

20 August 2020

Supported Decision Making Project

The aim of this project was to produce a policy and practice framework to implement supported decision making principles for Lifetime Support Authority (LSA) clients with an acquired brain injury.

The key personnel involved were:

- Anne Gale, Public Advocate (OPA)
- Lyndi Gepp, Project Manager (OPA)
- Clarissa Bourne, (LSA)
- Dr David Caudrey. (OPA)
- Margaret Brown (Adjunct Professor – UNISA)
- Kerry Cross, (Representative Lived Experience)
- Sally Fox, (Representative Lived experience)
- Kylie Smith (LSA)
- Joe Young, (DHS)

The key deliverables included:

- Best practice literature review of Supported Decision Making
- Supported Decision Making practice exercise and evaluation
- Supported Decision Making policy and practice framework

To achieve the key deliverables, the research examined the use of supported decision making practices for Lifetime Support Authority participants to enable them to exercise their independence, choice and control through:

- Training in supported decision making principles
- Adopting clear roles for decision makers, facilitators, supporters and monitors
- Recording decisions as either self-determined, collaborative or substitute.

A pilot group of participants were involved in the project where the above roles were implemented; training was provided; decisions were recorded and the process of supported decision making was evaluated.

Key findings:

- The training for LSA staff led to increased knowledge and skills in implementing supported decision making in participant planning processes – MyPlan.
- The Lifetime Support Authority has a strong person centred focus and staff exercised Supported Decision Making during planning sessions with participants.
- The decision making categories are a tool for capturing the types of decisions made, but should be accompanied with an explanation that recognises the extensive work undertaken by the Service Planner as part of the MyPlan.
- The role of the supporter assisted participants to set their own goals and make their own decisions. Despite a number of participants choosing not have not a supporter, the decisions made by these participants were all self-determined or collaborative and therefore considered to fall within supported decision making parameters.
- The monitor provides the extremely important functions of quality checks and safeguarding
- The findings indicate that the Lifetime Support Authority practices supported decision making within the participant planning processes. However, as this is an emerging paradigm in Australia and internationally, ongoing training and adoption of the framework to guide staff in supported decision making will see the LSA continue to be a leader in this field.

