

DISABILITY POLICY 2024

POLICY STATEMENT

Family Planning Australia respects and upholds the right of people with disability to have autonomy to control and decide freely on all matters related to their reproductive and sexual health, free from coercion, discrimination and violence.

We work alongside people with disability, and the organisations that represent them, to promote disability inclusion and advocate for their right to optimal reproductive and sexual health.

The reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability must be included in health and education policy, research agendas, clinical service provision, international development projects, data collection and workforce development strategies.

Family Planning Australia adopts the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability⁽¹⁾ and is a member of the Australian Disability and Development Consortium and the Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability.

Family Planning Australia supports the vision and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability⁽²⁾ and works to:

- prevent experiences of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- promote a more inclusive society
- support the recommendations of the Royal Commission on disability equity and rights and their implications for reproductive and sexual health.

Family Planning Australia reinforces the internationally recognised Social Model of Disability⁽³⁾ for reproductive and sexual health. We advocate in alignment with the model's attitudes and views, emphasising informed consent and decision-making across all services we provide.

Links to the Sustainable Development Goals

Implementation of this policy will promote achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including:

SDG 3 – Good health and well-being

SDG 4 – Quality education

SDG 5 – Gender equality

SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities

SCOPE

All Family Planning Australia.

POLICY DETAILS

Family Planning Australia recognises that:

- People with disability experience high levels of discrimination and abuse.⁽²⁾
- People with disability face negative attitudes and difficulty accessing necessary support, which limits them in finding work, study and being included in community life.^(2, 4)
- Women with disability are particularly vulnerable to having their reproductive and sexual health rights abused and to experiencing exploitation and violence, in line with the findings of the Royal Commission.⁽²⁾
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with disability may face additional barriers to achieving their rights.
- The lived experience of many people with disability suggests a lack of opportunity to learn, communicate and express their sexuality and develop relationships, despite the rights to do so.⁽²⁾
- There is a lack of training for professionals on working effectively with people with disability.^(2, 5, 6)
- There is a lack of research, protocols and advocacy in reproductive and sexual health for people with disability.^(5, 6)

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Family Planning Australia believes that:

- People with disability have the same rights as any other member of society, including rights in the area of their reproductive and sexual health.⁽⁶⁾
- People with disability have the capacity and the right to form consensual relationships, to express their sexuality, and to make informed decisions regarding their reproductive and sexual health.⁽⁶⁾
- Children with disability have the same rights as other children and should be treated equally with others.⁽¹⁾

Family Planning Australia is committed to working in partnership with people with disability to:

- Promote and encourage people with disability to pursue their own sexual and reproductive health, achieve a healthy relationship with their own sexuality and engage in healthy relationships with other people.⁽⁶⁾
- Deliver inclusive clinical services.^(4, 5)
- Provide accessible reproductive and sexual health information and resources for people with disability.
- Provide information, resources and support for parents, paid and unpaid carers, clinicians, teachers and other educators and services.⁽⁵⁾
- Design and implement international projects that aim to advance disability equity and rights, particularly reproductive and sexual health rights.
- Provide training for clinicians, health care workers, teachers and other educators, organisations and individuals on sexuality, human rights, and reproductive and sexual health for people with disability.
- Advocate for the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability.

- Support and conduct research aimed at enhancing the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability.
- Evaluate the extent to which our programs and services are inclusive and promote disability equity and rights.

REFERENCES

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4. Department of Communities and Justice. Disability inclusion plan. NSW Government. 2021. Available from: <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/community-inclusion/disability-inclusion/nsw-disability-inclusion-plan/nsw-disability-inclusion-plan-easy-read.pdf>
5. Australian Government Department of Health. National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability. Commonwealth of Australia. 2021. Available from <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-roadmap-for-improving-the-health-of-people-with-intellectual-disability?language=en>
6. World Health Organisation. Promoting sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities. WHO/UNFPA guidance note. World Health Organisation and United Nations Population Fund. 2009. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241598682>