

A new NDIS Code of Conduct has been introduced for workers under the National Disability Insurance Scheme to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people with disability.

The Code of Conduct applies to all workers and service providers delivering NDIS supports or services, including employees, contractors and volunteers.

This guide will help you, as a person who works with people with disability, to become familiar with the appropriate and ethical conduct expected under the Code of Conduct.

If you're unsure about any service delivery issue, you should consult your supervisor, your organisation, or talk directly with your client.

Remember, if you see something you think is a breach of protocol or the Code of Conduct, you should tell your supervisor or someone else in the organisation, or, let the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission know if you can't raise it internally. There are penalties for providers who take any adverse action against workers or other people who report a possible breach of the Code of Conduct.



## 7

### Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

People with disability have a right to sexual expression and to develop and maintain sexual relationships. However, they are at an increased risk of all forms of sexual violence and sexual misconduct.

You are expected to adhere to the highest standards of behaviour, by having professional boundaries with people with disability. This includes preventing and responding to any inappropriate behaviour by anyone to a person with disability.

Your NDIS provider should have a guidance policy that distinguishes between inappropriate and appropriate touching and between sexual misconduct and appropriate conversations about sexual support and family planning needs.

You should report any sexual misconduct, unlawful sexual or physical conduct or inappropriate relationships to your NDIS provider, the NDIS Commission and other authorities. You should support people with disability so they feel safe to make a complaint without fear of retribution or loss of services.



## More information

A full copy of the **NDIS Code of Conduct Guidance for Workers** is available from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission at [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)

You can contact the NDIS Commission on 1800 035 544.



NDIS Quality  
and Safeguards  
Commission

## The NDIS Code of Conduct Summary for workers



# The seven elements of the NDIS Code of Conduct

1

## Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions

All people with disability have full and equal human rights to make their own decisions, live how they choose and receive the support they need.

Not all adults with disability need or want support in decision-making so you should consult them about who, if anyone, they want to involve in decisions about their service and support. You should involve young people and children in decisions that affect them in ways appropriate to their age, development and communication skills.

People with a disability have a right to question, seek extra information about or refuse any part of their service delivery. The onus is on you to communicate in a way that ensures they understand the information and make their own preferences and concerns known to you.

The Code of Conduct requires you to consider their values and beliefs relating to culture, faith, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality, age, and disability.

2

## Respect the privacy of people with disability

People with disability have the right not to have their personal information disclosed to others without their informed consent — unless mandatory reporting is required.

You should explain to people with disability why and what information is kept about them, who has access to it, and what to do if they believe their privacy is breached.

Privacy goes beyond handling personal information to delivering services in a way that maintains personal dignity. This includes both asking permission to perform and explaining procedures that involve physical touch or invading personal space.

3

## Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner, with care and skill

All workers under the NDIS are expected to have adequate expertise and competence necessary for safe and skilful service delivery. You must have and maintain the required qualifications and skills.

You should decline directions — from an NDIS provider, person with disability or their family or carer — to undertake duties that you are not qualified or trained to deliver. You can make a report to the NDIS Commission if such a direction is made.

You should also comply with your own professional code of conduct and relevant work, health and safety requirements. You should ensure that accurate and timely records are kept about an NDIS participant's service history, medication and support needs. You must never work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

4

## Act with integrity, honesty and transparency

Integrity and honesty are crucial to developing trust between you and people with disability so you must be transparent about your qualifications and any limits on your competencies. You must disclose to your NDIS provider if you have failed a worker screening clearance or been subject to a professional misconduct finding.

People with disability have a right to get information about the comparative cost and effectiveness of treatments and the risks and benefits of service options.

You should declare and avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest in your work.

You should avoid giving, asking for or accepting inducements or gifts that may influence decision-making or service delivery under the NDIS. This includes to and from people with disability, their family or carers, or other service providers. You must avoid unethical practices such as over-servicing and high-pressure sales.

5

## Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports and services provided to people with disability

If the safety or the quality of support for people with disability is at risk you should take immediate action to address the reasons why. Ensure the person is safe and consult with them about how they would like to resolve the issue and take action.

It could be as simple as changing the timing of meals or moving a piece of furniture so it's easier to manoeuvre a wheelchair. Or the issue impacting quality or safety could be more complex and may require raising at an organisational level.

It is your responsibility to be familiar with your NDIS provider's systems for complaints and incident management and to follow established procedures. This includes supporting your provider to meet its reportable incidents obligations.

6

## Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against, and exploitation, neglect and abuse of, people with disability

People with disability are at a far greater risk of and are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation than those without a disability.

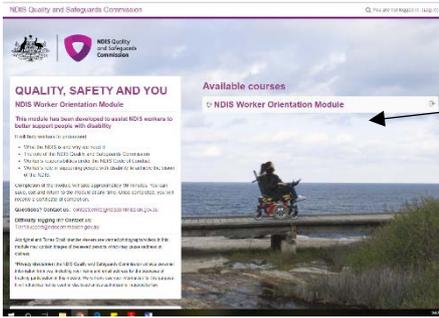
You can play an important role in helping to prevent, intervene early and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

If an incident or criminal act does occur, after ensuring the safety of the person affected, you must report it to your supervisor and/or other authorities, including the police where appropriate.

You should work with your NDIS provider to reduce and eliminate restrictive practices. This includes behaviour involving seclusion, chemical, mechanical, physical or environmental restraint.

