

# ***PEER SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT***

Booklet One



## **ABLE MINDS**

• UNLOCKING MINDS. •  
CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES.

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# ***ABLE MINDS***

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Able Minds is a group of mentors and it is our mission to support young people with disabilities to prepare themselves for life beyond school. Our Peer Support program focuses on employment and aims to enhance their ability to self-advocate and lead fulfilling lives within their communities. The program promotes independence, reablement and ensures each individual has the freedom to make choices and building skills, boost confidence and to be able to have employment opportunities.

This program is funded by the NDIS and is free to all who participate. We offer two mentors who will come to you for an hour session and go through interactive workshops to educate our participants about employment opportunities, self-advocacy and empowerment.

# **WELCOME TO THE SELF-ADVOCACY BOOKLET SESSION ONE**

This resource is designed for anyone who wants to develop and strengthen their personal skills, including:

- Understanding yourself, your rights, and what matters to you.
- Finding the most effective way to communicate your thoughts to others.
- Learning how to take care of yourself when faced with challenging changes.



## ***Who is this kit for?***

In our organisation, we encounter many individuals with disabilities who are dealing with unacceptable situations in their lives. Some find it difficult to speak about these issues, and we recognise that there can be many reasons for this challenge.

However, we also know that people can build skills, gain confidence, and discover how to make positive changes in their own lives.

This kit is for those who are ready to begin the journey of discovering and building these essential self-advocacy skills.



# WHAT IS SELF-ADVOCACY ?

Self-advocacy is all about speaking up for our **rights, needs, and the things that matter to us**. We practice self-advocacy in various ways and for numerous reasons, such as making everyday choices, such as what we choose to wear or even what we want to eat.

We also self-advocate when we:

- Communicate what is acceptable and not acceptable in our lives
- Request changes in situations that are not okay for us
- Highlight our skills and what we can offer
- Identify problems and determine who can help us resolve them and then communicate with that person to find a solution



The reasons we self-advocate:

- Improve our lives
- Remind others that we have the rights and deserve fair treatment and respect, just like everyone else
- Participate in decision-making within our families and in the community

We self-advocate because we all share the same human rights.

## ***WHAT DOES SELF- ADVOCACY MEAN TO YOU?***



Write down a time when you advocated for yourself. Example:

- When you spoke up about a problem
- Let someone know about a challenge you were facing
- Letting someone know what you have to offer when doing a task
- Being included in a group

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## ***Knowing your rights: What are Human Rights?***



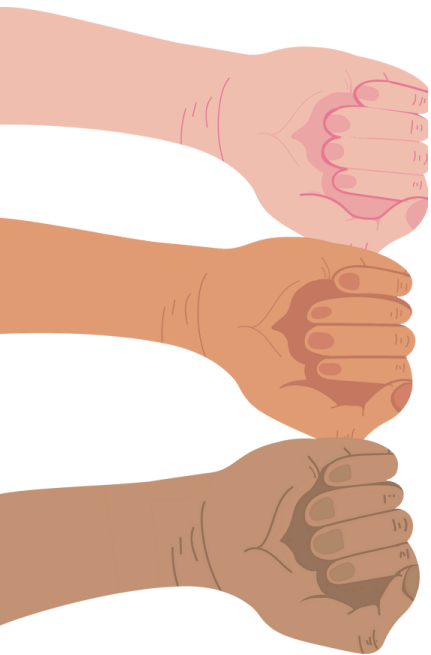


# ***WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?***

Human rights are basic rules that help us live happy, free, and respected lives. Everyone has these rights and should be treated equally and with respect.

Our human rights are explained in two important documents:

- The Universal Declaration of Human rights (UDHR)
- The convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD)



In Australia, many states, territory, and federal laws protect these rights. Ignoring human rights is wrong and can lead to serious legal trouble.

## ***Human Rights Cover:***



- The right to be treated equally
- The right to choose where to live
- The right to an education
- The right to vote and run for election
- The Right to marry and have a family
- The Right to work and choose where to work

The “Disability Service and Inclusion Act 2023” ensures that people with disabilities receive the support and services they need. This act helps improve the quality and safety of services for people with disabilities.

By learning and standing up for these rights, we help make sure everyone can live a good and fulfilling life.

***Let’s test our knowledge so far with:***





## Connecting Human Rights and self-advocacy:

The things that we self-advocate about are quite often linked to our human rights.

It's crucial to identify this connection when we feel unfairly treated, not given a fair go, or when our choices and decisions are being ignored.

Even when self-advocating, it can be helpful and important to seek out people who have the skills to assist us in:

- Understanding our problem
- Recognising how it might be related to our human rights and the law
- Developing a plan to resolve the issue

For people with disabilities, local disability advocacy organisations can be of great assistance. Additionally, the Human Rights Commission offices across Australia specialise in promoting and protecting human rights.





## Why is it important to know our human rights?

Understanding our human rights:

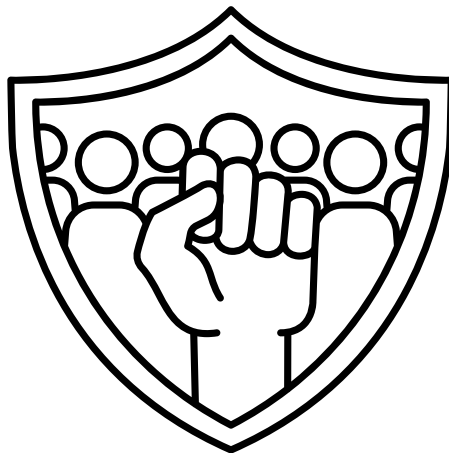
- Provides a clear framework for how people should treat each other, whether in the community, at school, or in workplaces.
- Helps us comprehend our own rights and our responsibilities in protecting the rights of others.
- Offers a strong reference when discussing what is unacceptable in our lives and why it is so.
- Reminds us that we deserve to be treated fairly and equally, just like anyone else.

