REAL LIVING OPTIONS
ASSOCIATION INC.

Supporting a lifestyle for people with a disability

Participant Handbook

Includes Easy Read Supplement

Address: Shop 1, 157 Mulgrave Road, Bungalow
Phone: 07 4035 5886
ABN: 50 147 076 258
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Section 1 Our Organisation

Welcome to Real Living Options Association Inc.

This handbook explains the disability services we provide and how they may assist you in achieving your goals. Importantly, this handbook explains how we partner with you to meet your support needs.

About Us

Real Living Options Association Inc. has been providing support and assistance to people with a disability who live in Cairns for over 30 years.

Contact details	
Address	Shop 1, 157 Mulgrave Road, Bungalow 4870
Phone	07 4035 5886
Emergency after hours contact	0408 827 261
Email For Support	support@reallivingoptions.com.au
Email for Rostering	Rostering@reallivingoptions.com.au



Our Vision

Vision

The Service will work towards maintaining people with disabilities in their own home within the community, with a lifestyle of their choice that reflects the conditions of everyday life valued by the community.



Our Mission

Mission

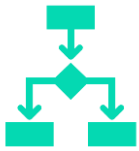
Real Living Options Association Inc. is a family governed organisation which values and respects the rights, responsibilities and aspirations of people with a disability, while promoting maximum participation and inclusion in the community with a focus on living a life of choice.



Our Values

Values

- People with a disability have a right to a lifestyle which is based on the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as other citizens.
- People with a disability, along with all members of society should have a safe, secure and comfortable life in their own home.
- A person's home environment should be a place of sanctuary which will be reflected in all work practices of Real Living Options Association Inc..
- The natural authority of families is respected.
- Community inclusion is not just living in a house in the community, it also gives rise to meaningful participation in community life and the development of broader networks.
- People with a disability should expect to have support and assistance which respects their rights, responsibilities, goals and aspirations and is flexible to changing needs while providing opportunities for participation and valued roles.



Organisation Structure

Position	Name	Email
General Manager	Craig Peach	GM@reallivingoptions.com.au
Support Manager	Rachael Person	supportmanager@reallivingoptions.com.au
Support Facilitator	Daniel Vitanza	support@reallivingoptions.com.au
Support Facilitator	Sarah Bogale	support@reallivingoptions.com.au
Quality and Compliance Officer	Michelle Resende Castelani	quality@reallivingoptions.com.au
Human Resources and Work Health and Safety Officer	Hayley Steele	hr@reallivingoptions.com.au
Rostering Officer	Jessica Barkby	rostering@reallivingoptions.com.au
Rostering Officer	Rebecca Miano	rostering@reallivingoptions.com.au
Finance Officer	Krisztina Orosz	finance@reallivingoptions.com.au
Administrative Officer	Fiona Angus	admin@reallivingoptions.com.au



Our Services

Real Living Options Association Inc. offers support and services to people with disabilities. We are funded under NDIS to provide support and services under the following registration groups:

Core:

- Assistance with Self Care Activities
- Assistance with Personal Domestic Activities
- Assistance with Household tasks

- Assistance to Access Community, Social, Economic and Community Participation
- Community Based Group Activities

Capacity Building:

- Improved Living Arrangements
- Increased Social and Community Participation
- Improved Relationships
- Improved Daily Living Skills
- Coordination of Support



Access and Entry Requirements

To be eligible for the NDIS, you must:

- have a permanent and significant disability or a developmental delay
- be an Australian citizen, hold a Permanent Visa or a Protected Special Category Visa
- be under 65 years of age
- require support from a person or equipment to do everyday activities.

To be eligible for our NDIS services, you must:

- meet the NDIS eligibility criteria
- have an NDIS plan that identifies the services provided
- have an NDIS support plan that requires services that are included in our registration groups
- have funds available in your plan to pay for our services.

Note: We do offer a fee for service model. Please let us know if you wish to pay the full fees.

Words We Use and What They Mean

Keyword	Meaning
Lifestyle Assistant	Support Worker that provides support and assistance to you.
Participant	You
Representative	The person you have given us permission to talk to on your behalf
Workplace or environment	Service delivery, including in your home, during transport, community spaces, public spaces or other facilities.
Service	Services and activities that we deliver that are related to a service agreement and support plan.
We, us and our	Real Living Options Association Inc.

Section 2: Working with you



Data Security/Archiving Participant Files

Real Living Options data is password protected and stored on a secure online cloud server. We regularly backup data to ensure record protection in case of a system crash or hard drive failure. Participant files are kept for seven years, as required by legislation. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island Participant files are stored indefinitely.



Participant Service Suspension and Leave

When using our services, you may terminate them for any reason, and at any time, you just need to provide us with the length of notice included in your service agreement.

You may leave Australia on holiday or for another reason. Note: there is a *grace period* of six (6) weeks before the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reviews your need to continue our services.



Participant Access to Personal Records

Real Living Options keeps personal records on our Participants. At any time, you, or your Representative/Nominee, can request access to see your personal information.

Included below is the process we will follow to provide you with your personal information/records:

1. You, or your appointed Representative/Nominee, request access to your records, verbally or in writing.
2. The General Manager will confirm your request within forty-eight (48) hours.
3. The General Manager will update you about the release of your information within seven (7) working days.
4. A reply to your request for information will be provided to you within two weeks of your original application.
5. Personal information is only released with the approval of the General Manager.
6. We will provide your personal information to the agreed person when consent is received.
7. The General Manager can assist you in understanding the information and will explain the terminology used.
8. On infrequent occasions, access to records may be denied. Denial is based on advice received from our legal representative. Should this situation arise, the denial will be discussed with you, your family and your Representative/Nominee.



Participant Assessments and Choices

You are at the centre of our services. We will partner with you to learn about your strengths and preferences to design the right supports for you.

You tell us what services you need and how and when you want them delivered. This holistic and collaborative approach ensures that Real Living Options can meet your expectations. We will design a service that assists you to maintain and to improve your lifestyle while increasing your independence and involvement in the community.

Your support (or service) plan is developed with you as its focus. We will create the plan in collaboration with you, your family or Representative/Nominee, our team, and any other required support professionals. Assessments will be undertaken before you commence receiving services from Real Living Options. Our Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will conduct all assessments face to face with you, your family and/or Representative/Nominee.