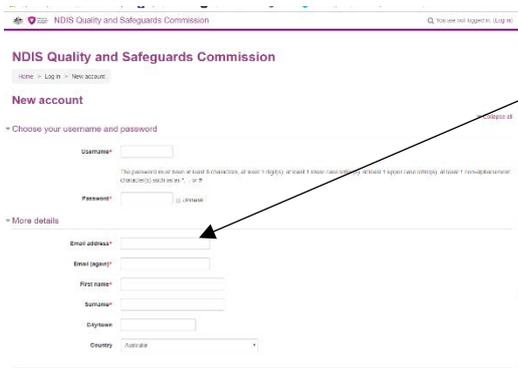
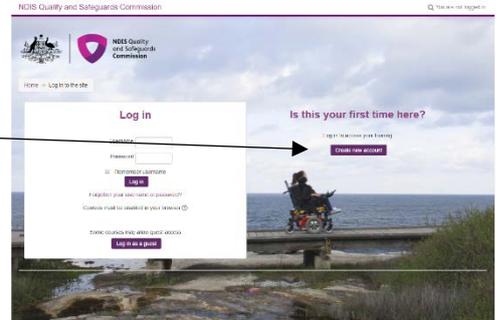
# NDIS WORKER ORIENTATION

1) GO HERE: <https://training.ndiscommission.gov.au/login/index.php>



2) Click on **NDIS Worker Orientation**

3) Click on **Create new account** under “Is this your first time here?”

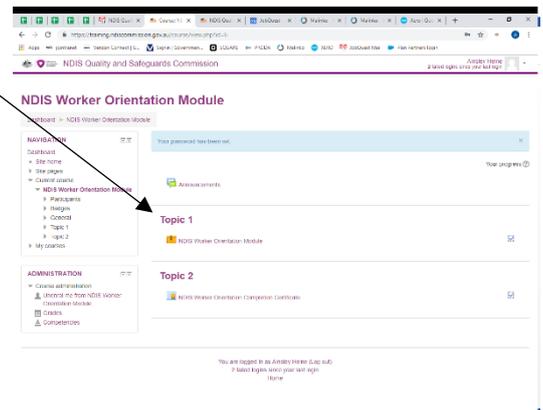


4) Create your account with your details

- Create username [lower case]
- Create password, must be a mix of lower & upper case letters, numbers and symbols  
*For example: Jobquest\$10*
- Complete email and other details
- Click on **Create my new account**

5) Go to your email – NDIS just emailed you a verification to confirm and **click on the link** to start the Orientation.

6) Click on **Topic 1 – NDIS Worker Orientation Module**. You will need to watch the videos and answer the questions after each video. You cannot skip through the videos you must watch them and then answer the questions before moving on to the next section.



7) To continue click on “Current Course” Select “Topic 2” and so forth until you have completed all 4 Topics

8) Download your certificate on completion and email to the office.

Thank you!!

Note: You don't need to complete all Topics in the one sitting – you can leave and go back at any time.

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# Job@quest

Connecting People and Skills

## Working with Our Clients

A guide for Field Workers





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## DOCUMENT AMENDMENT REGISTER

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| Date           | Version | Amendments   |
|----------------|---------|--|
| September 2018 | V1      | New document   |
| July 2019      | V2      | Changes to Client Rights Policy, Feedback and Complaints, Incident Reporting<br>Add reference to the Charter of Aged Care Rights |

## INTRODUCTION

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JobQuest delivers a range of services to people in our community. Some of these people access our services through government funded programs. We refer to these people as clients. We have other customers who access our services on a fee-for-service basis.

When delivering services to our clients and customers we may be operating under various specific laws such as the Aged Care Act and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act.

JobQuest requires all staff to operate under the procedures and protocols that enable us to comply with these laws and ensure that we provide services to our clients that are best practice.

This manual provides some guidance for Field Workers but is by no means all-inclusive.

Field Workers should not only use this guide, but also access information through the intranet and/or consult with their supervisor to ensure that the guidance given in all relevant procedures, protocols and other materials are followed.

JobQuest is committed to upholding the human, social and legal rights of all people who access our services. This means that all clients and customers accessing our services have a right to:

- Respect for their individual human worth, dignity and privacy;
- Participate fully in the life of society;
- Be informed about available services and be supported to make their own decisions;
- Have fair and reasonable access to available services that match their ongoing needs and goals;
- Have their rights under Australian Consumer Law upheld;
- Have services provided by trained and qualified staff;
- Access to quality services irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, marital status, disability, sexuality or age;
- Have their privacy and confidentiality maintained except under special situations such as legal reporting of incidents such as abuse or neglect;
- Ensure that any personal information held by the organisation is kept secure and be able to see and correct any errors;
- Express complaints and grievances and seek to have them resolved without fear of this having any effect on the services they receive; and
- Be able to provide feedback or complaint about service delivery and have this heard and dealt with in a fair and even-handed manner.

Our elderly and disabled clients and customers accessing various aged care and disability services have some specific rights including the right to:

- Be consulted about their needs and preferences and given the opportunity to choose from available alternatives;
- Involve an advocate of their choice if required;
- Have control over their own lives and have a say in the services that affect them including participating in decisions concerning the type of assistance provided and the way it is provided;
- Access services which are flexible in response to their changing needs and priorities;
- Expect assistance that is reliable, of high quality and culturally and linguistically relevant;
- Refuse a service and not be prejudiced in their future access to services;
- Be provided with services that are carried out under the various charters such as the NDIS Code of Conduct Summary for Workers, the Charter of Care Aged Care Rights and the Veterans' Home Care Rights and Responsibilities; and
- Be provided with services that are carried out under the Disability Services Standards and the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework.

## RECOGNITION OF CLIENT RIGHTS

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JobQuest recognises the client /customer as the central focus for our service delivery and acknowledges that all clients/customers are individuals and therefore have different needs determined by age, gender, cultural background and life circumstances.

