

North West Residential Support Services Inc.  
Policies & Procedures  
**CHOICE & DECISION MAKING**

Number: <1>  
Effective From: <October> <2015>  
Replaces: <#>  
Review: NWRSS Board  
Contact: Neal Rodwell, General Manager  
Review Date: <January> <2017>

Dealing with human difference and need involves the most complex issues and problems found in any workforce. The myriad of competing interests found in human support services include:

- The people being supported and their many needs such as:
  - Healing past wounding experiences
  - Attending to general, special, mental and spiritual health
  - Finding ways to communicate
  - Making the most of a limited income
  - Finding, maintaining and keeping a home
  - Finding, making and keeping friends
  - Being accepted into community activities
  - Having ways of getting around
  - Finding opportunities to display personal gifts and assets
  - Being protected from ill-informed gossip and negative publicity
  - Being encouraged and allowed to take responsibility
  - Gaining knowledge and learning new skills
  - Being able to follow chosen lifestyles
  - Developing social roles to be appreciated for
  - Planning for the future
  
- The demands of running a service such as:
  - Obtaining and managing funds
  - Meeting legal, statutory and political requirements
  - Choosing, training and supporting staff
  - Maintaining a sound philosophical base
  
- The pursuit of quality for which there are always the competing notions of:
  - The person being supported
  - The family of the person being supported
  - The support workers
  - The service
  - The funding source
  - The public

In such a climate of competing interests, making choices and decisions is always complex and invariably involves:

- Dealing with large amounts of information
- Dealing with strong beliefs, feelings and emotions
- Being cautious not to inflict harm
- Ensuring benefits for the person being supported
- Creating solutions
- Managing all of the above

Decisions affecting staff are predominately workplace decisions governed by awards, policies and procedures.

Decisions for and about the people we support are, more often than not, life defining and need great thought and care.

NWRSS recognises that those we support have the right to make choices in all life areas. It also recognises their right to be represented and/or involved in decision making processes at all levels of the service.

Involvement in decision making processes for the people being supported will be promoted and protected in the following ways by:

- Ensuring attendance and/or representation when decisions that will affect them are being made. This includes but is not restricted to:
  - Life enrichment planning meetings
  - Support team meetings
  - Management team meetings
  - Service coordination meetings
- Those being supported having someone represent them on the board of management
- Assisting people to meet and discuss pending decisions
- Keeping formal minutes of meetings
- Making information about how and why decisions were made freely available on request
- Assisting people to use advocacy services and take training opportunities in self-advocacy

**[www.nwrss.org.au](http://www.nwrss.org.au)**