Your support plan will be person-centred and take an individualised approach. The plan will focus on you as an individual and be designed to promote your independence. We will record your unique

skills and strengths, together with your goals and aspirations. The plan will be flexible and open to change, depending on your progress and other factors. Real Living Options will regularly review your support plan to ensure that we are meeting your needs and personal requirements. We welcome your feedback regarding the services we provide you.

You can ask your Lifestyle Assistant about your support plan. Whilst you are given a copy of this plan, you can seek more information and clarification from your worker. If it is out of their capability to inform you, we will contact you to discuss your plan.

Below is the process that is taken to commence the development of the support plan:

1. Real Living Options will perform assessments face-to-face with you, your family and/or Representative/Nominee. Any specific access or entry requirements we have will be discussed with you.
2. Assessment interview time/s are arranged by telephone. Your Representative/Nominee will be invited to be present (if applicable).
3. During your first meeting, the Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will explain our assessment process to you. They will provide information on collecting and using personal data, privacy, information-sharing, and confidentiality considerations. They will also remind you that a Representative/Nominee can be arranged if you want one.
4. If you have specific communication needs, our Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will make the necessary arrangements to ensure these needs are considered. For example, interpreters and translated information can be provided. If you have a vision impairment or hearing loss, we will make the necessary arrangements for the essential support service during assessments.
5. The Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will inform you of your right to opt-out of sharing your personal information to meet government requirements.
6. The Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will review completed assessments. Identified areas of your independence and needs will form the basis of your support discussions.
7. Developing your support plan is a consultative process between all relevant parties. Here we will look at various areas related to your services, such as:
    a. Risks to you and in your environment
    b. Emergency and disaster management
    c. Mealtime management (if relevant)
    d. Your health needs, including comprehensive assessments, oral health and medication requirements
    e. How we can assist you in gaining vaccines or similar services
8. Your support plan is flexible and can be reviewed at any time you request it.

9. Once your plan has been determined and you are happy with it you will be provided with a copy.
10. Real Living Options will regularly assess your support plan to check that your needs are being met.
11. Our Lifestyle Assistants will collect information when they work with you. This information is entered into your record, so we have evidence-based information to check that our service delivery meets your current needs, interests and aspirations.
12. Real Living Options will conduct regular assessments in the future with you to review your support plan and make sure the supports you are receiving still meet your needs.
13. We can re-negotiate your service agreement to take into consideration any changes in your needs or circumstances, which may include a:
    - change to your support worker or representative
    - request to increase or decrease the number or types of service we provide.
14. You can opt-out of providing the information requested by government bodies such as the NDIS; please inform our Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator if you want to opt-out.



Communication with Participants

Following our initial assessment of your communication needs, we will provide written, verbal or translated options to communicate with you on an ongoing basis.

If you have a preferred communication method, please let our team know to arrange this for you. How you wish to communicate with us is recorded in your support plan and allows our staff to communicate how you wish.



Participant Assistance with Medication

The Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will discuss your medication requirements with you and then complete an assessment regarding your medication needs.

If you need assistance with your medication, all oral medications must be provided in a Webster Pack (or another multi-dose-controlled medication pack).

During your assessment, our team will determine if you have any issues with taking medication and how we can arrange a medication plan to support you.



Smoking

If you smoke, we ask that you please not do so while our Lifestyle Assistants are performing their duties. We are committed to providing a safe workplace for our team. If you choose to smoke inside your home when your Lifestyle Assistant is present, they will have to go outside until you have finished and the air is clear of smoke.



Interpreter Services

If you are from a non-English speaking background, we can engage an interpreter if you would like one. We will only engage an interpreter if we have your permission. The interpreter will attend meetings with you and record all meeting information in your record. We can arrange for a telephone interpreter service in an emergency or a crisis.



Management of Budgets, Statements and Fees

You receive an NDIS funding package to pay for your disability support and support management. Your package lets you decide the type of disability supports you need, who provides it and where it is provided. Thank you for choosing Real Living Options as part of your support team. Our team will never offer you financial advice or information.

Real Living Options will regularly inform you of the cost of the services being provided. We are transparent with our fee structure.

Fees may be changed during your service delivery in line with the NDIS Price Arrangements and Price Limits guide, but you will be informed of this increase with as much notice as possible.

Please note: There are annual changes in the NDIS Price Guide; these will automatically adjust your fees and you will be notified.

Before services are provided, we will inform you of:

- chargeable fees
- payment methods, i.e. direct debit, cheque, money order (please never pay a ${Staff Worker} directly)
- your budget (or the amount of money you can spend)
- methods for payment of fees.

If you are using the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to manage your funds, Real Living Options will work with the NDIA.



Money and Property Assistance

Your money, or other property, will only be used with you and for the purposes you request.

If you require Real Living Options to provide financial assistance, you, your family or Representative/Nominee must approve the arrangement.

If your Support Plan requires Real Living Options staff to be involved in handling your money, strict procedures will be followed to protect you from financial abuse. Your Support Plan will outline the assistance you need relating to your money and property.

You, your family or your Representative/Nominee should sign the Service Agreement. If you don't want to sign the Service Agreement, we will record the reasons for future reference.

Our staff are not permitted to provide you with financial advice or information other than what is required under your Support Plan.



Gifts

Real Living Options recognises that you may, on occasion, like to give a gift to a Lifestyle Assistant or other staff member. If you wish to give a gift, we prefer that it is something that can be shared by all workers, e.g. a cake or chocolates.

Please NEVER offer or provide money to a Real Living Options staff member.



Re-negotiating an Agreement

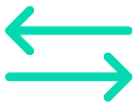
When your needs or circumstances change (e.g. Lifestyle Assistant or Representative/Nominee), or where you request an increase or decrease in the number or type of services, the re-negotiation of your Real Living Options service agreement may be required. Our Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will advise you if this is the case and arrange for a revised service agreement to be prepared.



Participant Transport

During your initial meeting with Real Living Options, we will discuss your transport requirements. Together, we will determine the most appropriate transport services to meet your needs and if this is required as part of your NDIS package or as an additional service.

If you did not arrange transport as part of your service agreement, we could help. Real Living Options can arrange to include transport services as part of your package or as an additional service. Contact the Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator for assistance.



Transition and Re-entry

Your needs and interests may change while working with our service, which may mean you need to move to another provider. Real Living Options will assist and support you during this process. We will work with the other service providers to ensure your transition is smooth and meets your needs with your approval.