Along with the Client Rights Policy, JobQuest also recognises and supports the Human Rights principles of –

- Respect for the inherent dignity, independence of persons and individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disability and respect for the right of children with disability to preserve their identities; and
- Active partnerships between services and people with disability, and where appropriate, their families, friends, carers and/or advocates.

## CHOICE AND CONTROL

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One of the underpinning principles of both the NDIS and Aged Care Acts is the acknowledgement and support of a client having choice and control.

Clients will decide which services they require and JobQuest will provide information and assistance in planning the services to meet their needs in partnership with them.

This means that, within available resources, we will –

- Work with the client to identify suitable services that we can provide;
- Refer the client to other providers if they wish us to do this;
- Refer the client to advocacy services if they wish us to do this;
- Keep in regular contact with the client and get their feedback about our services;
- Re-assess the client's service plan as required;
- Keep clear, accurate and up to date records on our clients;
- Only share information with the consent of the client; and
- Encourage clients to do as much as they can to maintain capacity and self-confidence.

It is important for all Field Workers to understand and work within these concepts.

INDEPENDENCE can be achieved by:

- Supporting clients to exercise choice and flexibility over their independence [by not insisting that you do everything but assisting the client to do things themselves];
- Knowing what independence means to a client;
- Considering the clients sensory and physical needs [vision or hearing loss, mobility, dexterity or mental capacity];
- Considering the client's communication needs [English language, literacy, sensory loss or mental capacity];
- Considering other people involved with the client; and
- Considering any risks to the client associated with providing the services.

### ENABLEMENT

This is based on the concepts of “use it or lose it” and “the more we do for people the more we steal from them”. While it might make a worker “feel good” to have done lots of jobs to help a client, it's important to also focus on what a person can do and wants to do with your help; and not just assume that the client can't do anything.

### REABLEMENT

This tends to occur when a client is recovering or regaining capacity and confidence. It may involve re-learning a task or learning a new task with encouragement, support and assistance.

### WELLNESS

This approach is similar in that it's about encouragement, support and focus on abilities rather than taking over and doing for. Again it's about doing with. It's also about the client retaining as much independent thinking, problem solving and functioning and increasing their self-confidence and dependency on others.

Field Workers should not assume the thinking, problem solving and decision making of their clients.

Allowing the client to think about something, make a decision [regardless of how minor] and instruct you in your work is fundamental to enablement and wellness.

## FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS

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At JobQuest we view complaints and other feedback as opportunities to identify areas for improvement in our services and operations. If someone lodges a complaint with you, this must always be documented and reported to your supervisor as quickly as possible so it can be followed up and resolved.

JobQuest collects a range of feedback that will help the organisation improve and all employees are expected to take an active role in continuous improvement by making suggestions for how anything can be done better.

We will routinely ask the client for feedback on the services they receive. The client's right to express dissatisfaction or make a complaint will be supported. Any complaint will be dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without prejudice.

You are expected to report any comment, feedback or complaint provided by the client. This can be done by writing on the Job Sheet or emailing your supervisor.

Any formal complaint will need to be documented and your supervisor will assist you to do this. A Formal Complaint Form is to be used when a client lodges a formal complaint as opposed to some negative feedback. All feedback whether formal or informal needs to be recorded.

You are also expected to encourage clients and customers to provide feedback, whether it's a compliment or a complaint.

You should not take complaints too personally because sometimes it's a system problem, a communication problem or an expectation of a client or customer that is incorrect. By reporting feedback or complaints we can get to the root cause of a problem and stop it from happening again.

## COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS

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Communication with our clients/customers is very important at all levels.

All staff – Field Workers, office staff and Managers need to ensure that communication with clients/customers is always professional, courteous, factual and sensitively delivered regardless of the client/customer's demeanour or manner of interaction.

A polite, factual response and acceptance of any error on our part is all that is required.

Field Workers need to hand any issues or complaints that they cannot handle over to their supervisor.

Field Workers are not expected to make decisions about how complaints might be rectified or compensated.

Regardless of the reason for the communication, all staff are expected to treat all clients and customers with respect and to make a sustained effort to communicate successfully.

If you are having a problem communicating successfully with a client or customer due to language or other constraints, try to find out if there is another person who can help such as a relative or neighbour.

Don't just "write off" a client or customer due to a communication constraint.

## AUSTRALIAN CONSUMER LAW

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Australian Consumer Law applies to all businesses that provide goods and services and protects the rights of consumers from unlawful trading practices. The laws relate to contracts, guarantees for goods and services, product safety and selling practices.

JobQuest must abide by consumer laws in its dealings with all clients and customers.

## FUNDED PROGRAMS UNDER WHICH OUR SERVICES ARE OFFERED

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### NDIS – The National Disability Insurance Scheme

The NDIS funds services for people living with disabilities. This funding can be managed by the client themselves [self-managed], a Plan Manager [plan managed] or through NDIS funded coordinators who help the participants organise their services. Clients can only access those services, activities or equipment approved through their NDIS Plan by the National Disability Insurance Agency.

### HOME CARE PACKAGES

These packages of support funding are for elderly people wanting to continue to live in the homes. The funding is allocated to the different services a client needs through an accredited Service Provider who manages the package for the client by assisting the client in accessing the range of services they require.

### CHSP – Commonwealth Home Support Programme

The CHSP provides funding for a broad range of entry-level support services to assist frail older people aged 65 years and over (50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) and who have functional limitations (including cognitive), to remain living independently at home and in their community. CHSP services are delivered on a short-term, episodic or ongoing basis, with a strong focus on activities that support independence and social connectedness and taking into account each person's individual goals, preferences and choices.

### VETERANS HOME CARE

The aim of the assistance provided by the VHC Program is to work with the entitled person, rather than replace activities that the entitled person is capable of doing themselves, which promotes independence, wellbeing and quality of life. Active participation has a beneficial health effect, even for the frail and those with health and disability limitations.

