

PRINCIPLES OF ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT

Statements of Position which might be made by VALID representatives from time to time will be based on the considered interpretation of the following Policy Statement: Principles of Accommodation Support. These Principles reflect the views and opinions of the VALID organisation and are subject to elaboration and definition only with the authorisation of the VALID Committee of Management.

1. A Real Home

- 1.1 Every adult with an intellectual disability has the right to live in a real home.
- 1.2 A real home is a place where friendship is nurtured and love grows. Home is where the heart is.
- 1.3 A real home is not a facility. It is not an institution. A real home is the place where you belong, not where you are housed.
- 1.4 Real home environments are more likely to develop when the number of people living in the home is low, and when the compatibility of residents is high.

2. Individual Lifestyles

- 2.1 Every adult with an intellectual disability has the right to enjoy an individual lifestyle.
- 2.2 Services should respond to individual needs and support personal preferences.
- 2.3 People should not be grouped according to their deficits and diagnoses, but according to their personal preferences, common interests and compatibility of personality.
- 2.4 Daily routines and patterns should be structured according to individual needs and personal preferences; group schedules should not be imposed to suit organisational convenience.

3. Community Inclusion

- 3.1 Every adult with an intellectual disability has the right to community inclusion. This means having the right to access and participate in the activities and opportunities available to people who do not have a disability, to the maximum extent possible.
- 3.2 Specialist programs and services, whilst often vitally important and necessary, may be regarded as discriminatory if they serve to unduly isolate people from community inclusion. Specialisation, however necessary, must not be allowed to unduly restrict a person's right to socialisation, nor their right to enjoy an individual lifestyle and live in a real home.
- 3.3 Any compromise of a person's right to community inclusion should occur in strict compliance with the principle of the Least Restrictive Alternative. "When some restriction on the rights or opportunities of an intellectually disabled person is necessary, the means chosen should be the least restrictive of the available alternatives having regard to all the circumstances." (IDPSA 1986)

4. Disability Support Services

- 4.1 Every adult with an intellectual disability has the right to obtain appropriate disability support services.
- 4.2 Disability support services must provide assistance that balances the individual's need for care, supervision and security, with the need of every person for stimulation, growth, challenge and development.
- 4.3 Disability support services should be provided by quality staff who are committed to, and skilled in, responding to people with intellectual disability as individuals.
- 4.4 Disability support services must be supported by a quality assurance framework that establishes clear standards and effective monitoring systems.

5. De-Institutionalisation

- 5.1 Institutionalisation is a condition associated with:
 - a. the large-scale congregation of people with intellectual disability, which typically leads to regimented routines and impersonal care, and;

- b. the segregation of people with intellectual disability, which typically leads to a restriction of opportunities for community inclusion.

5.2 People are likely to become de-institutionalised:

- a. when personal choice and decision-making are supported
- b. when personal needs and preferences are respected more highly than group or system convenience, and;
- c. when real homes and individual lifestyles are supported, in settings which provide for the greatest possible degree of community inclusion, whilst having regard to each individual's own needs and preferences.

5.3 People with intellectual disability currently living in Training Centres* have the right to be de-institutionalised. The State Government should implement a systematic plan which:

- a. ensures all current residents of Training Centres are provided with real homes, and;
- b. supports individual lifestyles and opportunities for community inclusion, based on the principle of the least restrictive alternative.

5.4 The de-institutionalisation of people with intellectual disability currently living in Training Centres should proceed within the framework of a systematic plan which ensures the closure of all Training Centres within a limited time-frame, whilst ensuring the rights, needs and preferences of current individual residents are respected.

5.5 As Training Centres are progressively closed, Government must observe a strict policy ensuring no new admissions.

5.6 As Training Centres are progressively closed, Government must channel all proceeds from the sale of Training Centre land and assets to make capital purchases which directly benefit people with intellectual disability.

6. People with Severely Challenging Behaviours or High Medical Needs

- 6.1 A person with an intellectual disability who also has severely challenging behaviours or high medical needs, has the right to obtain specialist support services which positively manage and effectively address his or her needs, without negatively compromising the right to a real home, an individual lifestyle and opportunities for community inclusion.

6.2 Where some restriction on the rights of a person is deemed necessary in their interests, specialist services should be provided in strict accordance with the principle of the least restrictive alternative. An individual's placement in specialist services and programs should be reviewed regularly and independently to ensure that the opportunity for movement to less restrictive - and more inclusive options - is maximised.

7. Unmet Needs

7.1 The State and Federal Governments share a responsibility for funding housing and accommodation support to all adults with intellectual disability, and should commit to addressing unmet needs as a matter of urgency.

7.2 Families of adults with intellectual disability have a right to expect that access to the accommodation support system should be readily available, fairly managed and equitably provided.

7.3 Families who choose to contribute to the funding and/or establishment of alternative accommodation options have a right to do so. They also have a right to expect that government should remove any impediments to their initiative, and provide information and advice that might assist them.

7.4 Families developing alternative accommodation options should ensure that adults with intellectual disability are established in real homes, which support individual lifestyles, in settings that provide maximum opportunities for community inclusion.

7.5 Government must ensure that all services, including those which are funded and managed in the government, non-government and private sectors, comply with the principles of the DSA 1986 and IDPS Act 1986, and uphold the rights of people with intellectual disability as equal citizens of Australia.

*** Training Centre - a residential institution as defined in section 17 of the IDPS Act.