If you leave our service and want to return, we would be pleased for you to come back. You will need to:

- meet the program requirements to access funding, including prioritisation
- undergo a risk assessment that reviews the risks relating to staying and leaving our service
- sign a service agreement
- pay any relevant fees

During temporary absences, such as a hospital visit, our team will regularly contact you, your family or your Representative/Nominee when planning your entry to or exit from our service. We will also assist you in contacting the hospital to book any appointments.



Withdrawal from our Service

Should you wish to stop your Real Living Options services, please contact the Support Manager or Senior Support Facilitator immediately for this to be arranged.

Real Living Options has the right to stop providing services to you if you do not meet your responsibilities. You will never be excluded from service provision because of a 'dignity of risk' choice. In all cases, we will speak with you and discuss the reasons for any withdrawal of service.

Where you agree, we will support you to find another service provider.



Accessing Services

The best way to receive information about all the services available to you is to speak to the Support Manager or Senior Support Facilitator. You are entitled to receive information regarding our services, and we want to provide you with the most appropriate ones.



Service Agreement

Once Real Living Options has been selected as your service provider, we will develop a service agreement with you, your family or your Representative/Nominee. This service agreement will list the schedule of supports, the responsibilities of Real Living Options, your responsibilities (as a Participant), your emergency and disaster plan and our cancellation policy.



Charter of Rights

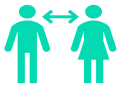
Your Rights

As an individual, you have many rights, and we will support and assist you in identifying and exercising these rights to achieve your goals. Real Living Options adopts a policy of non-discrimination regarding eligibility and entry to our services and when providing support services to you.

You have the right to:

- access supports that promote, uphold, and respect your legal and human rights
- exercise informed choice and control to maximise independence
- freedom of expression, self-determination and personal decision-making

- access supports that respect your culture, diversity, values and beliefs
- a support service that respects your right to privacy and dignity
- be helped to make informed choices which will maximise independence
- receive support that is free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination
- receive supports which are overseen by strong operational management
- receive services that are safeguarded by informed and compliant risk and incident management systems
- receive services from workers who are competent, appropriately qualified and have expertise in providing person-centred supports
- advise consent to the sharing of information between providers during the transition
- opt-out of giving information as required by NDIS.



Your Responsibilities

The information below explains your responsibilities when using our services.

We ask that you:

- respect the rights of Lifestyle Assistants to ensure their workplace is safe and healthy and free from harassment
- abide by the terms of your service agreement with us
- understand that your needs may change, meaning your services may need to change
- accept responsibility for your actions and choices, even though some decisions may involve risk
- tell us if you have problems with the service you are receiving from us
- provide us with enough information to develop, deliver and review your support plan
- care for your health and wellbeing as much as you are able
- provide us with information that will help us to meet your needs
- remember that our Lifestyle Assistants are only authorised to perform the agreed number of hours and tasks outlined in your service agreement
- participate in safety assessments of your home
- ensure your pets are controlled during service provision
- provide a smoke-free working environment
- pay the agreed amount for the services provided
- provide appropriate notice when you want to stop receiving our services



Our Responsibilities

Real Living Options will:

- provide the supports that meet your needs at your preferred times
- regularly review the provision of your supports with you
- communicate openly, honestly and promptly
- treat you with courtesy and respect
- discuss with you all decisions regarding your supports and how they are being provided
- listen to your complaints and feedback and address any problems that may arise
- keep your personal information confidential
- support your culture, community and any other needs
- implement policies and procedures to ensure your safety and the safety of others during service provision.



Conflict of Interest

Real Living Options is committed to ensuring that actions and decisions taken at all levels in our organisation are informed, objective and fair. A conflict of interest may affect how a staff member acts or their choices. Identified conflicts of interest require action to be undertaken by our organisation to ensure that personal or individual interests do not impact yours or our services, activities or decisions.

Real Living Options requires all staff to declare their involvement in external independent work-related activities to allow for discussion and management of the potential conflicts of interest. Declarations and management of a conflicts of interest are handled by the Support Manager and General Manager. If you and your Lifestyle Assistant undertake any other (new) work outside of our organisation, you must inform the Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator immediately.

In the event **you** declare or identify a conflict of interest, the General Manager will assess the conflict to determine if a conflict of interest exists. A meeting will be convened to discuss the conflict, and you may be asked to:

- contribute to the discussion, but abstain from voting or taking part in a decision on the matter
- observe but not take part in the meeting or decision-making
- leave the meeting during the discussion and before a decision has been made.

All potential and actual conflicts will be recorded in the Conflict of Interest Register to oversee the identified and declared conflicts.

You will be informed of the outcome of the review by the General Manager and, if there is a conflict, advised how our organisation will manage the conflict.



NDIS Code of Conduct

Real Living Options employees follow the NDIS Code of Conduct by:

- acting with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making following relevant laws and conventions
- respecting your privacy
- providing supports and services safely and competently with care and skill, and acting with integrity, honesty, and transparency
- promptly taking steps to raise and act on concerns regarding matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to you
- taking all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse towards you
- taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual misconduct towards you.



Abuse

Real Living Options recognises your right to feel safe and to live in an environment where you are protected from assault, neglect, exploitation or any other form of abuse.

We encourage and support any person who has witnessed any abuse towards one of our Participants or suspects that abuse has occurred to make a report and be confident of doing so

without fear of retribution. Our reporting process includes any kind of abuse, including financial, emotional, social, psychological, sexual, physical abuse or neglect.

You can make a report to whomever you feel comfortable and safe with; this may include one of our employees, our General Manager, Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator, a family member, your Representative/Nominee or a trusted friend.

If you would like to speak with someone outside of Real Living Options, you can contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission:

Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677
National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544
Interpreters can be arranged.

You can also complete an NDIS Complaint Contact Form online. Go to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website *business.gov.au*

Real Living Options acknowledges that prevention is the best protection from abuse and neglect and recognises our duty of care to put in place prevention strategies that include appropriate protocols that assist in identifying potential risks. Our prevention strategies include only employing Lifestyle Assistants who respect the rights of Participants and who are aware of current legislation and policies regarding abuse and neglect. Our General Manager, Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator can assist you, your family or Representative/Nominee, to access our complaints process and raise any concerns regarding our service provision.

Where abuse, harm or neglect has occurred, Real Living Options will respond quickly, considerately and effectively to protect you from any further harm. We will provide you with access to any required counselling, medical and/or legal assistance.