All clients regardless of their funding package can access our services on a fee-for-service basis.

## GUIDANCE MATERIALS FOR STAFF

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Various guidance documents are available for Field Workers and other staff within JobQuest.

Some documents are provided to you when you commence work at your induction program.

Other documents are found on the JobQuest intranet and can be accessed directly or with assistance from your Supervisor.

Examples of some of the guidance materials are:

- Charter of Care Recipients Right and Responsibilities – Home Care
- Code of Conduct
- Code of Practice for Field Workers
- Staff Handbook
- NDIS Code of Conduct
- Continuous Professional Development [CPD] Bulletins on various topics
- Safety Bulletins on various topics
- Safe Work Procedures
- Safe Work Method Statements
- JobQuest Policies
- Procedures Manuals:
  - Quality, Risk and Governance Manual
  - Information Management Manual
  - Human Resources Manual
  - Incident Reporting and Management Procedures

## KEY ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Ethical behaviour can be described as acting in ways consistent with what society and individuals typically think are good values. Ethical behaviour involves demonstrating respect for key moral principles that include honesty, fairness, equality, dignity, diversity and individual rights.

Ethical behaviour is essential when working with vulnerable clients. There are a number of specific issues that employees need to take account of when working with our clients and some of these are described below. More detailed information can be found in CPD [Continuing Professional Development] Bulletins and other guidance materials provided. All employees need to be aware of their importance.

### Working with vulnerable people

Field Workers need to be acutely aware that some of our clients and customers are vulnerable people, such the elderly and people with disabilities.

This is why there are certain protocols in place that must be adhered to particularly in relation to the protection of vulnerable people from neglect or abuse.

### Access and Equity

People will not be excluded from the service or treated differently because of their gender, marital status, religious or cultural backgrounds, political affiliation, particular disability, ethnicity, age, sexual preference, ability to pay, geographical location or circumstances of their carer.

### Conflict of Interest

Field Workers need to be mindful of conflicts of interest in the course of working with clients and ensure that any conflict is appropriately managed. This include any potential or real conflict between your employment and private interests.

Conflicts of interest can occur in many instances, such as seeking or accepting gifts for work performed while on duty, hawking/selling to others, or influence to seek advantage such as recommending to clients services operated by the employee or their family from which they gain benefit.

Conflicts can also occur through the following activities:

- Political or religious activity;
- Secondary employment;
- Using JobQuest information after leaving your employment; and
- Having services purchased from you by JobQuest under contract and conflicts between your employment and these contractual arrangements.

### Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality

Field Workers are required to protect the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of all clients and customers.

The following simple guidelines can help you maintain client confidentiality:

- Never discuss client information with other people, especially people outside of the organisation - friends or relatives;
- Ensure that material kept in files about clients relates only to the service delivery being offered to that client and factors that may affect service delivery;
- Ensure clients are aware of what information is kept about them and ensure relevant consents are in place;
- Keep confidential documents secured if they are taken out of the office or during transit, including transportation in JobQuest vehicles;

- Keep all paper files in cabinets when not in use and locked at the end of the working day;
- Ensure electronic client file systems have passwords which are kept secured, for example, not on a post-it note on your computer monitor;
- Never disclose client information to third party who may be contacting the service to find out whether the person is a client of the service;
- Never disclose client information to other agencies that are not involved with the client. For example, the Department of Housing may want to report their concerns about a tenant. In this situation, it is possible to receive information about the person, but not confirm whether the person is known to the service, without the client signing consent to release of information; and
- Never disclose the names, personal or any identifying details of any clients in public forums such as meetings, conferences, workshops or seminars unless you have specific written consent to do so.

### Physical Privacy

Clients also have a right to physical privacy especially while staff are working in their home or grounds. For example:

- Only access those parts of their home they have given consent for staff to access;
- Knock on doors of rooms before entering to ensure the client is not inside and “indisposed”;
- Do not go into or look into sheds, cupboards, containers and other rooms that are not part of your work schedule. If you think you need to do this, for example because you are concerned about the safety of the client, ask their permission first;
- If a client says no to this or states that they no longer consent to staff accessing a particular part of their home, follow their instructions and then report this to your supervisor directly or via the Job Sheet;
- If you think a client is compromising their own privacy, for example by leaving bedroom curtains open, especially at night where people can see in; discuss this with the client and if still concerned report to your supervisor directly or via the Job Sheet;
- If the client reports or you suspect that the client’s mail is being tampered with, discuss this with the client and report to your supervisor directly or via the Job Sheet. They may need something as simple as a lock on their mail box to prevent this; and
- If the client reports or you suspect that the client’s on-line privacy is being compromised or they are subject to on-line, face to face or telephone scams also report this to your supervisor directly or via the Job Sheet.

## Professional Boundaries

Employees working with vulnerable people such as children and young people, the elderly or people living with disabilities need to be aware of very specific professional boundaries.

There are professional boundaries in the Field Worker role and as such it is not appropriate for you to have certain interactions with JobQuest clients.

Some examples of working outside of professional boundaries include:

- Offering additional services to a client that are not booked in and authorised by your supervisor, are provided outside of your JobQuest job role or contract;
- Having a conflict of interest; [see page 8]
- Asking the client for things or accepting gifts from a client;
- Purchasing any item from a client;
- \*Developing a personal relationship with a client;
- Talking to a client about your personal life;
- \*Engaging with clients on social media;
- Giving your personal private information, such as your mobile phone number, to a client;
- \*Engaging with a client outside of work [for example, meeting up for a drink];
- Treating a client differently to others [spending more time, being more active];
- Believing that you are the best person to provide services to a client;
- Making comments to a client about your employer, your supervisor or other field workers;
- Making comments to people outside of the organisation about your employer, your supervisor, other field workers or clients;
- Physically touching a client; and
- Suggesting that a client not make a complaint, even though they are unhappy with the service.

