

Possability

Working together:
Our policies and practices

A decorative graphic consisting of several teal-colored diagonal bars of varying lengths, arranged in a fan-like pattern that curves from the bottom left towards the top right.

Nurturing
potential.

Contents

Welcome	3	Health and safety.....	16
About this Booklet	3	Medication management.....	17
How we support clients	4	Advocacy.....	18
Person-centred support.....	4	Privacy and confidentiality.....	19
Participation and inclusion	5	Internal use of personal information.....	19
Overview of client rights.....	7	External use of personal information	20
Anti-discrimination.....	8	Families	20
Client consultation and engagement	9	Client consent	21
Client and family surveys	9	Protecting property and money.....	22
Individual client meetings.....	9	Continuous improvement	23
Resident meetings.....	10	Transferring service provider.....	24
Consumer Forums	10	Notice required.....	24
Feedback and complaints.....	11	Reference list.....	25
Complaint process	11	Advocacy and complaints organisations.....	26
Decision reviews.....	12	Further information	27
Preventing and responding to abuse	13		
Safeguarding children	14		
Restrictive practices	15		

Welcome

Thank you for choosing Possability. We have more than 25 years' experience working with Tasmanians to develop their skills and confidence, live the life they choose and achieve their goals.

Possability offers a wide range of services across Tasmania, tailored to meet individual needs and desires. We aim to provide the very best service and hope your experience with us is positive and rewarding.

If you have any questions relating to this booklet or your services, please contact your key worker or Team Leader:

Name

Phone

Email

About this booklet

This booklet explains the rights of Possability clients and carers, and what we are doing to protect those rights. It includes a summary of our policies that are designed to protect clients and be responsive to their changing needs.

This booklet is also a guide to clients and families on our processes and expectations for client relationships to ensure that your time with Possability is a positive experience for everyone.

Please keep this booklet so you can refer to it again.

How we support clients

We support our clients to exercise choice, live in dignity and increase independence while:

- › Getting involved in their community and community activities
- › Pursuing personal interests
- › Building relationships with other people
- › Developing healthy lifestyles by being mentally and physically active
- › Maximising independence in household and daily activities such as shopping, preparing a meal or paying bills.

We are committed to enriching clients' quality of life and supporting skill development. We provide flexible, consistent and reliable support services that are responsive to the individuals' needs and express wishes.

Our practices are based on research and evidence-based best practice to promote the best possible outcomes.

These practices include providing person-centred support, active support and ensuring client participation in decision-making processes.

Clients are encouraged and supported to make decisions in relation to:

- › The management of the organisation and its services
- › The recruitment, induction and training of new staff members
- › The development and review of policies and procedures.

Person-centred support

Possability is committed to a 'person-centred' philosophy of service delivery. This means that we will ensure that clients (and where appropriate, their families, carers, advocates and guardians) are in control of their own plans and are encouraged to make decisions that affect their lives.

We listen to, consult with and support our clients to live in their communities as they choose.

Participation and inclusion

Possability works to ensure clients are able to participate and feel included in decisions about their care.

Community participation and inclusion

Possability supports each client to make decisions about how to connect with their communities. We provide information, support and training to support our clients to participate in the community, such as through employment, social and recreational clubs, adult education facilities (e.g. TAFE), sporting facilities, and cultural/spiritual organisations.

We actively seek information about supports and services in local communities to enable clients to achieve their goals and minimise any barriers to participation and inclusion.

We will do everything in our power to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our clients while they are accessing or participating in community-based activities.

Community education about participation and inclusion

We undertake activities to help the community understand the issues surrounding disabilities and thereby contribute to removing the barriers to full participation and inclusion. We use feedback from clients and their families to understand their needs to participate in the community. We make this information available to local planners (e.g. councils) to improve our clients' access to community facilities.

Employee and volunteer training

Possability recruits, trains, and develops a skilled and respectful workforce that will provide the same opportunities and choices to people with a disability as experienced by other people in the community. We train Possability employees and volunteers so that they understand, respect and support the interests and skill development of our clients.

Clients in the Criminal Justice System

We actively seek meaningful connections with the community for people at risk of entering or leaving custody. We will support those clients develop their interests and activities, while assisting them to meet the requirements of legal orders that may be in place for the safety of themselves and/or others.

