



Australian
Human Rights
Commission



Human rights in health and disability care during COVID-19

Guidelines

August 2020



Easy Read

Guidelines



The Australian Human Rights Commission has made guidelines to protect the rights of people with disability.



Guidelines are like rules.

The guidelines are for health and disability workers during coronavirus.



Health and disability workers should

- Know about people's rights
- Protect people's rights



People should get the health care they need during coronavirus.

Human Rights



The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a law that protects the rights of people with disability around the world.



The Convention is called the **CRPD** for short.

The CRPD says discrimination is **never** ok.



The CRPD says people with disability

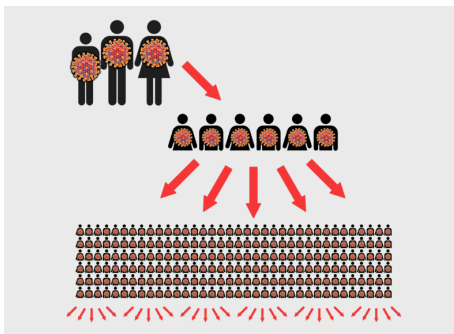
- Have the same rights as other people
- Must be respected



The CRPD says people with disability have the right to

- Be included in their community
- Make their own decisions and choices

Rights in a pandemic



Coronavirus has been called a pandemic.

A **pandemic** is when a virus spreads to lots of countries around the world.



During a pandemic some rights are **very** important.

- The right to life
- Good health and health care
- Information like Easy Read



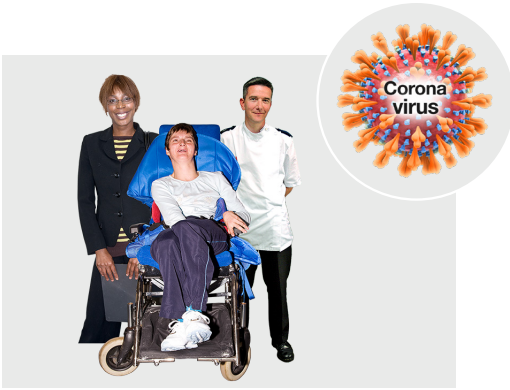
People with disability have the right to make choices about their health.

This includes having support to make choices.



The guidelines say people with disability **should** get the health care they need during the pandemic.

What workers should do



Health and disability workers should **always** protect the rights of people with disability.

During coronavirus this is **very** important.



Health workers include

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Therapists like OTs



This document has stories to help workers understand

- What they **should** do and
- What they **should not** do



Disability support workers can also use these examples to protect the rights of people with disability.

Supports



People with disability have the right to supports when using health services.

Supports include

- Aids like a cane or wheelchair
- Support workers or family



Rita's Story

Rita felt very sick and went to the hospital emergency room.

Rita is blind and uses a cane.

The hospital has a rule that says you cannot bring things into hospital.

This is to stop coronavirus spreading.

This means Rita cannot take her cane into the hospital.



Health workers should

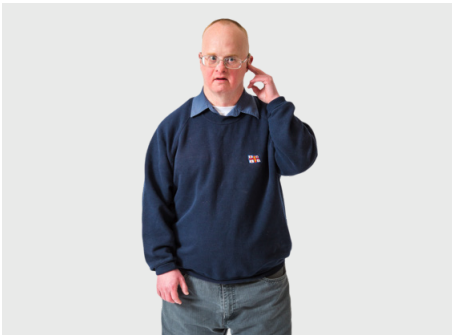
- Find ways to let Rita use her cane.
They could sterilise the cane or lend Rita a hospital cane.
- Always let people have their supports.

Communication



People with disability have the right to communicate how they choose.

- Auslan
- Braille
- Easy Read
- National Relay Service



Seb's Story

Seb is Deaf and uses Auslan sign language.

He has been in hospital for 3 days without an Auslan interpreter.

The doctors think Seb does not need an interpreter.

Seb is about to have a COVID-19 test.

Seb does not understand what is going on.



Health workers should

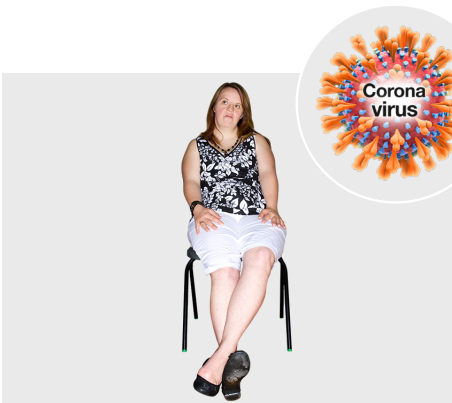
- Be trained on how people communicate.
- Ask Seb how he likes to communicate.
- Get Seb an Auslan interpreter.

Visitors and family



There are lots of rules about coronavirus.

Some rules say people are not allowed visitors in hospital or COVID-19 clinics.



Lucia's Story

Lucia has a sore throat and a fever.

Lucia thinks she might have coronavirus.

Lucia also has autism.



Lucia went to the clinic with her mother to get tested for COVID-19.

The staff said Lucia must wait by herself.

This has made Lucia very anxious and upset.



Health workers should

- Find a way to let Lucia wait with her mother. They could sit in a separate waiting room.
- Allow people with disability to have visitors or family.

Leaving hospital



People can only leave hospital if

- A doctor has done a check up
- They feel better
- It is safe to go home

People should **not** be asked to leave hospital because of their disability.



Gen's Story

Gen is in hospital for her mental health.

The doctor says Gen needs to stay in hospital for **2 weeks**.

The hospital rules say people must keep a big distance from other people.

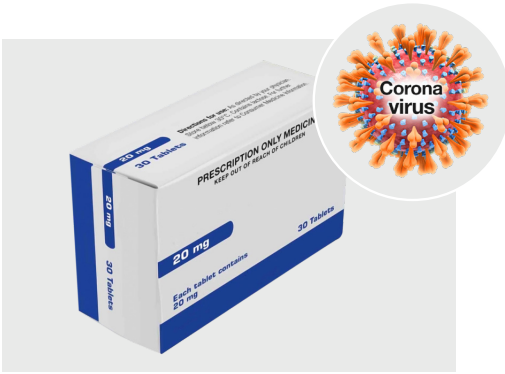
After 3 days the nurses say Gen is not following the rules and must go home.



Health workers should

- Let Gen stay in hospital until she is better.
- Not make people leave hospital because of their disability.

Health resources



During coronavirus it can be hard to get things like

- Medicine
- Ventilators to help people breathe



Kenji's Story

Kenji is 12 years old and has coronavirus.

Kenji has Down syndrome and is in a country hospital in NSW.



Kenji needs a ventilator to breathe.

The hospital only has **1** ventilator.

The doctor gives the ventilator to someone who **does not** have Down syndrome.



Health workers should

- Make sure people with disability like Kenji have the same right to a ventilator as other people.
- Not make health decisions based on someone's disability.

Health papers



People who live in aged care homes might be asked to sign health papers.

People with disability should **not** be asked to sign health papers without support.



Sean's Story

Sean lives in an aged care facility.

Sean is 55 years old and has an intellectual disability.

The staff ask Sean to sign a health form.

The form says if Sean gets very sick he will **not** get treatment.

This means he might die.

Sean does not understand the form.

Sean does not want to sign the form.



Health workers should

- Make sure people in aged care homes like Sean have access to advocates.
- Not make people sign health papers.

Remember



People with disability have the same rights as other people.



People with disability have the right to

- Good health and health care.
- Make their own choices and have support.
- Information like Easy Read.



Health and disability workers should

- Know about rights
- Find ways to protect rights



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For more information

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