\*If you are allocated a job with a client who you already know on a personal level, inform your supervisor of this situation.

\*If you wish to develop a personal relationship with a client, inform your supervisor so the client can be allocated to another worker.

## Duty of Care

Duty of care refers to the obligation to take responsible care to avoid harm to a person whom, it can be reasonably foreseen, might be injured by an act or omission. A duty of care exists when someone's actions could reasonably be expected to affect other people.

Negligence is a failure to take reasonable care to avoid causing injury or loss to another person. There are four steps in proving negligence. The person affected must prove:

- That there is a duty in the circumstances to take care (duty of care);
- That the behaviour or inaction of the person accused in the circumstances did not meet the standard of care which a reasonable person would meet in the circumstances (breach of duty);
- That the person affected has suffered injury or loss which a reasonable person in the circumstances could have been expected to foresee (damage); and
- That the damage was caused by the breach of duty (causation).

You have a duty of care to raise any concerns about a client with your supervisor. This may result in a relevant third party [care provider, case manager, coordinator of supports or relevant authority] being informed of these concerns so they can be addressed. You should report what you see, hear or suspect.

Examples of things you might report in taking care of a client could include the following examples.

- You may see a deterioration in the client's general health and well-being. They may complain to you about not feeling well and appear to be having health issues that are not being addressed.
- The client may be creating hazards around the house by not having repairs and maintenance tasks carried out or creating trip hazards in walkways or slip hazards in wet areas.
- Reporting that they have had a trip or fall or other accident in the home.
- The client may have started smoking in bed or in other places that have the potential to cause fire.
- The client may be demonstrating that their living arrangements are risky such as:
  - Not operating electrical equipment safely such as using double adaptors or overloading power points;
  - Having faulty or no smoke detectors;
  - Using appliances with worn cables or otherwise appear faulty; or
  - Using un-flued gas heaters, a gas water heater or other potentially dangerous gas appliances.

Another example of where you might exercise a duty of care is a situation where you suspect a client may be the subject of elder abuse.

#### Elder Abuse

Elder abuse takes many forms and detailed information can be found in the Elder Abuse Toolkit available on the JobQuest Intranet.

The main forms of elder abuse are as follows:

#### Financial abuse

Whereby people usually know to the client threaten, coerce or influence the person in order to gain financial advantage.

It may also be outright stealing of cash or belongings, pension skimming or abusing power or attorney privileges.

Signs of financial abuse are that the person has little money, bills not being paid, belongings disappearing, insufficient food or other daily living items.

#### Psychological abuse

This include pressuring, bullying, intimidating or harassing a person through physical and psychological means.

Signs may include a change in mental state – depression, anxiety, confusion; social withdrawal and unexplained fear particularly of certain people.

#### Neglect

This is the failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, personal and home hygiene and health care.

Signs may include poor hygiene, unkempt appearance, deteriorating health, unexplained weight loss, dehydration and skin problems.

#### Physical abuse

This is any rough handling such as pushing, pulling or shoving; restraining a person or violence such as kicking, hitting, punching or burning. It also includes locking a person in a room or home and the overuse of medication.

Signs may include unexplained injuries including bruising and broken skin/bones, lacerations to the mouth, face or eyes, unexplained burns and discrepancies between what you see and what the client tells you about an incident or an injury.

These types of abuse don't just occur with the elderly. Field Workers need to understand that any client can suffer from abuse. If the client is a person with a disability there are now mandatory reporting procedures in place.

There are also mandatory reporting requirements for people working with children.

All employees who work with children must undertake compulsory child protection training.

## INCIDENT REPORTING

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Anything that occurs or that you observe when working with a client needs to be reported regardless of how minor it may appear at first. Such incidents could include but not be limited to:

- The client or others reporting that the client is being harmed by others;
- An safety risk the client has reported or has been observed [including a risk just to workers];
- Challenging behaviour of a client or another person at the client's home;
- No response when staff call to undertake the service; and
- Any general concern for the wellbeing of a client that is observed or suspected.

When an incident occurs workers must ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the people involved in the incident (including clients, other workers and any other people).

For example, if a client or other person suffers a serious injury or requires medical treatment, you must contact 000 for an Ambulance immediately.

Where it is alleged or suspected that a criminal offence has occurred, or where there is ongoing danger, contact 000 for the Police and other relevant emergency services.

Key steps to ensure safety immediately after alleged or suspected criminal conduct toward a person with disability, or where there is ongoing danger are:

- Immediately secure the safety of people if safe to do so;
- Protect the victim from any further harm if safe to do so;
- Contact 000 for the Police if there is a risk of immediate harm which requires their assistance;
- Contact 000 for the Ambulance if someone is injured; and
- Notify your supervisor or the Manager as soon as possible.

### Reportable Incidents

Your work with NDIS clients is covered by mandatory reporting. Incidents that must be reported are referred to as Reportable Incidents. There is a CPD Bulletin for Field Workers that provides details of the Reportable Incident requirements but the basics are as follows:

Registered providers must report to the NDIS Commission serious incidents (including allegations) arising in the context of NDIS supports or services, including:

- The death of an NDIS participant;
- Serious injury of an NDIS participant;
- Abuse or neglect of an NDIS participant;
- Unlawful sexual or physical contact with, or assault of, an NDIS participant;
- Sexual misconduct committed against, or in the presence of, an NDIS participant, including grooming of the NDIS participant for sexual activity; and
- The unauthorised use of a restrictive practice in relation to an NDIS participant.