When you make allegations of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation or discrimination, you have the right to have a Representative/Nominee present. Real Living Options can arrange this for you.



Family Assistance

Real Living Options encourages and supports families to maintain contact with you. Your family is welcome to contact us for information and support with your permission. Your family or Representative/Nominee can be involved in planning the services you will receive through your person-centred support planning meeting.

We can help your family by:

- communicating in a way they understand
- providing information regarding available services, including those offered by other agencies
- helping to build trust and respect between Lifestyle Assistants, you and your family
- providing them with the opportunity to take part in service delivery planning
- creating opportunities to develop links with you
- assisting them to access counselling and support services
- providing them with access to effective complaint procedures
- helping them to access advocacy services where required.



Continuity of Support

The Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator will arrange your support schedule, so you know who will be working with you to deliver your services and supports. We will provide you with a Lifestyle Assistant who has the skills and knowledge you require. Wherever possible, we will meet your support requests, e.g. you would like a worker who speaks the same language, is from the same culture or meets other specific criteria such as age or gender.

Lifestyle Assistants are allocated to you regularly so that you can feel comfortable with them and receive predictable and continuous support. The supports we provide are linked to your support plan and will demonstrate consistency with your needs and requests.

What will happen if your worker is absent?

- Real Living Options will contact you to discuss the situation and see if you would like us to find an alternative Lifestyle Assistant.
- Where possible, we will provide a Lifestyle Assistant who has worked with you previously and is aware of your requirements, but you can choose to say no to this offer.
- Where possible, we will advise you of details of the replacement Lifestyle Assistant.
- We will get your feedback on the replacement Lifestyle Assistant so we know if you would be happy to have them again in the future.
- The replacement Lifestyle Assistant will be sensitive to your needs and ensure that care is consistent with your expressed preferences.
- We will seek your approval for the replacement staff member and will never place someone to support you who you do not wish.



Emergency and Disaster Planning

We will create an emergency and disaster plan with you and other relevant support networks and will consult with you about any changes and improvements. This plan will be adjusted depending on any current emergency or disaster.



Vaccinations

Lifestyle Assistants will support you in gaining any vaccinations that you request. We will work out a plan with you. We will look at how you will get to the vaccination location, the types of support you need, and support you during and after the process.



Infection Management

Your wellbeing is essential, and we will take all measures required to reduce any contamination in your environment, including wearing masks or gowns where required,

cleaning surfaces, handwashing, and use of antibacterial gels. Please make sure that you keep yourself and your environment as clean as possible.



Your Advocacy Rights

An advocate is a person who will listen to you, help you make decisions about what should happen in your life and then speak, on your behalf, to arrange for those decisions to be implemented. An advocate will ensure that your rights are respected and speak out for you if your needs are not met.

You can ask anyone that you know well and trust to be your advocate, such as a:

- member of your family or a friend
- a person from a legal advocacy service.

Real Living Options can help you find an advocate by providing a list of available advocacy services. Once you have selected an advocate, we will provide you with a form that must be completed called the Authority to Act as a Representative/Nominee Form.

With your permission, Real Living Options will:

- provide your advocate with all the information they need to ensure that we (and any other service providers) are acting in your best interest
- work closely with your advocate and involve them in the planning of services that will be provided to you
- ensure our Lifestyle Assistants understand the role of your advocate.

Real Living Options will ensure that your advocate is invited to attend:

- consultation meetings
- person-centred planning meetings and reviews
- any other relevant meetings or conferences.

You can use your advocate:

- any time you wish to communicate with us
- during your initial assessment consultation
- during your interviews and reviews
- during service delivery

- when you want to make a complaint
- when you want to give feedback.

We encourage you to bring your advocate to your initial assessment meeting to hear your voice during the planning process, guiding and developing your person-centred support plan. Your advocate is welcome to attend any meeting and speak on your behalf.

Real Living Options will provide your advocate with the opportunity to discuss problems or concerns they may have. Failure to adequately address your advocate's concerns will lead to our team informing them of our complaint process and providing the governing agencies' contact details who have the responsibility to ensure we perform our job correctly.

You can change your advocate at any time. If you change your advocate, please inform us as soon as possible to update your information and ensure that we talk to the correct person.



Consent

When you provide consent, you give your permission or say that it is okay for something to happen. You must always fully understand why a person requires your consent. If you have any doubt about this, you should ask our Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator, or your Representative/Nominee, for help.

You can withdraw your consent at any time. For example, the withdrawal of consent means if you are taking part in a particular program and decide that you do not like the program, you can tell us that you no longer want to participate in that program.

Real Living Options will need your consent to:

- read the information that any other service providers have about you and for us to provide any information about you to other service providers, your family or Representative/Nominee
- collect data relating to you for funding bodies
- ask people to attend your person-centred planning meeting
- carry out any training programs or behaviour change programs we want to put in place for you
- assist you to see a doctor or a dentist
- provide appropriate services and supports

- assist you with medication

Usually, consent will be documented in your Service Agreement. However, we will ask you to sign a consent form to release your personal information. We will always ask for your permission and explain the reasons for accessing your information when providing it to Lifestyle Assistant or another service provider. If you are unsure during this process, you should ask your Representative/Nominee for help.

If you feel that you cannot consent about issues in your life, we can talk to your family or Representative/Nominee and ask them to assist. If you do not have family who can make decisions for you, we will help you apply to the court, or other government bodies, to appoint a Guardian who can legally help you make these decisions.



What is a Guardian?

A Guardian is usually a person who has been legally appointed by a court to make decisions on your behalf. This person may be a friend, a family member, or a person from your State Government Representative/Nominee.



Privacy Statement

Real Living Options complies with all relevant privacy legislation and has systems for the collection, use, disclosure, quality, security, accuracy and correction of personal information relating to you, as our Participant.

Your privacy and dignity will always be maintained. You will be asked to sign a Privacy Agreement to consent to collect, use, and disclose your personal information to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*. If you want more information about this, you should read our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure. Information regarding your privacy is also included in your service agreement.

Requests for access to the personal information we hold should be made in writing to the General Manager. Where you believe that a breach of this policy or the *Privacy Act* has occurred, a written complaint should be made to the General Manager.

