

Zero Tolerance: a framework to prevent and improve sector responses to abuse, neglect and violence experienced by people with disability

Zero Tolerance is a project led by National Disability Services in partnership with the disability sector. It aims to assist disability service providers to understand, implement and improve practices which safeguard the rights of people they support.

The Zero Tolerance approach is built around a national evidence-based framework with specific strategies for service providers to improve prevention, early intervention and responses to abuse, neglect and violence experienced by people with disability. This prevention focussed framework informs the range of Zero Tolerance tools and resources for the disability sector. It also provides a platform for the non-government sector to support broader safeguarding approaches for people with a disability.

# Understanding Abuse

* Promoting and Applying Human Rights
* Education and Training to Understand Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Violence
* Risk Factors and Signals of Abuse

# Practices and Safeguards which can help prevent abuse

* Implementing policy and practice that protect people's rights
* Empowering people with disability
* Creating the right organisational cultures

# Addressing Risk for Specific Groups and Service Settings

* Targeted approaches for groups at increased risk of abuse
* Understand and address service features and settings that increase risk
* Understanding behaviours of concern

# Responding to abuse

* Early Intervention and Response
* Supporting the person
* Meet organisational requirements

# Analysis, Learning and Improvement

* Maintaining and Analysing Records
* Continuous Improvement Approach
* Supporting initiatives to reduce abuse

The text below expands the Zero Tolerance framework to highlight specific topics that disability service providers should consider and incorporate into their broader safeguarding approaches. Some topics may require multiple approaches to ensure understanding, ongoing training and action at appropriate levels of the organisation. In addition to development of information, tools and training resources under these topics, the Zero Tolerance project will highlight and share existing evidence-based products and tools to support broader safeguarding in the disability sector.

# Understanding Abuse

* Promoting and Applying Human Rights
* applying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
* abuse as a violation of human rights
* right to justice
* Education and Training to Understand Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Violence
* understanding abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence in disability services
* recognising lived experience
* power and gender
* abuse as a crime
* Risk Factors and Signals of Abuse
* recognise when abuse is happening
* prevalence of abuse
* individual and service risk factors
* trauma informed approaches

# Practices and Safeguards which can help prevent abuse

* Implementing policy and practice that protect people's rights
* committing to person centred approaches
* strong leadership, policy and guidelines
* staff training, deployment and supervision
* training on communications preferences
* encouraging bystander action
* Empowering people with disability
* providing information and training on rights, self-advocacy and speaking up
* abuse prevention education and training
* relationships and sexuality training
* building connections outside the service
* engaging family and advocates
* Creating the right organisational cultures
* safer recruitment and screening practices
* establishing cultures of respect
* attitudes, behaviour and boundaries
* creating positive feedback cultures
* addressing barriers to disclosure
* openness to external mechanisms
* clearly documented whistleblower protections

# Addressing Risk for Specific Groups and Service Settings

* Targeted approaches for groups at increased risk of abuse
* people with intellectual disability and ABI
* women and children with disability
* people with communication support needs
* indigenous and CALD communities
* people isolated from family and community
* people at risk of familial abuse
* Understand and address service features and settings that increase risk
* abuse in accommodation settings
* personal care
* unpacking systemic abuse
* remote and unsupervised service provision
* Understanding behaviours of concern
* Identifying causes of behaviours
* Using positive behaviour support
* Reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive practices

# Responding to abuse

* Early Intervention and Response
* intervening early: guidelines on responding to early indicators of abuse and trauma
* clear expectations, policies and procedures for responding to disclosures and allegations
* timely reporting to maximise victims recall
* evidence gathering and record keeping
* Supporting the person
* ensuring safety of victims through trauma informed key support person
* response informed by victim’s experience
* engaging family, carers and significant others
* linking to specialist support services, complaints bodies, police and advocacy
* addressing barriers to justice
* ongoing person-centred healing strategies
* Meet organisational requirements
* Acknowledgement, Actions, Answers, Apology
* Rigorous approaches to investigations
* Clear disciplinary processes that protect victims
* Approaches meet needs of whole organisation including other clients, families and staff
* Communication of actions and outcomes
* Meeting legislative and external body obligations

# Analysis, Learning and Improvement

* Maintaining and Analysing Records
* rigorous quality monitoring
* meeting incident reporting requirements
* review and analysis of individual incidents
* maintaining records on alleged staff to client abuse
* Continuous Improvement Approach
* review staff knowledge and competencies
* using data to inform improvements
* to abuse prevention and response processes
* exploring systemic safeguarding gaps
* addressing organisational impact of abuse
* Supporting initiatives to reduce abuse
* using referee checks to identify people of concern in the sector
* working collaboratively with mainstream, specialist support services and advocacy
* contributing to cross-sector approaches