepare a plan that may include self-advocacy. They will help you with setting and achieving your goals as well as connecting you with services that can assist you
- > **An advocacy organisation** — there are a number of supportive advocacy organisations that are able to help you to self-advocate



Ask: Who would you ask?

Resilience and advocacy



Ask: What does resilience mean?

Resilience means **bouncing back** after difficult times, events or situations.

It involves dealing with challenges, knowing that you are capable of coping with any situation. It means that no matter how bad you may feel at the time, you will be able to recover.

Building resilience strengthens your **voice** and gives you the confidence to speak up for yourself.



Ask: How is resilience critical to success in life?

Examples:

- > resilience stops you from being overwhelmed
- > resilience allows you to move on
- > resilience involves learning and growing

“

Resilience and advocacy helps you to communicate your needs.

”



“
Set goals to do everything everybody else does!
”

Discuss

- > What is self-advocacy?
- > What are my human rights?
- > How do I make a plan?
- > What is resilience and why is it important?

Goals to think about

- > Having access to community facilities
- > Joining a local club and participating in club activities: football, sailing, cycling, bowling or other sports
- > Attending community celebrations
- > Just doing everything everybody else does!



Ask: Are there any comments or afterthoughts?



Further reading

Disability Advocacy Unit (DARU) (2016) **What is disability advocacy?**, <http://www.daru.org.au/what-is-advocacy>

NOTES



Circles of support

“
Circles of support are all about the person at the centre of the circle: in this case, you!
”

What are circles of support?

Circles of support are **groups of people who come together to help promote the goals and interests of one person**. They are all about the person at the centre of the circle: in this case, you!

Circles of support make time for thinking, planning and dreaming, for considering possibilities and achieving goals and dreams.

Circles of support are a natural part of life for most of us. When we are troubled, we call on our family, friends and support professionals for help, or to share our worries. When good things happen, we call on our circles to share our joy.



**Ask: Does anyone have a circle of support?
Who is in your circle?**



My circle of support



Circle one is the **family circle** and includes the individuals who are closest to us.



The second circle is the **friends circle**.



The third circle is made up of the people who support us at work, school and in the community: people we see on a regular basis at work and/or school, as well as in the clubs, sporting teams, interest groups and anywhere we interact with the community.



The fourth circle contains the professionals whose job it is to support us: doctors, teachers, dentists, social workers, carers, support workers and therapists, etc.

People can have relationships across all four circles.

A person who lives with a disability may be vulnerable to **social isolation** and may have only a few people in their circles. Building circles can help to bring more people into our lives, including developing mutual goals with others in the circle.

“

People can have relationships across all four circles.

”

“
Circles of support
can help you in
your everyday
life.”



Ask: Do you now understand circles of support?

Why are circles of support useful?

A circle of support can help you to make **decisions about your life**, to change things that may be worrying you and help you achieve your goals.

A circle of support puts you in the centre and helps you to stay strong, in charge and in control. Circles of support can **connect** you to other people in the community. They can also **speak up** on your behalf.



Ask: Is a circle of support useful? Why or why not?

Example:

Brodie is a person who lives with a disability and has set up a circle of support. See how his circle of support helps him.

Watch the following video: Circles of support – Introducing Brodie’s circle

<https://youtu.be/gPfHheOr18>



Ask: How does Brodie’s circle of support help him in fulfilling his goals?

What do circles of support NOT replace?

Circles of support can play many important roles in a person's life, but they cannot replace:

- > the role of family
- > the role of support workers
- > the individual care that the person at the centre of the circle (you) receives on a daily basis

Circles of support should keep their focus on supporting the person at the centre. They are not meant to address all the issues you may face and it is essential to have realistic expectations. For example, specific family issues should remain private and be resolved within the family.

Making changes in your life will take time and there may be some setbacks. The advantage of having a circle of support is the opportunity to go back to the beginning and start with another idea.

“Circles of support should focus on supporting the person at the centre.”



Ask: Do you have any questions or comments?



“
Your circle should include peers and people of a similar age to you.
”

Inviting people into your circle

Who to invite into your circle

Invite people you know and trust, people who have a genuine interest in being supportive.

Think about who you know and like. You could also ask a trusted person to help you choose who to invite:

- > family
- > friends
- > teachers
- > neighbours
- > classmates
- > recreation or sports groups
- > local community people and community groups
- > faith-based groups
- > work colleagues
- > people with useful expertise or experience

It is important for the circle to include **peers**, people of similar age and generation to you. Peers can help you to pursue age-appropriate interests and encourage friendships with people your own age.