Failure to receive a response within thirty (30) days, or you are dissatisfied with the response, you may complain to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) via:

- mail: GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001
- fax: 02 9284 9666
- email: enquiries@oaic.gov.au
- online: https://www.oaic.gov.au/



Critical Incidents

While we hope that a critical incident does not occur, in the event it does, we are prepared to support and assist you by following procedures that appropriately deal with a critical incident.

A critical incident is classified as an event (or alleged event) that occurs because of, or during, the delivery of services and has caused, or is likely to cause, a significant negative impact on your health, safety or wellbeing.

If an incident does occur, we will engage the required authorities to support you during this time.

Critical incidents that relate to you may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- an unexpected death, serious injury or alleged assault (including physical, sexual abuse, sexual assault or indecent assault) that occurs as a result of or during the delivery of services
- allegations of serious, unlawful or criminal activity or conduct involving a Real Living Options employee, subcontractor or volunteer that has caused, or has the potential to cause, serious harm to you
- an incident where you assault or cause serious harm to others (including our employees, volunteers or contractors), as a result, or during the delivery, of services
- a severe fire, natural disaster, accident or other incidents that will, or is likely to prevent, service provision, or that results in closure or significant damage to premises or property, or that poses a substantial threat to your health and safety.

Real Living Options has established procedures that identify, manage and resolve incidents which include:

- Lifestyle Assistants reporting all incidents to the Support Manager and/or Senior Support Facilitator
- completion of an incident report that identifies and records an incident
- the Support Manager is responsible for reporting incidents that are 'reportable incidents' to the NDIS Commissioner and other required agencies
- compliance with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable) Rules 2018
- supporting and assisting you if you are affected by the incident
- review of the incident by the General Manager if you or others were affected
- collaborating with you, your family and/or Representative/Nominee to manage and resolve the incident
- reviewing the incident and making necessary amendments to systems and processes to reduce the risk of recurrence.



Complaints and Feedback

Your feedback allows us to provide you with high-quality services; we actively seek your input. Feedback can be provided anonymously or through written or online surveys or conversations with you. We would like your feedback on:

- quality of support received
- consistency of services provided
- support worker performance
- supports that work for you
- changes you want made to assist you
- what you like and dislike about our services.

You always have the right to expect the best possible standard of service from us, and we will treat any concern or complaint you provide as a serious issue. No matter what the situation, a Lifestyle Assistant will not react badly to your complaint; you should feel safe knowing that they will not retaliate or hurt you in any way.

You can make a complaint regarding our services, or a Lifestyle Assistant provided to work with you. If you do not feel comfortable making a complaint, someone else can do this on your behalf, including:

- a Representative/Nominee
- a family member
- a close friend
- your Lifestyle Assistant
- a person you know and trust.

Please send any complaints addressed to the General Manager via:

Website:	www.reallivingoptions.com.au
Email:	GM@reallivingoptions.com.au
Postal address:	P.O. Box 562, Bungalow 4870

Once a complaint has been received, Real Living Options' General Manager will investigate the complaint and find a resolution. The General Manager will write a letter to confirm that your complaint has been received. This letter will provide you with the expected date of the complaint resolution.

The complaint will then be investigated, and a plan to resolve it created. You will be informed of this plan, and we will ask you to provide your opinion on our recommended solution. You can advise if you are happy with the proposed solution or unhappy with the outcome and feel the matter is not resolved.

If you are not happy with the solution proposed by Real Living Options regarding your complaint, you can speak to other organisations, such as:

Commonwealth Ombudsman – Disability Services

Telephone: 1300 362 072
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

NDIS Complaints

Telephone: 1800 800 110
Email: feedback@ndis.gov.au or
Website: https://www.ndis.gov.au/contact/feedback-and-complaints



Networking

Real Living Options will engage with your networks and community to ensure you are offered the opportunity to be involved in activities and areas of interest.

We will access networks such as religious groups, local ethnic groups, community groups, or other you request. We believe that it is essential that you are part of your community, so we work with you to ensure that this happens.



Legislation and Standards

Real Living Options operates in compliance with all current legislation and standards. Please contact us for a copy of the legislation that applies to the service we are providing you. The primary legislation and standards that cover your service include the following:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Disability Act and Regulation
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021.



Risk-Taking

You have the right to participate in lawful activities that may involve a degree of risk. We will always allow you a dignity of risk, and our role is to look at the activity and not you. We will discuss this with you if you wish to undertake the activity. Any dangerous risk may require you to sign that you are willing to take the risk. We always assume that you have the capacity to make your own choices.

We will work with you and advise the various options available regarding the activity to make an informed choice.

We will undertake an individual risk profile of you and a risk assessment of your environment. These assessments will include risk assessments when you leave your home environment.



Continuous Improvement

We aim to provide you with a high-quality service that meets your expectations and needs. To do this, we ask you to let us know how we can maintain and improve the services we provide to you. You can do this by giving feedback or making a complaint.

Our collaborative and person-centred approach means that Real Living Options will respond to your information positively to improve the services we provide.



Work Health and Safety

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011,* Real Living Options has a duty, under the law, to make sure our Lifestyle Assistants can work with you in a healthy and safe environment. Some things you can do to assist in this matter include:

- notifying us of any unsafe conditions in your home
- participating in safety assessments of your home
- arranging repairs of any hazards identified during our safety assessment of your home
- ensuring your pets are controlled during service provision
- providing a smoke-free working environment
- providing a workplace for Lifestyle Assistants that is free of racial, sexual, physical or emotional abuse
- treating your Lifestyle Assistants with dignity and respect
- advising us if you are unwell or cannot do things the way you usually do them
- telling us if your doctor has diagnosed you with a short-term infectious illness

- providing cleaning equipment that is suitable and well maintained
- providing safe, non-toxic cleaning products
- ensuring your mobility equipment and any other items required to live independently in your home is available and well-maintained.

We will conduct a safety check during our first service and discuss any risks we identify with you. The safety of the service will be reviewed with you, on an ongoing basis, following state and federal work occupational health and safety legislation.

Section 3: Easy English Information

Advocacy



This document will help you understand **advocacy and who a Representative/Nominee is**.



Advocacy is when a person publicly helps to **promote, provide, and protect your human rights**



Advocacy can help **your voice be heard, and your wishes met.** Advocacy can **be used to help you become part of your community.**



Sometimes you might find it **hard to say what you want.** You might want someone to:

- **support** you
- **speak up** for you
- be your **voice**



An advocate can be that person.
An advocate is someone who provides a public voice for you if you cannot or do not want to speak up for yourself.