Overview of client rights

Possability respects the rights of people with a disability. We embrace the principles and rights contained in United Nations Conventions, and Australian and Tasmanian Laws.

People who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments can face many barriers that hinder full participation in society on an equal basis with others. We support the promotion, protection and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promote respect for inherent dignity.

Key principles include:

- › Acceptance of people with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- › Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- › Respect for dignity, autonomy, independence and difference
- › Non-discrimination
- › Equality of opportunity; equality between men and women
- › Respect for the capacity and identity of children with disabilities.

The National Standards for Disability Services emphasises that people with disabilities have a right to dignity and respect, self-determination, choice and control, freedom of expression and freedom from discrimination, exploitation, abuse, harm, neglect and violence.

Anti-discrimination

Possability will not tolerate discrimination based on race, religion, age, national origin, language, sex, sexual orientation or disability. We will treat all clients fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner. This applies to our referral and intake processes as well as service delivery.

We do not tolerate harassment or vilification. We consider such behaviour to be unacceptable and it is likely to result in disciplinary action. We will investigate and address all allegations of discrimination, harassment or vilification promptly and in a confidential way.

Client consultation and engagement

Communication is one of the most basic needs and rights of all people. We recognise that everyone communicates differently, and therefore provide alternative approaches for everyone to be able to have a say and be heard.

We support clients' right to choice and control and offer opportunities for input into decisions about their life and goals.

By consulting inclusively, we enhance clients' participation skills and their ability to receive and share information.

We use inclusive consultation, through a number of strategies, to influence decisions about our services.

Client and family surveys

We conduct regular surveys to gather feedback and input from clients and their family members about our services. These surveys provide an opportunity for anonymous input, where any feedback cannot be linked to one individual.

Individual client meetings

One avenue for resolving client, employee or other issues, requests or feedback is through individual client meetings.

The Practice Development (PD) Consultant explores any issues raised. Minutes are taken and any clients and family/guardians involved are provided with a copy. Where needed, the PD Consultant works with the client to identify how they wish to proceed.

Possible outcomes include:

- Providing feedback to the Coordinator or Team Leader for action, outcome or resolution
- Referral to a Resident Meeting or Consumer Forum for broader discussion
- Referral to an independent advocacy agency.

Resident meetings

Another avenue for consultation and engagement is through Resident Meetings. These meetings are an initiative specially designed by Possability for clients to raise, discuss and resolve issues, and share information and ideas.

Resident Meetings are held at each supported accommodation site every eight weeks, led by a Practice Development Consultant.

Site staff support clients to create an agenda before each meeting but are not involved in the meetings. Items for discussion may include things like holidays, upcoming events, housekeeping issues, household purchases, staff or service delivery issues. The PD Consultant may also add items to the agenda, such as updated Possability client information or Possability policies for review.

Any issues that are not client-specific or cannot be resolved at the meeting are referred on to the next Consumer Forum. Where needed, issues raised at the meeting are passed on to the responsible supervisor for action. The PD Consultant will let clients know the outcomes of any issues raised at the next scheduled meeting.

Consumer Forums

Consumer Forums provide clients with another opportunity to discuss matters of interest and to raise complaints about service delivery, staffing and other issues. They also help clients develop confidence and participate in decision making about how services are provided across the organisation. These forums are held at least four times a year and are organised by an independent advocacy group.

The forums strengthen the line of communication between clients and Possability's Board of Directors. The advocacy group works with clients to help them prepare reports to present to Possability's Board. Consumer Representatives are elected each year by their peers and present a Consumer Report in-person to each board meeting during their term.

Feedback and complaints

Possability welcomes, and takes seriously, all complaints and feedback. Complaints and feedback can be raised or provided by clients, family members, friends, employees or another service provider. We deal with all complaints fairly, efficiently and confidentially. We will ensure that anyone with an issue can make a complaint without fear of retaliation, disadvantage, or services being discontinued.

We encourage you to make complaints or provide feedback whenever you have an issue or concern. We regularly discuss with clients that it is their right to make a complaint and that complaints help us to make our service better. We ensure that clients can easily access Possability's Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure information. And we provide complaints information for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

When we do receive a complaint we make every effort to address it in a timely manner. We manage and investigate complaints in an open and accountable way, with a view to improving our services. We will allocate resources, as needed, to ensure all complaints are investigated and managed well.