Circles can grow over time and members might come and go. Whether small or large, it is important that the circle's focus is on the person in the centre — you.



Ask: Who would you invite into your circle?

How to invite people into your circle



Ask: Has anyone invited people into their circle of support? What was the outcome?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

When inviting people, it's important to **explain what is involved**. Tell people the **purpose** of your circle, your **goals** and the **support** you need. Explain how each of the members of the circle could support you.

There may be reasons why a person is unable to join your circle. Personal and work commitments, as well as lack of time, are common reasons. This is not a personal rejection of you, so do not let this affect your relationship. Keep the communication lines open just in case they want to join at a later time.

It is important to ensure that circle members do not feel obligated to get involved.

For more detailed information on how to ask people to join your circle see: <https://www.ric.org.au/assets/Uploads/circles-of-support/fc67c032b4/Circles-of-Support-Manual-2019.pdf>



Does anyone have any questions or comments about inviting people into their circle of support?

“

It is important to ensure that circle members do not feel obligated to get involved.

”



“
Your circle can support you in all areas of your life from finance to making friends.
”

What is the purpose of your circle?



Does anyone have any questions about the purpose and benefits of having a circle of support?



Circle meetings

Running your circle meeting

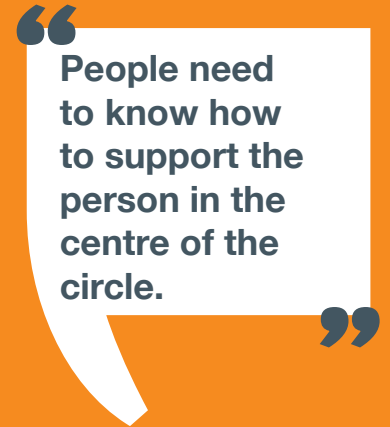


Ask: Has anyone had a circle of support meeting?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

Every circle of support will be different:

- > **Casual or formal** — formal meetings have meeting notes with action items listed and allocated to individuals. Casual meetings are less structured
- > **Regular meetings** — some circles meet every few weeks while some meet every few months
- > **Agreements** — people need to know what to do to support you. They should discuss issues with you and help you make decisions
- > **Facilitators** — a facilitator can keep discussions focused, stick to the agreed time and help the group reach agreements or compromise
- > **Location** — the setting needs to be comfortable and private. Distance attendance can be managed using video-conferencing technologies such as Skype, Zoom, speakerphone etc.
- > **Timing** — this should be agreed by the circle members at the first meeting and take into account everyone's needs
- > **Length** — meetings usually run for between one and two hours. It is important to remember that people are volunteering their time and meetings should not go past the scheduled finishing time



“People need to know how to support the person in the centre of the circle.”

“Specify the help and support needed to achieve your goals.”



First circle of support meeting – making your plan

It is important to **make a plan** for the first circle of support meeting.

Let everyone know what you would like them to help you with and ask them for their ideas. Specify the help and support needed to **achieve your goals**. Discuss the frequency, timing and venue. Talk about who does what: facilitator, note-taker, caterer, etc. How will money be managed, if relevant?

- > **What is going well for you?** – e.g. your family, friends, social activities, school, university or job
- > **What you would like to change about your life?** – e.g. more independence, getting your driver’s licence, having more choice in finding sporting and social activities
- > **What will the circle’s role be in supporting you with any changes?** – e.g. setting and achieving goals and realising your dreams. This may include finding the appropriate supports and services
- > **How often will you meet?** – e.g. monthly, fortnightly, every six weeks or every two months
- > **Arrange date of next meeting**
- > **Set goals or actions (short and long term)** – e.g. organising a birthday party in a month might be a short-term goal while creating a plan for getting a driver’s licence is a longer-term goal
- > **Review and reflection** – What worked and what didn’t work? What can be improved?



Ask: Do you understand how a circle of support meeting works? Do you have any questions or comments?

Discuss

- > What would your circle of support look like?
- > How will you find out what outcomes the circle members want?
- > Do you think your desired outcomes differ from those in your circle?

Goals to think about

- > Working in a job where you are paid a fee
- > Joining a local club and participating in club activities
- > Attending community celebrations
- > Just doing everything everybody else does!



Ask: Are there any comments or afterthoughts?