An Advocate should be fair and treat everybody in the same way.

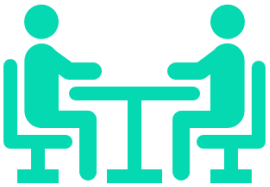


You can ask someone **you trust** to be your advocate, like your:

- mum or dad
- brother or sister
- close friend



Or you can ask a **professional, independent advocate** to help you and be your voice.
They can help you make good decisions and choices right for you.



Your advocate should always:

- **listen** and **support** you
- **take your side**
- **help you make your own good choices and decisions**



Your advocate can **help you**:

- get ready for **meetings**
- tell people/providers **what you want**
- **by signing documents** for you.



Importantly, your advocate **can represent you and speak on your behalf.**



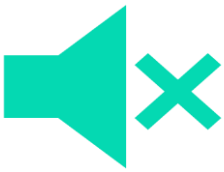
Your advocate can help you **make a complaint** if you are not happy **with:**

- supports provided
- the way you have been treated.



Your advocate **can speak for you** and tell us how **you have been mistreated**.

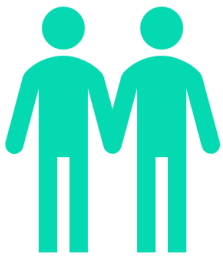
They will help us understand the **support and assistance you need**.



Your advocate must keep your information **private.**



Not sure how t**o find an advocate**?



Talk to the Support Manager at Real Living Options.
Call: 4035 5886
They will help you find a Representative/Nominee.

ndis National Disability Insurance Scheme

Our Support Manager can also help you to go online to use **the** NDIS Disability Advocacy Finder

https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/

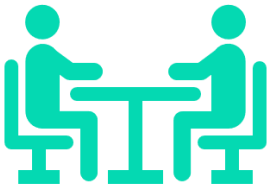
Complaints and Feedback



This document tells you about **how to make a complaint or give feedback**.

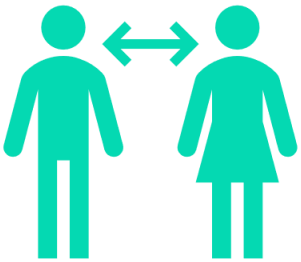


Real Living Options wants you to give us **feedback or make a complaint** if you are unhappy.



It is **okay to complain** if you are not happy. Tell us when you are upset about:

- your supports
- your support workers
- the office (Real Living Options)



If you do not feel comfortable telling us about your complaint, **you should tell someone you trust** like your:

- mum or dad
- brother or sister
- support worker.

Ask them to help you make a complaint.



Or you can get help from a **professional, independent advocate** to make a complaint or provide feedback to us.

We can **help you find** an advocate if you want.



Ask our Support Manager to help you. Call them on 4035 5886.

How do you make a complaint or provide feedback to us?



You can **talk** to:

- your **support worker**
- the **Support Manager**
- our **General Manager**







You can **call or email our General Manager** directly:

- Call: 4035 5886
- Email: GM@reallivingoptions.com.au



You can fill out the **Complaints and Feedback Form** and mail it to the Complaints Manager: GM@ reallivingoptions.com.au
Ask the Support Manager or your support worker for a copy of the form.



You can fill in the Participant Survey we send to you every year.

ndis National Disability Insurance Scheme

You can make a complaint **at any time** directly to the **NDIS Commission:**

Call: **1800 03 55 44**

Or go to their website: www.ndiscommission.gov.au



You can make a **complaint and remain anonymous.** Anonymous means we will not know who you are.



To be anonymous, don't put your name on the **Complaint** or **Feedback Form**



Remember, if you complain anonymously, we **cannot provide you with a response,** as we will not know who you are.

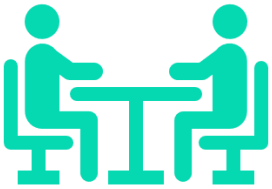


We take **all complaints and feedback** we receive **seriously**.

They help us to make our service and supports better for you!



How do we manage your complaint or feedback?



Our **General Manager** will:

- **talk** with you about your problem
- **write** everything you say down
- **plan** to fix your problem.

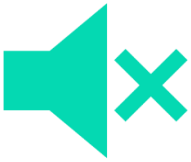


Our **General Manager** will:

- try to **fix your problem**
- **contact you regularly** to tell you how the issue is being fixed.



To keep you safe, if your complaint or feedback involves someone being put **in danger of being hurt,** we will tell the police and the NDIS.



We **keep** everything **you tell us private.**



If **you are unhappy** with the way we handle your feedback or complaint, you can **tell the NDIS Commission:**

- Call: **1800 03 55 44** (free call from a landline)
- Go to their website: **www.ndiscommission.gov.au**

Incident Management



This document tells you **what an incident is** and how **Real Living Options manages them.**



There are **two types:**

1. A general incident
2. A reportable incident.



A **general incident** is:

- when a person **causes you harm** or could have caused you harm
- when **you hurt someone** else
- when you feel that someone is **going to hurt you.**



A reportable incident is when one of the following happens:

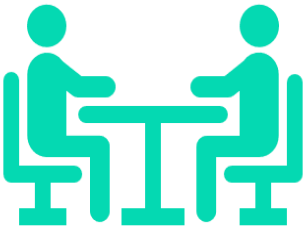
- a death
- a serious injury
- abuse
- neglect
- sexual misconduct
- unregulated use of restrictive practices.



If you are involved in an incident, you must **tell our Support Manager or your support worker or a trusted person immediately.**



Our Support Manager **will meet with you to record** what was said and done during the incident.



Our Support Manager will ask you:

- **what happened**
- the names of **people who saw** the incident
- **when you told someone** about the incident (date and time)
- details of the **person you told**
- how the incident **affected you**
- what could be **done** to **stop the incident from happening again.**



Your **safety is important** to us. After an incident, **we will provide support or assistance** to help you recover from the incident**.**



After an incident, Real Living Options will:

- **do all we can** to make sure you are safe
- provide you with **advice and support**

- arrange for **counselling or medical support** (if required).



We will support you by:

- **investigating** the incident quickly
- helping you look **after your health and wellbeing** (where we can).



We will regularly **keep you up to date** with **managing the incident.**





The Support Manager will **contact you to:**

- **talk about what happened**
- **tell you** what **actions we** will take **to fix** the incident
- explain to you what **steps** have already been **taken**.



