

Client Handbook



**Empowerment of people with intellectual
disability and their families**

About VALID's Individual Advocacy Support

VALID is funded by the Victorian Government to provide a free individual advocacy support to adults with an intellectual disability and their families.

Individual advocacy supports people to exercise their rights and to be included within their local communities.

VALID's individual advocacy support:

- is available to adults with an intellectual disability who are considered eligible to receive Victorian disability support services.
- is usually on a short term basis.
- can be provided in a range of ways including, information, advice, referral, direct support (i.e. attending meeting) and representation (see next page)
- is provided in a manner that is consistent with the 'To Stand Beside' method.
- assists people to address specific issues and challenges that they may be facing with either specialist or community-based services.

Principles

VALID provides free Advocacy support to people who are eligible under the Victorian Disability Act 2006.

VALID respects the right of people who use its services to privacy and confidentiality.

VALID works with individuals/families in a manner which seeks to empower them.

VALID's advocacy service is provided to people in a non-discriminatory manner.

VALID works with individuals/families in the least intrusive way as possible e.g., only ask the info we need.

Priority criteria for Individual Advocacy

VALID has to manage demand (i.e. more people than we have staff for) for its services. To do this VALID will respond first to people who are either:

- at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and/or.
- without any alternative form of advocacy support or representation.

Forms of Support

Standing Behind: VALID provides advice and guidance to support people with intellectual disability to assert their rights and achieve their goals.

Standing Beside: VALID works alongside people with intellectual disability to assist them in raising and addressing their issues effectively.

Standing Before: VALID provides representation to defend and promote the rights and interests of people with intellectual disability.

Family Advocacy

VALID provides advice and assistance to support the natural role played by families advocating for a family member with a disability. However, we do not advocate for the needs of the family itself, and our advocacy is always directed towards the VALID Mission, and guided by the principles of the Disability Act 2006.

Advocacy Support

VALID provides advice, where sought, to assist advocates who are representing or supporting people with intellectual disability. Where an advocate is actively engaged with a person with intellectual disability, our advice is provided to the advocate rather than to the person, to avoid potential confusion or conflict.

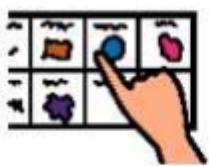
Referral

Where VALID is unable to provide advocacy support, we will refer people to other relevant services. For example, families of children are referred to Association for Children with a Disability and people with legal issues are referred to a legal advocacy service like Villamanta.

Rights and Responsibilities

When you use VALID's support you have the right to:

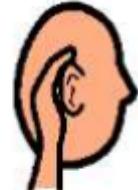
Make your own choices



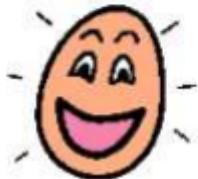
Have a Say



Be listened to



Feel safe



Access information about you



Be respected



When you use VALID's support you need to be responsible by:

Keeping Appointments



Working together



Being polite



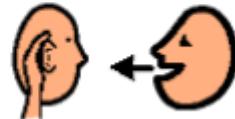
Respecting Confidentiality (not gossiping)



Respecting Privacy



Listening to others



Privacy & Confidentiality



VALID does keep some information about you, but we will not tell other people your private information.



Information you give to VALID will be kept secure and confidential.



In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act you may access your file.



The only exception to this policy is where staff are bound by a law to report (e.g., physical abuse) information to the police or government.

Consent to Referral



VALID will not accept referrals for service if the individual or family have not given consent for the referral to be made.



The only time we will vary this is where a guardian/carer of a person who is unable to give informed consent due to illness (e.g., dementia) or disability (e.g., intellectual, psychiatric, brain injury) requests assistance for that person.



VALID will still seek to respect the individual privacy and rights of all concerned.

Contact Information

VALID provides free independent advocacy for people with an **intellectual disability** who are over the age of 18 and reside in Victoria.

We have limited capacity to take on new cases and we prioritise situations where a person with an intellectual disability is experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation.

All service providers and other professionals, please send us an email to intake@valid.org.au with information about your enquiry.

If you are a person with an intellectual disability, a family member or a friend of a person with an intellectual disability you can call us on **03 9114 9415** and leave a message, or you can email us on intake@valid.org.au