

## **Advocacy**

SAL Consulting embraces the principle that clients have the right to raise concerns regarding services without fear of retribution and is committed to ensuring that all clients have appropriate supports in place to ensure their rights and interests are respected and realised.

SAL Consulting recognises that specific groups, for example, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities may need assistance to understand and to participate in the advocacy process by using an advocate of their choice.

Consumer advocacy can be described as the process of standing beside an individual or group and speaking out on their behalf to protect and promote their rights and interests. An advocate may be a friend, a family member, a neighbour or someone from an independent advocacy organisation.

### **The rights of clients**

As clients of the services of SAL Consulting, individuals have the right to involve an advocate of their choice to represent their interests at any time. Clients are entitled, as a minimum, to the following:

- The right to privacy and confidentiality;
- The right to access personal information held by SAL Consulting;
- The right to be treated with respect and dignity;
- The right to recognition and respect of cultural, religious and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- The right to receive a good quality service that meets the individual's specific needs
- The right to accurate information about available services to assist the individual make an informed decision about the most appropriate service for their needs;
- The right to provide direct and honest feedback about the service provided without fear of retribution;
- The right to the assistance of an interpreter if English is not the individual's first language, and
- The right to express opinions and to be supported by an advocate who may be a friend or relative or an advocacy agency to speak out on the individual's behalf to protect and promote their rights and interests.

### **The role of advocacy**

Advocacy is the process of taking action to:

- prevent abuse, discrimination or negligent treatment of people with an intellectual disability;
- promote and enhance the rights of people with an intellectual disability;
- encourage people with an intellectual disability to make informed choices;
- assist people with an intellectual disability to participate equitably in community life;
- increase the knowledge and understanding of people with an intellectual disability, their families, carers and people in the community about the rights of people with disabilities;
- improve communication between people with an intellectual disability and other members of the community.

### **Client Advocacy**

Advocacy agencies provide a critical role in ensuring the rights and interests of people with a disability are respected and realised.

SAL Consulting believes that:

- Any user of its services has a right to seek the support of an advocacy agency to help deal with a disagreement with the organisation;
- It has a responsibility to work together in a co-operative manner with workers from such agencies, and
- It has the responsibility to make sure that users of its services are aware of advocacy agencies and how to contact them.

What we will do:

- SAL Consulting personnel will support each client to make decisions and choices and as necessary, to draw on external agencies or individuals to facilitate information exchange and effective communication [e.g. interpreters etc.] with each client.
- SAL Consulting will assist to link each individual, their family members and significant other persons in their lives, with external agencies [eg. interpreter services, culturally appropriate/responsive information, advocacy and support groups] as required, to facilitate effective information exchange and communication.
- The client has a right at any time to make their own decision on whether or not they need an advocate. In the case of a client being unable to make an informed choice regarding advocacy, the client's family or guardian will be contacted for a decision to be made on behalf of the client.
- Each client, and his or her representative as appropriate, will be provided with the opportunity to be fully and actively involved in all decision-making processes concerning the planning, development, delivery, evaluation and monitoring of SAL Consulting's services.
- The right to raise service issues or complain about how the service is provided extends to 'interested parties' such as the person's family, friends, advocate and guardian, and to other members of the community who can demonstrate a genuine interest in the life and circumstances of the person.