

WRISC Disability Action Plan

Our Vision for Disability Action

WRISC Family Violence Support is an organisation which exists to change the lives of women affected by family violence. 2.2% of the population in the Central Highlands report having a disability (Central Highlands Regional Council). WRISC acknowledges that there are significant barriers in our society that restrict women with a disability from accessing family violence services. WRISC is making a commitment to recognize and address these barriers, providing an equitable service that reflects the diverse needs of women.

Women with disabilities are more vulnerable to violence than other women and less able to leave. Women with disabilities are twice as likely as women without disabilities to experience violence. They are subjected to similar forms of violence as women without disabilities however they also experience forms of violence unique to their disability and support needs. Specific acts of violence towards women with disabilities include withholding medication, withholding personal care, and removing equipment essential to a women's independence.

There is little research completed on the incidence of family violence on women with disabilities in Australia. A Western Australian study (Cockram, 2003) showed 50% of women with a disability in this study had experienced physical, sexual, social or emotional abuse and the male spouse or partner was likely to be the perpetrator of the violence. Overseas studies which mainly focus on intellectual disability state up to 90% of women with an intellectual disability have been sexually assaulted by an intimate partner.

In achieving this vision Wrisc will seek to:

- To eliminate disability related discrimination
- Improve the wellbeing of women and children with a disability through appropriate service provision, employment, support, community education and advocacy.

Our DAP

A working group was established to develop the Disability Action Plan in 2015. This group includes a WRISC board member and up to three staff members.

WRISC Family Violence Support has made a commitment to creating an accessible service for women with disabilities. This is an ongoing and evolving process. Some achievements to date include

- An accessible website which incorporates approved font
- “BrowseAloud software for visually impaired clients.
- Meeting rooms and toilet facilities are wheel chair accessible
- Providing advocacy for women and children with disabilities
- Access to crisis funding for women and children with a disability who need to leave their place of residence and require significant support

A commitment to establishing a Disability Action Plan within WRISC requires the continuing development of resources and skills. WRISC currently employs two staff members who are experienced in the area of Disability and will look at completing further staff training in disability. Disability and family violence services will work together on the Disability Action Plan to ensure WRISC practice is inclusive and relevant to all women and children with disabilities who are experiencing family violence. WRISC will partner with other agencies (Karden, DHHS) to work together and strengthen relationships.

Relationships

Wrisc values relationships built with the disability community, including women and children with a disability, specialist support services and key stakeholders. Respect and trust are critical to WRISC's core business of responding to and assisting women and children with a disability that have been victims of family based violence. Our model of care draws on a healing and strengths based approach, and is underpinned by a human rights framework. Our practice model is supported by a comprehensive assessment and care plan for each woman and child. Our relationships and partnerships with the broader community and integrated service system enable us to deliver our care plans.

Focus area:

- Local Disability agencies / networks / families and children
- Other Community stakeholders that work to support the wellbeing of women and children with a disability

Action	Target	Responsibility	Action	Timeline	Completed
Partner with specialist support services to improve the quality and accessibility of WRISC's crisis response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish protocols with local services who brokerage personal support packages to women with disabilities. 				
Disability Action Plan Working Group to be established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRISC DAP working group to meet regularly to ensure DAP is actioned. 		Libby to contact Karen Robinson to rep from Karden		
WRISC to build and maintain formal partnerships with disability organizations / agencies / committees at a local and state level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary consulting available 				
WRISC to develop and nurture relationships within the disability community at a personal, program and agency level by participating / hosting culturally appropriate events and activities within the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual relationship building with relevant organisations e.g.: Ballarat Police FVU, Child Protection, Ballarat Magistrate's Court, Disability Services • Promote agency within disability community 				

Reduce Barriers to service access

Wrisc is a workplace that values diversity, which understands difference and is able to adapt to diversity to provide services in a safe and appropriate way. Women with disabilities rely on agencies such as WRISC to identify barriers to service access and collaborate to work through the barriers.

WRISC identifies it is unable to make changes that will make its service accessible to all women with disabilities, however acknowledges the physical and attitudinal barriers that exist within the service and remains open to the possible changes that may be necessary for individual preference and need.