Further reading

Resourcing Inclusive Communities (2019) Circles of Support: A manual for getting started, <https://www.ric.org.au/assets/Uploads/circles-of-support/fc67c032b4/Circles-of-Support-Manual-2019.pdf>

“Set goals to do everything everybody else does!”

NOTES



Volunteering

Introduction to volunteering

Volunteering can help you **meet new people** and **discover your talents**. It is a great way to get out and get involved in your community.

Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place.

Volunteer work is unpaid.

“Volunteering connects you to your community and helps make it a better place.”



Ask: Would anyone like to share their stories or experiences of working as a volunteer?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

Volunteering and social inclusion

Reasons for volunteering:

- > Being part of your **local community**
- > Making **new friends**
- > **Belonging** to a group of like-minded people
- > **Helping others** in your local community
- > Discovering **new skills**
- > Building up skills that will help in **finding a paid job**
- > Wanting to **make a difference**



Ask: Is anyone interested in volunteer work? Why/Why not?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

“When you volunteer you can make a difference for others who are disadvantaged.”

Why volunteer?

Volunteering can help improve your self-confidence and overall happiness. It can also give you a feeling of pride and identity. By giving your time as a volunteer you are doing good for others and the community.

Volunteering can help you in many ways:

- > Learn **new skills**
- > Gain important **work experience** and sometimes even qualifications
- > Take on a **challenge**
- > Build **confidence** and **self-esteem**
- > Develop **communication skills**
- > Be part of a **team**

Watch the following video: Circles of support – Making volunteering work for you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClrFW2Y2Bv8>



Ask: Does anyone have any questions or comments?

Career experience and pathways

Volunteering can be an exciting way to explore your interests and passions, and help you to build on your skills.

Volunteering is a great way to get work experience and try out a new career without having to make a long-term commitment.

“
Volunteering can challenge you to try something different.
”



Ask: Does everyone understand what volunteering can do for you in terms of your career?

Personal benefits of volunteering

- > **Explore** your interests and passions
- > **Experience** real hands-on work
- > **Try** new things
- > **Meet** new people from different cultures, backgrounds and walks of life
- > **Be inspired** by others and let others be inspired by you
- > **Develop** your social and communication skills

Watch the following video: **Circles of support – Benefits of volunteering**

<https://youtu.be/DuD8Rd61q18>



Ask: What did you take away from the video? Does anyone have any questions or comments?

“
Volunteering can help you to build on your skills and to gain paid employment.
”



Where can I volunteer?

- > Ask people in your circle of support for help with ideas
- > Volunteering Australia has lots of information:
www.volunteeringaustralia.org
- > Check your local council website
- > Your local library may have information
- > Check with your local church, religious organisations or schools



Ask: Does anyone have any questions or comments?

Discuss

- > What are the benefits of volunteering?
- > What would I like to do as a volunteer?
- > How can I become involved?

Goals to think about

- > Joining a local club and participating in club activities such as football, sailing, cycling, bowling or other sports
- > Attending community celebrations
- > Just doing everything everybody else does!



Ask: Are there any comments or afterthoughts?



Further reading

Volunteering Australia website:
www.volunteeringaustralia.org/#/

NOTES

**“
Set goals to
do everything
everybody else
does!
”**

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light green button-down shirt with intricate lace-like embroidery on the chest and large white over-ear headphones, is shown in profile from the chest up. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the left. Her hands are positioned over a black computer keyboard. The background is a soft-focus office environment with green and white elements. A solid green rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'Employment' in white text.

Employment

Job seeking

Will a disability make it hard for me to get a job?

Even if your disability has no bearing on your ability to do the job, some employers may have concerns. It is up to you to show them that, despite your disability, you are the **best person for the position**.

When you apply for a position, it is important to be clear about your qualifications.

“
Be clear
about your
qualifications.
”



Ask: Has anyone had trouble getting a job because of their disability?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

Where to find jobs

- > personal contacts
- > classified ads
- > job-placement services
- > disability advocacy job-placement services or support groups
- > vocational rehabilitation agencies
- > internet searches



Ask: Does anyone have anything they would like to add?

“
Does your background and experience make you a good candidate?
”

Do your homework

Getting to know the company shows you are motivated:

- > Are they a Disability Confident Recruiter? www.and.org.au/pages/disability-confident-recruiter.html
- > Do they have a good reputation with disability advocacy groups? — e.g. hiring, training and promoting people who live with disabilities
- > What are their strengths and weaknesses? — e.g. look at the company website
- > How does your background and experience make you a good candidate?