We will ask for your:

- **feedback** and t**houghts** on how we are fixing the problem
- **ideas a**bout any changes that could **help you in the future.**



Our Support Manager **investigates the incident** to work out what happened and stop it from happening again.



We then **complete a review** of the incident **to improve our service by:**

- **learning** what happened
- **making changes** to stop it from happening again.



Some changes we might make could be to:

- change our practices
- change our policies
- retrain our staff



Reportable incidents



A **reportable incident** is when you, or another Participant, is very **badly hurt** or **mistreated.**

If a reportable incident happens Real Living Options must **tell** the **NDIS Commission.**



We must **complete an NDIS Reportable Incident Form**.

- Immediate Notification Form
- 5-Day Notification Form



Real Living Options then must send the form to the NDIS Commission using the **NDIS portal.**



The **NDIS Commission reviews the incident.**

They will tell us if we need to take **any further action.**



We will **update you on the NDIS Commission's findings,** including any actions we must take.



We **keep** everything **you tell us private.**



If **you are unhappy** with the way we handle your incident, you can **tell the NDIS Commission:**

- Call: **1800 03 55 44** (free call from a landline)
- Go to their website: www.ndiscommission.gov.au http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/

Money and Property



This document tells you how we will look after your **money and property.**



You are the owner of your money and property.
If **you say that it is okay**, we can help **you buy things** with your money, and **we will use your property to deliver your services.**

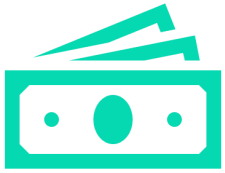


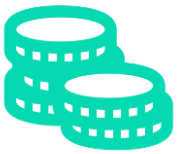
We can only use your money or property if **you have agreed,** and **it is in writing.**



Property:

- Our staff will **only use your property** if needed to help deliver your services.
- You must tell us it is **okay to use** your property.





Money:

- **You tell us** how you want to spend your money
- Our **staff cannot touch your money** without your permission



If you ask a support worker to **help you spend your money**, they must check they can **with our support team at the office.**



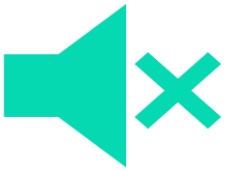
Our **staff cannot use your PIN** or **get money from an ATM** because this is your **VERY private information**.



If a support worker helps you with your money, they **must follow our rules** to keep you and your **money safe**.



Our staff will keep all receipts for things they have used your money to buy.
They will **keep a record** of all of your money that has been spent.



Our staff **cannot give you any advice or information about money matters**.



If we think someone is **misusing your money or property,** our Support Manager will tell you.



The Support Manager will:

- **investigate, record evidence** and **write a report**
- **tell the police** or other authorities, if needed
- **provide additional support** to you (if required)



The Support Manager will then include the help you need in your **Support plan and give you an updated copy.**





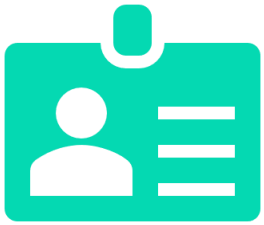
If **you are unhappy** with how we manage your money or property, you can tell **the NDIS Commission:**

- Call: **1800 03 55 44** (free call from a landline)
- Go to their website: **www.ndiscommission.gov.au**

Privacy and Your Personal Information



This document tells you **about your privacy and your personal information.**



To help us provide you with the proper support and services, **we collect and store personal information** about you.



We use your personal information to work with you to **design supports and care that meets your** needs.



Personal information can include:

- your **name, address and phone number**
- **your Representative/ Nominee**'s contact details
- details about **people who you are close to** (mum, brother or a good frie
- **supports** you need
- your **medical records**
- other **support providers** you use
- **why and how** we are helping you.



It is Real Living Options' **responsibility to keep** your personal information **private and safe.**



We **only share** your information with others if **you say "yes"** or if the law says we must.



You can say ' no' when asked to share your information with government agencies (like the NDIS).
This instruction means you **opt-out of sharing** your personal information.



We will ask you to **sign an information consent form.**
The form **gives us your approval** to use your personal information.



We also ask you to include all the people you are **happy to share your personal information with** on the form.



Your information will **only be shared** with **people who you have said can see it,** like:

- a Representative/Nominee
- a trusted person
- other support providers
- support workers
- government organisations that support you



You have rights when it comes to the management of your personal information.



You can:

- **ask our General Manager to see** your personal information at anytime
- tell us **to correct** wrong or incomplete information
- **tell us if you think the** information is wrong and must be deleted

Participant's Rights



This document tells you about **your rights.**

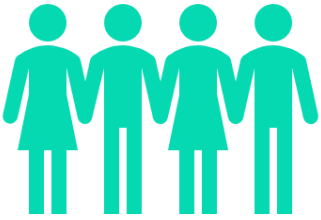


Australian laws respect the rights of people with disability. The laws say you:

- should be **included in community life, and**
- have the **same rights** as all other Australians

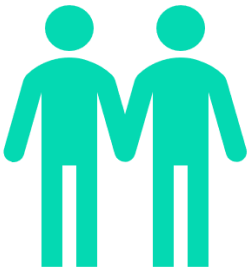


What are your human rights?



You should feel:

- **safe** in your home and anywhere else
- treated with **respect**
- part of your cultural **community**

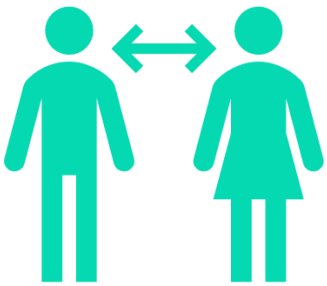


You should be able to:

- **participate** in your **religion**
- express your **sexuality**
- communicate in your family's **language**



When w**orking with Real Living Options** and other disability **support providers,** you **also have rights**.



You have the right to:

- receive good quality services
- tell us what you want
- choose the type of support worker you want
- make your own choices



You also have the right to:

- be safe
- get help when you need it
- try new things and take risks

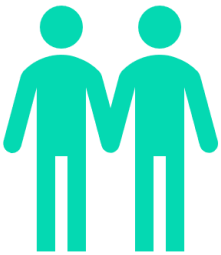


How does Real Living Options respect your rights?