Field Workers are required to report any incident with a client or customer to their supervisor immediately so it can be managed in accordance with the various protocols in place.

Supervisors are responsible for reporting and dealing with client or customer incidents.

The Manager is responsible for externally reporting and dealing with Reportable Incidents.

## REFERRALS

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There are many services that clients and customers can access to assist in their daily living.

Both the NDIS and the aged care system are based on a holistic model of service delivery based on the concept of a “circle of support”. That means that every person and organisation involved in the support or care provided to a client has a role in protecting the well-being of that client.

While we only provide a specialised range of services at JobQuest, if we are aware of issues that clients or customers have, we can refer them to other services. Other services can then be put in place to assist the client and improve their living conditions.

It is an integral part of the Field Worker’s role to be aware of their clients and not ignore changes to their circumstances or concerns that may be addressed by specialist providers or in some cases by JobQuest.

## ADDING VALUE

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Sometimes Field Workers have the opportunity to add value to a client or customer’s existing service arrangement.

For example:

- You may notice when mowing a client’s lawn that their gutters are clogged with leaves, or they are struggling to clean their bin or trim their trees – you can let the client know that we can offer these services
- You may notice that the curtains and blinds in a home you clean are very dirty – you can let the client know that we can offer a Spring Clean service.

Often clients/customers are unaware of their needs or the services we offer. Let the office staff know so they can visit and organise a quote. Do this by contacting them or writing a note on the Job Sheet.

## ADVOCACY

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Advocacy is the process of standing beside someone and supporting them to:

- Understand and exercise their rights; and
- Have their voice heard on the issues that are important to them.

While JobQuest does not provide advocacy services, Field Workers need to be aware that these services exist and sometimes it’s in the client’s best interest to have a professional advocate help them.

JobQuest can assist clients to access the most relevant advocacy services to meet their needs.

If Field Workers raise their concerns about a client's situation, then an advocacy service may be the best referral we can put in place in the first instance. Tell your supervisor and they can make a referral if this is what the client wishes.

## CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

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Challenging Behaviour is defined as any behaviour of a person which is of such intensity, frequency or duration that the safety (physical/emotional) of the person or those nearby is put at risk.

Some of our clients may from time to time exhibit challenging behaviour.

Our aim is to be able to provide our services to all of our clients in a respectful and dignified manner and assist in the protection of clients from abuse and neglect. We will do our best to ascertain as much information as we can about any client with challenging behaviours to support this aim.

This will enable us to provide guidance to Field Workers on how to:

- Prevent behaviours by understanding triggers;
- Re-direct a client to prevent a behaviour;
- Respond to situations where a client may exhibit unusual or challenging behaviours; and
- Deal with an emergency situation with a client and prevent harm to self, others or the client.

All situations where a client or customer exhibits challenging behaviour must be reported to your supervisor immediately or as soon as practicable.

If appropriate Field Workers should take notes so they can clearly describe a situation that has occurred and not just rely on their memory.

Field Workers are not expected to have clinical expertise in managing challenging behaviour, but need to ensure that they do not escalate a situation due to their actions or inaction.

Here are some tips to handling a difficult situation where a person may be acting out, being aggressive or angry, or acting in a manner that would suggest they are psychotic [unable to tell what is real from what is not].

What to do:

- Be calm and quiet – do not raise your voice at all [if anything lower it];
- Be friendly – it may even be helpful to make a joke;
- Be aware of your body language – keep your hands down and your distance from the person;
- Listen to what the person has to say – don't interrupt;

If the person is complaining about something:

- Think through what has happened – consider where fault lies;
- See if there is some common ground that you can both agree on;
- Try to clear up any misunderstandings as best you can;
- If the customer thinks we are in the wrong, you might need to accept this and move on;
- Explain clearly what you can or can't do [you must follow the job sheet or your supervisors instructions]; and
- Agree to disagree.

What not to do:

- Raise your voice and/or move into the person's personal space;
- Get angry or emotional;
- Use accusing or intimidating language;
- Try to argue the point or make excuses;
- Make assumptions about the client or customer; and
- Push on with the service despite the problems which might make things worse.

The other things to consider are:

- What might be causing the behaviour?
- Is there anything I can do about this to help out?
- Is the person in pain or ill?
- Are they "worked up" about something?
- Have they taken their medication?
- Is there a problem in the environment – very hot, cold?
- Is the person confused? Are they normally like this?

Keep yourself calm and do what you can to calm the client. Contact your supervisor for advice [they may need to contact a relative].

**Any situation that occurs where you think you are in any sort of harm, you must remove yourself as quickly as you can and contact your supervisor immediately.**

**If any people are in danger call 000 for the Police immediately and follow the instructions of the emergency operator.**

All such situations need to be reported to your supervisor.

## NO RESPONSE PLANS

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One of the scenarios that Field Workers have to deal with from time to time is when they arrive to a client's home to work and the client does not answer the door and cannot be raised. This is referred to as a no-response.

When this occurs it's important to keep calm and use common sense:

- Contact the supervisor immediately who will try to contact the client;
- Look in the windows if safe to do so;
- Check the house for "signs of life" or disturbance;
- If there is no sign of the client or signs of forced entry, contact your supervisor again to report the situation and await instructions;
- If the client is located and is unconscious or injured call 000 immediately and follow the instructions of the emergency operator;
- Provide first aid if safe and you are trained to do so;
- If the client can be seen inside the home and appears to be unconscious or injured call 000 for Ambulance/Police immediately and follow the instructions of the emergency operator;
- If there are signs of forced entry call 000 for Police immediately and follow the instructions of the emergency operator;
- After any 000 call, contact your supervisor and follow their instructions;
- The supervisor is responsible for reporting any situation to the client's emergency contact and to their case manager or coordinator of supports.