Complaint process

1. Making a complaint

Complaints may be raised at a Resident Meeting, with your Consumer Representative, at an individual meeting with a Practice Development Consultant or through an independent advocate.

2. Gathering information

The Practice Development Consultant gathers all relevant information.

3. Client feedback

Outcomes or decisions are conveyed back to the client. Clients can ask for reasons for decisions to be provided to them in writing.

Decision reviews

If you disagree with the outcome from a complaint, you can ask for a review of the decision.

Options for decision reviews include:

- Requesting an internal review of decisions made
- Contacting a senior staff member - this should initially be the Regional Manager, escalating to the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer if you are still not satisfied with the outcome
- Contacting an advocacy organisation
- Contacting the Tasmanian Ombudsman's Office – it is advised that you access all internal avenues for redress under our Feedback and Complaints process prior to pursuing this option.

We are happy to provide contact details for these people upon request.

Contact details for advocacy groups and the Ombudsman's Office are included at the back of this book.

Preventing and responding to abuse

Possability takes any report of abuse or suspected abuse, very seriously. If clients or family members become aware of, or suspect abuse, they are each encouraged to make a report to us. Staff must report any suspected abuse promptly. We will maintain strict confidentiality according to professional and legal obligations as well as Possability policy.

Our focus is on supporting the interests of the alleged victim. We will make every effort to prevent further contact between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator, including possible relocation of one party, based on the best interests of the alleged victim.

We will focus any interventions on ensuring safety and protection from violence and abuse.

We will provide the alleged victim with information about their options, and encourage and support them to make their own decisions. If the alleged victim is unable to make their own decisions, we will ensure their views are still considered. We will respect an alleged victim's choice of an independent advocate.

In the case of potential criminal offences (such as theft, violence, assault, threats, intimidation or harassment), and other situations where appropriate, we report the incident to the Police and/or pursue legal recourse.

Safeguarding children

Possability is clear in its commitment to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect. In support of this commitment, we have elected to undertake voluntary accreditation in the Safeguarding Children program. The program systematically builds the capacity of an organisation to keep children and young people safe from abuse and exploitation by staff, volunteers and other related individuals. The process is supported by expert advice, policy development and resources from experienced child protection practitioners.

Restrictive practices

Restrictive practices involve the use of interventions and practices that have the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person with disability.

There are three kinds of restrictive practices:

- Environmental Restrictions
- Personal Restriction
- Chemical Restriction

Possability is morally, professionally and legally committed to providing an environment for clients that is the least restrictive possible and free from any practices that punish clients or impact on their human rights.

We apply positive behaviour support and other evidence-based approaches to avoid restrictive practices. Decisions or actions that involve restrictive practices affecting a client, will involve consultation, taking into account the wishes of the person, their best interests, and safety of the person and others.

This will be undertaken, so far as practicable, with regard to the intellectual capacity of the person with disability. Restriction of the freedom of decision and action of clients will be avoided as much as possible, and if at all, it will be to the smallest extent that is practicable.

Any planned use of restrictive practices follows the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requirements. If restrictive practice occurs in an emergency the matter is reported to DHHS's Senior Practitioner and is investigated by a senior manager at Possability. Where employee actions are assessed to have breached policy, that employee will be subject to disciplinary action.

Health and safety

Possability is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of clients, our employees and visitors to our offices.

We assess and manage risks for clients by:

- › Assessing their lifestyle, health safety and wellbeing
- › Developing a Risk Profile and Management Plan for all identified risks.

We provide staff training and have processes in place to ensure a safe working environment for employees and clients at Possability facilities and in the community.

Staff will work with clients to assist and encourage a healthy lifestyle. Good nutrition and exercise will be encouraged through education and informed choice.

Staff can support clients to attend medical appointments. In some cases, a Health Care Plan may need to be developed.

Medication management

Possability has a strong focus on ensuring client medication is stored, administered and disposed of in a manner that is safe and responsible, and meets relevant legislative requirements.

Medication is defined as including prescribed and non-prescribed medication to clients in the form of tablets, capsules, drops, ointments, lotions, sprays, inhalers and transdermal patches.