Ask: Has anyone researched a role, or a company, for a job application?

Helpful technology

Regardless of your disability, your talents and skills may be enhanced through the use of **adaptive technology**. For example:

- > **speech recognition software** can make using a computer easier for someone with a disability and
- > adjusting a **monitor's resolution** can make reading small print easier for people with limited vision.



Ask: What adaptive technology or special requirements will you need?



Do I disclose my disability?

You can decide when to disclose your disability:

- > Even though the law states you are not required to reveal your disability to your employer, unless it relates to completing essential job functions, you should consider being open on this subject
- > If you volunteer this information, your employer may see you as a strong and confident person

Timing

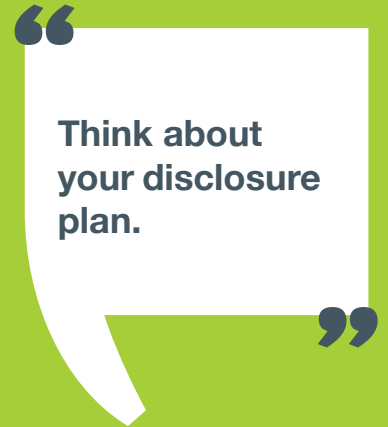
You could describe your disability in a **resume**, **cover letter** or **job application**, during the **interview**, when accepting the job or even after beginning the job.

Think about your disclosure plan.

Watch the following video: The job search and disclosing your disability <https://youtu.be/9mbaaz4FMZk>



Ask: Do you have a disclosure plan?



Think about
your disclosure
plan.

“
 This is an opportunity to use your self-advocacy skills.
 ”

Watch the following video: **Disclosing disability in the workplace**
<https://youtu.be/5AYsl36G8Wc>



Ask: How would you create your disclosure plan?

In creating a disclosure strategy, consider:

- > **When** would be the best time to disclose?
- > **Where** would be the best place to disclose?
- > **How** would you disclose?
- > **What** words would you use?

Creating a disclosure plan is an opportunity to use your **self-advocacy skills**:



Focus on the solution: When meeting with prospective employers, go with the solution, not the problem.

Example:

I have a disability. It doesn't define who I am as a person, it just enhances me in a way which differentiates and strengthens me. My disability should be viewed as an ability to see the world in a different way.

“
Notify your interviewers in advance so that they are prepared.
”



Ask: Is there anything that you would like to share?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

Interviews

Notify your interviewers in advance so that they are prepared — e.g. if you are bringing an interpreter to your interview, you use a wheelchair, have a guide dog or some other accessibility requirement.

It is also a good idea to inquire about accessible entrances to the building, as well as the best route to take once inside to get to your interview.



**Ask: Has anyone been for a job interview?
Did you need to let the interviewer know about your special requirements?**

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)



“
Communications
are words
spoken, tone of
voice and body
language.”

Role play: practice makes perfect

It is important to be comfortable with explaining **how you will perform** the job.

Practise answering these questions with a support person:

- > What are your skills and strengths?
- > What tools will you need (e.g. a specialised keyboard, accessible car space, a quiet location, etc.)?
- > How will the company benefit from hiring you?

The more you practise, the better you will become at responding to questions and the more comfortable you will be with disclosing your disability.



Ask: Has anyone done any role playing when it comes to job interviews? What does it mean when they say: “practice makes perfect”?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

Dressing appropriately

People often wear a dark blue or black outfit with dress shoes for interviews.

For some disabilities, the process of dressing for a job interview can be quite a challenge, but **it's worth it**.

Find out about the workplace before making a decision about what to wear.



Ask: Does anyone have any questions?

Resumes and samples of your work



Ask: What is a resume and what information should it contain? Has anyone written a resume?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)

Examples:

- > education summary
- > employment summary
- > qualifications
- > volunteer work experience
- > references

What to bring to the interview:

- > a clean, printed version of your resume
- > samples of your work
- > any relevant qualifications, references and so on



Ask: Does anyone have any questions about resumes?

Anticipating and addressing concerns

Some people have fears and prejudices about workers with disabilities. You can deal with these by offering examples to demonstrate how you have accomplished tasks and overcome challenges. Talk about your determination and resilience.