If a client is found and has died

Field Workers need to be aware that when working with clients who are elderly, infirm or have disabilities, there may be situations where they have died in their homes and the workers are the first on the scene – as described above in no response plans.

This is a stressful and traumatic situation and JobQuest will support staff who are involved in such incidents.

Field Workers may be required to provide information to Police and should remain calm and composed as best they can, in order to be accurate in their description of the situation.

JobQuest also understands that Field Workers do establish relationships with their clients, especially if they work with them over a long period; and that Field Workers will suffer grief when a client dies, regardless of the circumstances.

JobQuest's EAP [Employee Assistance Program] is available for all employees and volunteers regardless of the reason for their need for support and professional counselling. EAP will be recommended to all Field Workers involved in any traumatic no response incident.

JobQuest works with many different clients from all walks of life. This section provides some guidance to help people working with the different client cohorts.

### The elderly

Often people forget that the elderly are the same people who were once young, the same age as you, the same age as your children. They have experienced many of the same things you have experienced in your past and that you will experience in your future.

They have not always been slower of movement or thinking and may continue to have a strong intellect despite the ravages of age on their health and physicality.

They probably grew up in a world that is totally different to the one we now inhabit and as such are the custodians of a history that cannot be replaced.

They are most often interesting people and also interested in what is going on around them.

The elderly provide society with the wisdom of experience, the history of community and the need to be patient, respectful and gracious.

Most societies venerate their elders, that is – hold them in high esteem. In a world that is becoming more homogenised or “the same” the elderly are often the strongest link to the culture and history important to all communities.

Field Workers can learn a lot by working with elderly clients.

When you spend a lot of time with the elderly you begin to develop a deep respect for resilience. Particularly when you see the way that resilience builds over the course of a lifetime. This means that you begin to develop a greater sense of resilience for yourself, which can have a lasting benefit, particularly when it comes to dealing with difficult situations.

You really understand how important social connectedness is. When you work with people who are facing the end of their life, you can see the true value of social interaction right in front of you. For some, this might mean working harder on relationships with family and friends.

Working with the aged is also a daily lesson in the importance of keeping your mind and body active. This can mean that you work harder on your own health and wellbeing.

One of the greatest privileges of working with the elderly is hearing the stories of those in your care. Sometimes it is a tale of romance, sometimes war, but they are stories that can transport you to another time, which can feel very different to our own.

You get to experience the personal satisfaction of knowing that you are doing a job that genuinely makes a difference. It is easy to get up and go to work when you know that what you do has a positive impact on the community.

## People living with disabilities

The NDIS enables people with disabilities to access services that enable and assist them to live an ordinary life just like other people in their community.

Disability is a normal part of human diversity. Disability may be permanent, temporary or fluctuating, and may have a minimal or a substantial impact on a person's life. Disability may impact mobility, learning or communication and can result from accident, illness or genetic conditions.

Disability does not just refer to a person's health or wellbeing. It involves the interaction between the unique features and functions of a person's body and mind and the environment and socio-political context in which they live – how they function in the world.

Disability does not equate to inability to achieve. People with disability have the same right as everyone else to make decisions for their own lives and to be active members of society.

Disability forms only a part of an individual's identity. While some people identify strongly with their disability, others may see it as just another part of what makes them unique.

There are many different disabilities and causes of disabilities and Field Workers need to have some awareness of disability and working with clients who are living with disabilities.

The major types of disability are:

- Physical – such as paraplegia, quadriplegia, cerebral palsy, stroke related paralysis
- Sensory – such as vision or hearing impairment
- Neurological – such as epilepsy, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease
- Intellectual – such as Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders
- Acquired Brain Injury – this may result in any or a combination of the above types of disability, usually as the result of a traumatic injury to the brain
- Mental Health – such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety

Some people may have more than one type of disability.

It is important for Field Workers to understand that it is wrong to make assumptions about what a person can and cannot do.

Some examples are:

- People with cerebral palsy – some may be unable to walk or to speak clearly but will have no cognitive [thinking] or intellectual disability. The uneducated and uncaring can easily assume that they have an intellectual disability as well as a physical disability.
- People on the autism spectrum – may be unable to engage well, speak or control movements, but may in fact have well-functioning cognitive and intellectual capacity; and some have extremely high intellectual capacity.

- People with intellectual disability may be quite capable of making their own decisions about their normal daily living and function quite well in both work and daily living.

The best way to work with a person with a disability is to always take into account what they can do and what they believe their needs to be. It's not about what you think they need; unless there is some concern for their well-being.

### Indigenous Australians

Field Workers need to be aware of some protocols when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These include but are not limited to:

- Use language that is easily understood, do not use jargon;
- Share personal information about yourself. e.g. where you come from;
- Do not expect all Aboriginal people to share information regarding families and culture or local history;
- A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent does not have to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;
- Silence should not be misunderstood, it should be respected. The person may be reflecting on what you have said and may want more time to think about the answer to a question;
- Ask direct questions [don't "beat around the bush"];
- In some communities direct eye contact can be a sign of disrespect and in other communities direct eye contact will be expected; speak to your client about their cultural norms;
- Elders are particularly venerated in Aboriginal society and often called Uncle and Aunty regardless of being related or not; always show special respect for elders;
- Be careful not to refer to deceased people by name and be aware of the concept of Sorry Business which may be about mourning or trauma; and
- If necessary, be aware of the family structures that are in place.

More detailed information about working with Indigenous Australians can be found in the publication – "Working with Aboriginal People and Communities" which can be accessed via the intranet.

### People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Many of our clients were not born in Australia and some are recent migrants. It is important for Field Workers to understand the importance of taking into account the different cultures that people bring with them and live within.