Real Living Options will:

- keep you **safe**
- show you **respect and** respect **your privacy**
- **treat you well**
- **help you** make your own choices
- **listen to you**
- **involve your family, Representative/Nominee and other support carers** (if you want us to)



We will also:

- ask you to tell us **what supports you want and the type of worker you need**
- keep your **personal information private**

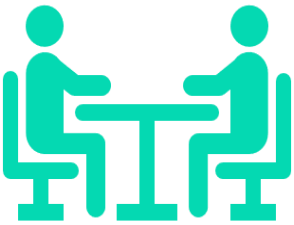


We can also help you find a Representative/Nominee if you need one.

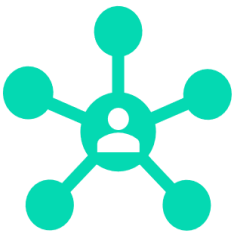


You can safely:

- **make complaints** and provide feedback to us
- tell us you want to use another provider



We will **follow your instructions** unless we feel that you may get hurt. We will then talk to you and your Representative/Nominee/family about any risks involved to help you make a safe decision.



We also make sure our support workers follow our Service **Charter of Rights.**

What is a Service Agreement?



This document tells you what a **Service Agreement is and why you need one.**



A **Service Agreement** is a **document.**

It is an **agreement between you and your service provider.**

The **service provider** is the person or organisation that provides you with supports (like Real Living Options).



When you agree on the services you want from the Provider, it is **written down** in the Service Agreement.



The Service Agreement says that you and your **Provider agree to the services they will provide.**



To **show that you agree, you sign** the Service Agreement.

We (the Provider) will also sign the agreement



The Service Agreement helps make sure you receive the right services **for you**.



Your Service Agreement is helpful because it **provides everything agreed to in writing**.



If you need help to enter into a Service Agreement, you can **ask a trusted person to support you.**
A trusted person might be a **family member, a friend or an independent Representative/Nominee.**



Your trusted person (Representative/Nominee) **can speak on your behalf.**



Your trusted person (Representative/Nominee) can **sign your Service Agreement** for you (but only if you say that is okay).



What information should be in a Service Agreement?

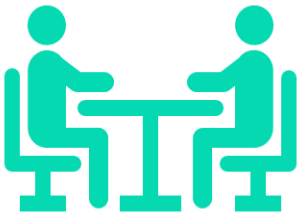


We will meet with you and ask you to talk to us about the support you want.



We want you to tell us:

- what type of **supports you need**
- how you **want your supports** provided
- the type of **support worker** you want to work with
- **when you need** supports
- **how long** you will need the supports.



We will talk to you about:

- the supports **we can provide**
- your rights and responsibilities
- our **responsibilities**
- anything **special that we must consider**



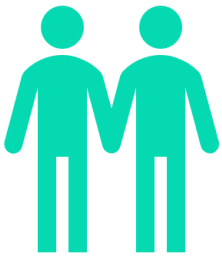
It is a good idea to **bring a copy of your NDIS Plan** to your Service Agreement meetings.

(If you want, we can put a copy of your plan in your agreement.

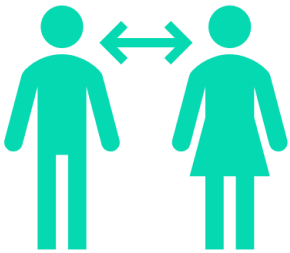


Once we both have **agreed on supports and costs,** we will write the Service Agreement.

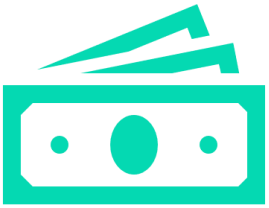
We will then provide two copies for you to read and sign.



The Service Agreement will include what is expected from **you and us (our responsibilities).**



We will explain **our responsibilities** to you.
We will also **explain the responsibilities which you must meet.**



The Service Agreement will include **information about costs.**
It will include how much our service will cost you.



When do you sign the Service Agreement?



After you, or your trusted person, has read the Service Agreement.



After you or your trusted person have had **your say** and are **happy that the Service Agreement meets your needs.**



You only **sign the Service Agreement** if you **agree** with what is written in it. There will be **two copies to sign** (one for you and one for us).



You sign the agreement, then **we will sign it.**





We will **give you a copy** of your Service Agreement, and we will keep a copy in your file.



Do not forget to keep your **copy in a safe and private place.**



You can **change or end** your Service Agreement with us.

To **change an agreement,** just talk to our Support Manager.



To **end an agreement,** simply **tell us in writing (if you can).**
You will need to give two weeks' notice to end your Service Agreement.



We will provide you with the support you need to leave our service.

Zero Tolerance - Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation



This document tells you about how Real Living Options **prevents or manages** violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.



You have **the right** to enjoy a life **free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation**.



You should always feel safe when receiving supports from us**.**
If you **do not feel safe**, tell our Support Manager immediately.



Violence is when someone **hurts you physically** (like hitting, punching, or slapping you).



Abuse is when someone **mistreats you** and might hurt your body or feelings.



Neglect is when someone is **not caring for you or helping you** the way they are supposed to.



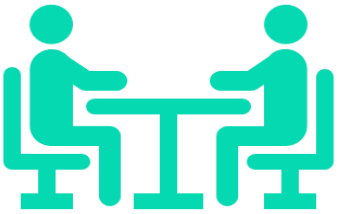
Exploitation is when someone is taking **advantage of you**.



Real Living Options **does not allow** any acts of violence, abuse, exploitation or neglect towards you.



It is our **responsibility to protect you** and **keep you as safe as possible**.



We want you **to tell us if someone hurts you** or **does not feel safe when you are with someone**.



If you do not feel comfortable telling us, **you should tell someone you trust** like your:

- mum or dad
- brother or sister
- support worker



Or you can get help from a **professional, independent Representative/Nominee**.



We can **help you find** a Representative/Nominee if you want. Ask our Support Manager for help. **Call 4035 5886**



You can also get help by calling the **National Disability Abuse Hotline** on **1800 880 052.**



To **keep you safe**, we will:

- make sure our **staff follow the rules**
- **train staff** on how to help you
- keep your **information private**



Real Living Options will always:

- **support you** if something terrible happens
- **call the police** if we need to



We will always:

- **listen to you** or your Representative/Nominee
- provide you with the **support you need**

- **keep you updated** on what is going on



If you are not happy with how we are helping you tell the **NDIS Commission:** Call **1800 03 55 44**

Go **online**

www.ndiscommission.gov.au