Employees required to administer oral or topical medication will have completed accredited training and be deemed competent in medication management including first aid, healthy body systems and medication administration processes. Staff are required to follow policies and procedures of Possability and the State Government's Disability Services Medication Management Framework May 2016. Possability employees will only administer medication as directed by a health professional and where the client, guardian or person responsible, have provided written consent.

Advocacy

Possability actively supports clients' right to advocacy. People with a disability have the right to actively participate in decisions that affect their life. 'Advocacy' refers to a person or group speaking, acting or writing on behalf of a disadvantaged person or group to promote, protect and defend their welfare and justice.

We advise clients of their right to have an advocate, and regularly remind them of this option. Clients can request an independent advocate to represent them at any time. A family member, carer, friend or an advocacy service can act as an advocate. Clients may choose to have an advocate present during assessments, planning processes, complaints or for any other communication with Possability. We accept and respect advocates representing the interests of the client.

Where a client is unable to independently request the services of an advocate, a Practice Development Consultant will refer them. Information about advocacy agencies and contact details are included at the back of this booklet and explained at intake, formal assessments and reviews.

Privacy and confidentiality

Possability collects personal and sensitive health information about our clients and is legally bound to ensure that this is kept confidential. The primary purpose for collecting personal information from clients is to help us provide appropriate services as well as perform functions such as planning, funding, monitoring and evaluating our services.

Internal use of personal information

Access to all client information is controlled. Client profiles and file notes are kept in a safe, locked place in our offices and only people who need the information can look at it. Clients are able to access personal information held about them, and may ask us to correct their personal information, if needed.

We usually collect personal information directly from our clients. However, we sometimes collect personal information from a third party such as family members, carers, volunteers, staff members, trustees,

authorised representatives or from a publicly available source. Information is only collected if you have agreed to such collection or would reasonably expect us to collect your personal information in this way, or if it is necessary for a specific purpose. All identifiable personal information is for use by Possability staff only and is not made available to external agencies, unless consent has been provided.

All employees sign a Confidentiality Agreement when they start work with Possability, and this document is indefinitely binding. Our employees are not allowed to disclose information that is given in confidence. Possability employees must respect client privacy and confidentiality at all times in their interaction with other employees and people outside the organisation. They should not share private information outside the organisation unless required for service purposes and with written agreement.

External use of personal information

Where Possability does have responsibility to report on our clients, for example, to funding bodies, we use de-identified information. Personal information will not be disclosed to third parties without your permission, except where allowed or required under the Privacy Act. We take steps to protect all personal, sensitive and health related information held by Possability against misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification and disclosure.

Families

Possability protects a client's right to privacy and confidentiality concerning their personal relationships, such as with family members. We encourage clients to keep in touch with their family but will also respect client wishes if they choose not to see their family. Staff will ensure that personal matters between the client and their family are kept private and confidential.

Client consent

Before providing a service we seek client consent to collect personal information that we need to provide the service and to report to funding agencies. If we need to release information to other people or service providers, we will seek consent and will not release information unless we have permission. We will also seek consent before taking photographs, making films, making recordings and/or publishing their image or voice in any written or electronic media.

If clients do not have the capacity to give informed consent, we will assist them to access other services that can help them to make informed choices and decisions. This includes accessing formal guardianship and advocacy services.

Protecting property and money

Possability respects our clients' right to have their personal property and money protected. Where possible, we encourage clients to have full control over their money. We promote independence by supporting clients to learn skills in money management, budgeting, shopping and bill-paying. We teach clients to create a budget and teach them how to manage money. We educate clients in keeping their property safe.

For clients living in a shared house, a household account is used for common expenses. The household account is used for the payment of regular bills such as rent, electricity, phone, shopping and maintenance. We also support clients to keep track of their property by maintaining an inventory of their possessions.

Where staff are directly involved in supporting clients to manage their finances we ensure the security of their money through a rigorous financial monitoring and auditing system. Possability staff are not permitted to support clients to purchase items with a value greater than \$500 without review and approval by management to ensure the item is of good value and something the client genuinely wishes to purchase. Financial records are checked by support staff daily and on a monthly basis by supervisors. They are also checked from time to time by external auditors.