The most important practice is to not make any assumptions about a person, their background, their abilities or their cultural norms.

A cultural frame of reference is the way people from the same cultural group see their world; it is their world view. Beliefs and attitudes are extremely important and personal. Values are formed and absorbed by people as they develop through childhood. Customary ways of behaving and responding to situations can vary considerably from one society to another.

In order to operate within a wide range of cultural groups, it is important that Field Workers:

- Be respectful of cultural practices, attitudes and beliefs;
- Show consideration ( think of the needs of others from their point of view);
- Be polite (use the preferred title and the appropriate tone of voice, listen to others address each other);
- Show genuine interest;
- Respect a person's right to privacy and confidentiality;
- When addressing a person from another culture, you may need to consider things such as:
  - Different ways of speaking or titles that may be preferred,
  - Male and female roles clearly defined along cultural boundaries,
  - Non-verbal communication and body language, and
  - Use of physical space.

The best way to achieve this is to find out the following:

- How does the client wish to be addressed?
- Does the client prefer eye contact or not?
- Does the client wish to direct your duties?
- What practices does the worker need to take into account? [for example - prayer time]
- What are the do's and don'ts in the person's home? [for example - don't touch the altar]
- What are the barriers to effective communication? [for example – can you learn some key words in the person's language – hello, goodbye, thank you, can I help?]

Field Workers can access the SBS Cultural Atlas via the home page of the JobQuest Intranet. They can also enrol in on-line cultural training programs and access specific information such as the Muslim Aged Care guide and the Little Book of Cultural Tips to help in understanding their client's culture better.

Contact your supervisor for assistance in accessing these resources.

## LGBTQI Community

Clients may also identify as LGBTQI - lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans-gender, queer or intersex.

Some Field Workers may have had limited contact with people who identify as LGBTQI and therefore be concerned about working with these clients or even be prejudiced against the people and their lifestyle for religious, cultural or other reasons.

Workers need to realise that people from the LGBTQI community often already experience wide-ranging stigma, discrimination, exclusion and even hate because of their orientation or gender.

At JobQuest we have zero tolerance of any type of discrimination or harassment and expect our Field Workers to raise any concerns they may have about working with LGBTQI clients so we can ensure that all clients regardless of their gender or orientation get only the best quality service.

Clients from the LGBTQI community should be treated the same as those from any other diverse group: with respect and courtesy.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

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Field Workers delivering home care services have a responsibility to ensure they are mindful of their own safety. They are required to undertake a simple 4 step process to deal with risks.

1. IDENTIFY THE RISKS & HAZARDS – find out what could cause harm  
The **Risk** is what could potentially happen, the **Hazard** is the cause  
For example - the risk of working outdoors in the sun [the hazard] is developing skin cancer
2. ASSESS THE RISKS – understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be and what is the likelihood of it happening
3. ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS – implement the most effective control measure that is reasonably practicable for the circumstances
4. REVIEW THE CONTROL MEASURES – ensure that the measures are working as planned

Some examples of how to work safely include:

- Work within the parameters of their job role and job sheet only;
- Check the work area for risks prior to commencing work and eliminate or control these;
- Take reasonable care when using equipment and cleaning products to avoid injury;
- Do not use equipment that appears broken or damaged such as equipment with frayed cords;
- Do not use any unlabelled cleaning chemicals;
- Ensure adequate ventilation when using cleaning chemicals;
- Abide by all JobQuest Work Health and Safety Policies and Procedures including Safe Work Procedures and Safe Work Method Statements; and
- Use the RCD [residual current device] when using electrical appliances such as irons, vacuum cleaners etc.

Some of the common causes of injury are:

- Slips, trips and falls;
- Poor manual handling;
- Contact with chemicals;
- Contact with sharp objects;
- Hitting against or being hit by objects; and
- Motor vehicle accidents.

Field Workers need to also consider their personal safety in terms of the actions of other people in their work environment. For people working in clients' homes, this may be the client or other people at the home. For people working in other residential settings or commercial environments this may be residents, workers, customers or other people on the site.

The main risk is where there is actual or threatened violence, abuse or harassment; but, regardless of whether any physical violence occurs, this type of act has a psychological impact on the worker.

The elements of how to manage your own personal protection are as follows:

- Consider the environment in terms of an exit strategy from the site [this is part of your risk assessment];
- Don't ignore any "gut feeling" or instinct you may have about a situation that "feels" risky;
- Always be on the lookout for verbal and non-verbal clues;
- If you need to speak with the person do so quietly and slowly;
- **Avoid all conflict, walk away and leave the site if necessary;**
- Always carry your duress alarm and mobile phone and use both when necessary; and
- Report all concerns to your supervisor regardless of how minor.

Field Workers also have a duty to ensure that their actions do not harm any other person, including the client / customers and any members of the public.

This means:

- Check the work area for risks prior to commencing work and eliminate or control these;
- Ensure the client understands any risks and keeps clear during the work; and
- Use barriers and/or signage to prevent people walking into a potentially risky work area.

## UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICES

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There are some specific practices that are unacceptable. Examples of these are:

- Hand out or assist with medications;
- Provide or assist with any medical or clinical treatment;
- Be named in or sign as a witness any personal document of a client [such as a Power of Attorney];
- Smoke at the client's home;
- Impose their religious, political beliefs or values on a client;
- Sell any product to the client or their family, including fundraising;
- Change, alter or reschedule shifts without the supervisors permission;
- Attend to your own affairs [eg by phone or internet] while at the client's home; and
- Use the client's telephone, except in an emergency.

Always remember, if you are unsure of any situation with a client, speak to your supervisor as soon as you can. This is for your benefit as much as the client's.