Focus area:

- Identify and address barriers which prevent women with a disability from accessing a service from WRISC

Action	Target	Responsibility	Action	Timeline	Completed
WRISC will develop disability awareness materials to include in Staff Induction Manual and information pack for volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAP in Induction manual for all new staff and Volunteers • Provide copy of DAP to Business Manager 				
WRISC will maintain appropriate resources for clients with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate resources are available in WRISC office and consultation rooms and include: Easy read Auslan 				
Ensure WRISC recruitment and selection policies do not discriminate and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and Equal Opportunity Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recruitment procedures and relevant processes including job advertisements to ensure relevant information is captured and non-discriminatory. 				
Information to be provided in a content and format accessible to women with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is not limited to one format opportunity for women to receive information in a range of ways – written, oral • Easy read 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website- Ensure WRISC's electronic information is accessible to adaptive technologies Ask people their preferred method of communication 				
Women with cognitive impairments are supported to better understand their rights and responsibilities in regards to family violence and WRISC	<p>Easy English resources are provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation induction pack WRISC information pack What is family violence 				
Wrisc events to be held in accessible venues. Access features and the positive inclusion of women with a disability promoted.	<p>Wrisc policies and procedures to advise that all events take place in accessible venues and support people available as appropriate such as Auslan or attendant carers.</p>				
Ensure that future building works/relocations/renovations are undertaken in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements (consider premises policy/accessibility policy)	<p>Audit premises</p>				
Ensure motel accommodation provided is accessible to women with disabilities.	<p>Audit of local motels/consultation with disability services that can assist in compiling a list of motels</p>				
Women and children with disabilities are supported appropriately in the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case discussions regarding complex disability cases Women with disabilities for discussion point on team meeting agenda 				
<i>Women and children with disabilities are supported to access Statewide Disability and Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and referral procedures on Statewide Disability and Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative are made available to all staff 				

--	--	--	--	--	--

Education and Awareness

WRISC acknowledges need for community education and awareness regarding women and children with a disability experiencing family violence. WRISC is committed to challenge the myths, stereotypes and assumptions relating to women with disabilities that further compounds the disempowerment of women with disabilities. Women with disabilities are unique and have unique needs.

Focus area:

- Increase community awareness of issues and barriers for women with a disability experiencing family violence

Action	Target	Responsibility	Action	Timeline	Completed
Increase community awareness of issues and barriers for women with a disability experiencing family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use media and community education to raise awareness on the impact of family violence on women with a disability • Participate in community events that for women and children with a disability 				
WRISC will display an acknowledgement of women with a disability through appropriate artwork and other visual displays in the WRISC office and consultation rooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artwork/posters with images of women with a disability displayed within WRISC office and consultation rooms 				

--	--	--	--	--	--

Opportunities

WRISC is committed to providing opportunities for education, training and employment around disability which enhances our capacity to provide diverse services and promote self-determination and empowerment. It would be beneficial for staff members to participate in disability awareness training, exploring what attitudes exist within the service about women with disabilities and developing skills to ensure practice that is inclusive of women with disabilities experiencing family violence.

Focus Area:

Action	Target	Responsibility	Action	Timeline	Completed
Align all relevant WRISC policy, procedures and plans with the Disability Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Disability Action Plan to be integrated into WRISC's operational strategic plan. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WRISC to develop effective and flexible employment and recruitment processes. Ensure recruitment and selection policies do not discriminate and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equal Opportunity Act 					
Appropriate and relevant training to staff, Board Members and volunteers as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 percent of staff undertake (where possible) at least 0.5 days of disability 				

required to work effectively with clients with a disability.	<p>awareness training per annum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRISC Training template and register to be utilised for the recording of such training • PD training around disability and family violence 				
Promote leadership roles for women with disabilities by recruiting women on the WRISC board	Invite and support the representation of a woman with a disability on the Wrisc Board.				
Effectively communicating and consulting with people with a disability by actively involving them in the planning, development, delivery, monitoring and review of services;	Opportunities for feedback in different methods e.g. oral, written, internet, face to face				

Evaluation

Wrisc is committed to completing ongoing data collection to establish the number of clients with a disability and the types of disabilities and to use this data to inform future work practices.

Action	Target	Responsibility	Timeline	Completed
Data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of clients with a disability – women children • Type of disability 	Develop ongoing data collection method			

Contact details

Elizabeth Jewson

Executive Officer

WRISC Family Violence Support

libbyj@wrisc.org.au

0353 333 666