- > **Describe** how using support equipment makes no difference to your ability to perform the tasks involved
- > **Highlight** the times where the disability you live with may even help you to do the job better



Ask: How would you address concerns about your disability with an employer?

**“
Demonstrate
how you have
overcome
challenges.
”**

“
Be assertive.
”

Inappropriate interview questions

It is illegal to ask about a person’s medical history during an interview.

If you are asked an inappropriate question, respond **calmly**.

Examples:

- > “Nothing in my personal life will keep me from doing an outstanding job in this position.”
- > “Is this question relevant to the job?”
- > “I don’t feel comfortable in answering this question as it relates to my privacy, may I please ask how the question relates directly to the job.”

Some questions are meant to test your ability to be assertive or to self-advocate. These skills may be required for the job.

The best way to manage an interview is to **practise, practise, practise**.

Remember your **communication skills**:

- > use active listening and responding
- > use open and closed questions to ask for more information
- > give examples — how have you previously dealt with similar situations or challenges?



Ask: What are some examples of inappropriate questions?

(All stories are private and should be treated as confidential)



Discuss

- > Will living with a disability make it hard for me to get a job?
- > How do I find out about job opportunities?
- > What should I include on my resume?
- > What are the important things to remember in interviews?

Goals to think about

- > Working in a job where you are paid a fee
- > Getting a job in an industry/activity you enjoy
- > Just doing everything everybody else does!



Ask: Are there any comments or afterthoughts?



Further reading

Australian Network on Disability JobSeeker toolkit:
and.org.au/students-jobseekers/jobseeker-toolkit

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**“
Set goals to
do everything
everybody else
does!
”**



NDIS access

What is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?



Ask: Has anyone heard of the NDIS?

(If they answer yes, ask if they are an NDIS participant)

The NDIS was launched to help improve the way people who live with a disability are supported to become more active members of their community, in line with their personal goals.

Understanding the NDIS

- > The NDIS provides **funding** to the person who lives with a disability to **support** them with their **individual needs and goals**
- > The NDIS is for people who have an impairment or condition that is likely to be **permanent** (lifelong) and that **limits their ability** to do everyday things by themselves
- > The NDIS helps the person to access '**reasonable and necessary**' **supports**
- > The NDIS provides the person who lives with a disability with **choice** and **control** in their lives
- > The NDIS helps increase the person's **independence**, including their social and economic participation

Who is eligible for the NDIS?

To check your NDIS eligibility, see the NDIS Access Checklist:
www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis/am-i-eligible

You can also speak to your LAC in the area.



NDIS provides people with a disability choice and control in their lives.

What support is there to access the NDIS



Ask: Has anyone heard of Local Area Coordination?

Local Area Coordination

Local Area Coordinators (LACs) support people aged 7 - 64 to access the NDIS and other mainstream services in the community.

SSI is partnered with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to deliver Local Area Coordination Services to residents in the following area of NSW:

Sydney

Ashfield
Burwood
Canada Bay
Leichhardt
Marrickville
Strathfield
Sydney

South Western Sydney

Bankstown
Camden
Campbelltown
Canterbury
Fairfield
Liverpool
Wingecarribee
Wollondilly

To access SSI's LAC call 1800 960 975 between 9.30am - 4.30pm, Monday - Friday or email ssilac@ndis.gov.au for assistance.

If you live outside the above areas you can find your local LAC here: www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-each-state

In-language videos

The SSI LAC resource portal provides useful information to help you understand and access the NDIS in the following languages.

English
Arabic
Croatian
Farsi
Indonesian
Khmer
Korean
Spanish
Tamil
Vietnamese

You can access these resources here: www.ssi.org.au/services/disability-services/local-area-coordination/resources

NDIS pathway

NDIS pathway information is available in various languages:
www.ndis.gov.au/languages

For a downloadable pathway booklet see:
www.ndis.gov.au/participants

If people do not have access to the internet, you can direct them to the SSI leaflets available. They may also speak directly to a facilitator or Local Area Coordinator (LAC) for further information.

“
If you need an interpreter you can call the TIS on 131 450.
”

TIS (Translating Interpreting Support) National

TIS National is an interpreting service for people who prefer to use a language other than English to access available services such as the NDIS. It includes:

- > immediate phone interpreting
- > pre-booked phone interpreting
- > on-site interpreting

How to call the NDIS if you need an interpreter

You can **call TIS National direct** on **131 450** and ask to speak to the NDIS on **1800 800 110**.