## Why might it be hard to protect our rights?

Protecting our rights can be challenging if:

- We are unaware of what our rights are.
  - We feel that people may not listen to or believe us.
  - We fear that making a complaint could lead to worse treatment.
  - We think that some issues are too difficult to change.
- Sometimes, we encounter people who don't understand human rights. Their behavior and interactions can be heavily influenced by their biases and prejudices.

This is especially difficult when those individuals are in positions of power and their decisions impact us. The pain and trauma from having our rights disrespected or ignored can be significant.

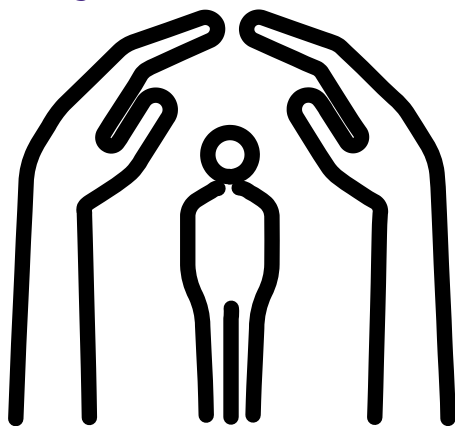


It is often helpful to get help from others when we are faced with this.



Sometimes our most powerful act of self-advocacy is asking for help when we need it. Organisations that can help with this include:

- Disability advocacy organisations (like Advocacy for Inclusion)
- The local office of the Human Rights Commission
- community legal Center.



**What are some things you can do to help protect your rights?**

Here are some steps to help you protect your rights:

- Know your rights: Educate yourself about your rights.
- Identify key contacts: Find out who to talk to when you need assistance.
- Seek support: Know where to get help if you need it.
- Be assertive: Learn how to communicate confidently and respectfully when standing up for yourself, without being passive or aggressive.



## Reflecting on Human Rights Activity

Brainstorm on butches' paper with words and pictures:

What are the Human Rights?

What do Human rights mean to you?

Draw some pictures that expresses Human rights



## ***What does it look like when Human rights are not respected?***



It's a sad reality that throughout history, and even today, people's human rights aren't always fully respected.

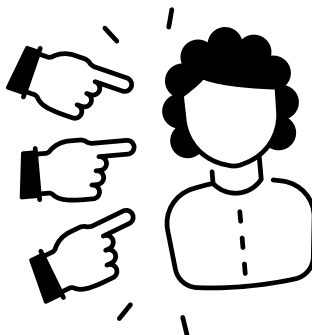
We can see this when:

- People face discrimination due to their disability, sexuality, cultural background, or beliefs
- People's freedom to make choices about their own lives is overruled.
- People are prevented from exercising their rights as citizens

All Our Human rights must be respected, not just some.

## ***Is it discrimination or not discrimination?***

Disability discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly or less favorably than others because of their disability.





This discrimination can manifest in various forms:

- **Direct discrimination:** This happens when someone is treated differently in a way that disadvantages them. For example, a person being denied entry to a restaurant because they use a wheelchair
- **Indirect discrimination:** This occurs when policies, laws, or practices that apply to everyone disadvantage people with disabilities. For example, a local council designed a playground that children with disabilities cannot access



Discrimination scenario activity.

- In this activity you will need to work in a group of 3 or 4 and place each scenario under either discrimination or not discrimination.

Discrimination can appear in different ways:

- **Prejudice:** Sometimes, discrimination happens because people have biases against those with disabilities. Sadly, some people dislike others they see as different.
- **Lack of Understanding:** At other times, discrimination occurs due to a lack of knowledge about disabilities. It's helpful when these people are open to learning from those with disabilities or through disability awareness training.
- **Even situations that aren't direct discrimination** – like a person with a disability not getting a job because they have fewer qualifications and experience than another candidate – can show a bigger pattern of discrimination. The bad effects of discrimination can build up over a lifetime. Did discrimination stop the person from getting the qualifications or experience they needed for a job interview?

Self-advocacy can include sharing our stories with others. When many people share their stories, it can reveal a bigger picture of how our community fails to respect human rights. Telling this bigger story can help make positive changes.





## discrimination

D D E L L O R T N O C N U Q D O H  
S T P R E J U D G E D T B T S X A  
E V U O F K E P S I Z E D N B H R  
G D B I E V R O G E T C D E M M A  
R I B V O W D M P R L O P N Z O S  
E S V L B W J O A J Y F J O Y V S  
G Y N E I V G Y S N I U H L U F M  
A U J F Z X E V O N D D L A A X E  
T M J A Z D U I D G E A J V T P N  
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H E E L E R S S M E U W W S I J L  
S N E D I G M D T G L B K W N P Z  
T X I E Y L W S M M M S I C A R C

uncontrolled  
harassment  
depressed  
unloved  
sexism

segregation  
separation  
self hate  
unequal  
alone

indifferent  
judgmental  
prejudged  
unsafe  
pain

favoritism  
stereotype  
betrayed  
racism