We encourage clients to obtain the services of an advocate of their choice to help make decisions about their property and if they require further reassurance that their money is being well managed.

Continuous improvement

Possability has a strong focus on continuous quality improvement. We have a cyclic approach to management that involves planning, doing, checking (gathering feedback and input) and acting. This enables us to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify and meet the needs and expectations of our clients and stakeholders in an effective and efficient manner
- To achieve, maintain and improve overall organisational performance and capabilities.

Continuous improvement mechanisms include the use of the quality policy, quality objectives, internal audit results, analysis of data, corrective actions and regular management reviews of the quality system.

Transferring service provider

There may be a number of reasons why a client may transfer from Possability. Either the client/guardian or Possability may choose to stop services. Possability respects clients' rights to choose to decline or exit a service provided by us at any time (unless leaving the service contravenes a lawful order). Any client who does decide to leave a service is welcome to request further services at any time.

Possability reserves the right to stop providing a service to a client. Such a situation would only occur after consultation with the person and/or their person responsible or guardian. This situation could occur if the service being provided is no longer funded or no longer appropriate for the client and no longer meets that person's needs. It might also occur if the client (or their associates) placed themselves, other clients, or staff at unacceptable levels of risk, and where such risk could not be minimised to a manageable level within the resources available. We only cease a service in such circumstances as a last resort.

We will also consult with the client, family, advocate or guardian about any concerns they may have about risks associated with the exit. We will assist a client to leave a service by providing information about other service providers who may be able to help. We will assess, manage and keep records of any identified risks associated with the exit, discharge or transfer of a client to another agency.

Notice required

For some clients there is a requirement to give Possability notice before transferring or exiting a service.

Clients funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are required to provide Possability with 28 days' notice to cease their service. Supported accommodation clients must provide 90 days' notice under DHHS guidelines.

Reference list

Policies and procedures outlined in this Booklet are aligned to the following legislation and standards:

- › Australian Privacy Principles
- › Commonwealth Disability Services Act 1986 and the Tasmanian
- › Department of Health and Human Services Restrictive Intervention Guidelines 2012
- › Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- › Disability Services Act 1992
- › Freedom of Information Act 1991
- › Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Act (Commonwealth) 1986
- › National Disability Services Standards 1993
- › Privacy Act 1988
- › Tasmanian Disability Services Act 2011
- › Tasmanian Guardianship and Administration Act 1995
- › The Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability 2008
- › The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- › Disability Services Medication Management Framework, May 2016

Acronyms

DHHS Department of Health and Human Services

NDIS National Disability Insurance Agency

PD Practice Development

Advocacy and complaints organisations

Advocacy Tasmania

South

Phone: 03 6224 2240
1800 005 131 (person free call only)
Email: intake@advocacytasmania.org.au

North

Phone: 03 6331 0740
Email: intake@advocacytasmania.org.au

North West

Phone: 03 6441 0201
Email: advocacynw@advocacytasmania.org.au
www.advocacytasmania.org.au

Association for Children with Disability

South

Phone: 03 6231 2466
freecall: 1800 244 742
Email: admin@acdtas.com.au

North

Phone: 03 6343 0344
Email: admin@acdtas.com.au

North West

Phone: 03 6424 7025
Email: admin@acdtas.com.au
www.acdtas.com.au

Citizen Advocacy (Launceston only)

Phone: 03 6331 2177
Email: manager@citizenadvocacylton.org.au
www.citizenadvocacylton.org.au

Guardianship and Administration Board (Hobart)

Phone: 03 6165 7500
or 1300 799 625

www.guardianship.tas.gov.au

Ombudsman Tasmania

Phone: 1800 001 170
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.tas.gov.au

www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au

Speak Out Advocacy

South

Phone: 03 6231 2344
Email: admin@speakoutadvocacy.org

North

Phone: 03 6343 2022
Email: launceston@speakoutadvocacy.org

North West

Phone: 03 6431 9333
Email: burnie@speakoutadvocacy.org
www.speakoutadvocacy.org

Further information

For further information about our policies or procedures please contact one of our Practice Development Consultants.

Freecall: **1300 067 842**

or email: info@possability.com.au



Nurturing potential.

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