If you are hearing impaired or deaf, you can use a **TTY phone** by calling: **1800 555 677**. The interpreter signs to you using FaceTime on your phone or laptop while talking on the phone to the NDIS person with whom you are communicating.

- > Interpreter services are free
- > The interpreter's role is to interpret the spoken words and not to give advice
- > NDIS Planners, Early Childhood Early Intervention Services, LAC Services or Support Coordinators can help you find or book an interpreter for you



Ask: Does anyone have any questions? Has anyone used an interpreter when it comes to talking to the NDIS over the phone?

Discussion

- > How has the NDIS helped you as a person who lives with a disability?
- > Was the NDIS easy or difficult to understand at first?
- > Were you able to get the correct supports from the NDIS?
- > Is there anything that you would like to share about the NDIS?
- > Did you have enough support?



References and resources

The following list includes the references and resources used in this Training Manual. If you believe there has been an omission please contact: SSI on (02) 8799 6700 or info@ssi.org.au

Australian Network on Disability JobSeeker toolkit,
<https://and.org.au/students-jobseekers/jobseeker-toolkit>

Disability Advocacy Unit (DARU) (2016) What is disability advocacy?,
www.daru.org.au/what-is-advocacy

NDIS (2019) Languages, www.ndis.gov.au/languages

NDIS (2019) Am I eligible, www.ndis.gov.au/applying-access-ndis/am-i-eligible

NDIS (2021) For participants, www.ndis.gov.au/participants

PeerConnect (no date) Setting up and running peer networks,
www.peerconnect.org.au/setting-and-running-peer-networks

Resourcing Inclusive Communities (2019) Circles of Support: A manual for getting started, www.ric.org.au/assets/Uploads/circles-of-support/fc67c032b4/Circles-of-Support-Manual-2019.pdf

Tuckman, B W (1965) Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. Psychological Bulletin, 63(6), 384–399

MPN resources for SSI partners (2023), www.ssi.org.au/services/disability-services/multicultural-peer-network

MPN resources for individuals (2023), www.ssi.org.au/services/disability-services/multicultural-peer-network/connect-in-your-community

SSI's Local Area Coordination services page in NSW (2023),
www.ssi.org.au/services/disability-services/local-area-coordination

SSI's personalised employment support services (2023),
www.ssi.org.au/services/employment

Videos

BeA Topfacilitator (2012) Six quick facilitation tips,
youtu.be/ZxOAYfRWAQ

Brown, B (2017) Brené Brown on empathy (child friendly version, edited from 2010 Ted Talk), www.youtube.com/watch?v=HznVuCVQd10

Career and Life Skill Lessons (2019) Self-advocacy skills — Self-advocacy strategies, www.youtube.com/watch?v=74G_Zpz-7Bk&t=97s

CISVicAustralia (2017) Making volunteering work for you,
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClrFW2Y2Bv8

EasyExplaining (2016) What is communication? Let's discuss!, youtu.be/JdbL7jJb3JE

Falbo, K (2013) Benefits of volunteering, youtu.be/DuD8Rd61q18

geniebray (2014) The eight things to be as a facilitator, <https://youtu.be/cQGQXTuLf80>

HealthWest TV (2019) The importance of social inclusion, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeEPf2rxfgl>

Inclusion Melbourne (2018) Circles of support – Introducing Brodie's Circle, <https://youtu.be/gPfHheOrl18>

Job Access (2017) Disclosing disability in the workplace, youtu.be/5AYsl36G8Wc

People with Disability (PWD) Australia (2019) Claire Bertholli, Self-advocate, youtu.be/2TkOdFOcdPQ

Shape Arts (2017) Social model of disability, https://youtu.be/24KE_OCKMw

TheDOITCenter (2018) The job search and disclosing your disability, <https://youtu.be/9mbaaz4FMZk>

Websites

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC): [humanrights.gov.au](https://www.humanrights.gov.au)

Carers NSW: www.carersnsw.org.au

Council for Intellectual Disability – Team up: [cid.org.au/team-up](https://www.cid.org.au/team-up)

Diversity and Disability Alliance (D+DA): www.ddalliance.org.au

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): www.ndis.gov.au

Volunteering Australia: www.volunteeringaustralia.org

SSI: www.ssi.org.au



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ssi.org.au

The Multicultural Peer Support Network (MPN) is an initiative of the Settlement Services International (SSI). The project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

SSI For equality
of life.