



Things to think about when supporting people with a disability through the Redress process

The term Disability is used to refer to the experience of a broad and diverse range of individuals. The term may carry different meanings and connotations dependent on the context. Disability can include:

- Physical
- Intellectual & cognitive
- Learning
- Psycho-social
- Neurological
- Sensory
- Appearance diversity
- & for many individuals, chronic health conditions

Barriers

People with disability often face additional barriers to engaging with services, and may have complex needs or requirements, relating to:

- housing
- transport
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- financial challenges
- safety
- privacy
- attitudinal barriers
- physical and mental health care
- access to supported decision making

In some instances, it will be necessary to address other, more urgent concerns before applying for the Redress scheme.

Be aware that friends, families, carers and external stakeholders, may have different experiences and interests to individual with a disability. They will often have authority and power over aspects of the client's life and can act as gatekeepers, filtering information in both directions.

Communication

People with a disability may utilise a variety of communication methods, dependent on their experience and on what they find most comfortable. These could include:

- Braille or large print documents
- Sign language or Auslan
- Text to Voice audio equipment
- Specialised phone and computer apps
- Image cards and books
- Translator services
- Internal or external hearing devices

When supporting a person with a disability, ask whether they have any preferred communication styles or aids, and wherever possible ensure these are provided.

Support needs and equipment

People with a disability may have specific support and access requirements, to ensure they are able to safely engage with a service. These will vary greatly dependent on the experience of the individual; some requirements may include:

- **Accessible buildings and work-space**
Wide doorways, ramp entry for multilevel access, lifts, accessible toilets, adequately sized meeting rooms/areas, non-slip surfaces, adequate lighting, braille signage, sound-proof or sound reduced meeting spaces, room for and/or access to interpreters, assistance animals, and disability equipment.
- **Support person or Carer**
Capacity for the inclusion of a support person or carer to be present at the client's request.
- **Communication**
Adjustment of tone, pitch, speed and loudness of voice. Use of easy-to-understand language, avoiding jargon, names and acronyms. Explain procedures, supports and concepts in clear detail and confirm the client understands. (Often when you work within large projects, systems and Government structures, it is easy to assume others understand these systems as well as you do).
- **Client response**
The Redress process can raise many uncomfortable negative emotions for applicants. Survivors react differently to these emotions, sometimes with unpredictable or heightened expression. Provide calm, measured supportive responses. Do not suggest the person should react differently, but allow the appropriate space and time for these emotions to be explored safely.

- **Assistive technology**

Large screens, translation/interpreter services, audio/ hearing devices.

- **Transportation**

Appropriate parking provisions within a reasonable distance from the service.
Arrangements for accessible appropriate transportation to and from your service.
e.g., Community transport, Pre-booked taxi service, taxi voucher.

Have the conversation

In the early stages of working with a client in accessing the Redress scheme, conduct a discussion around any methods, adjustments or requirements, which will need to be implemented in order to provide a safe, accessible environment.

In some instances, clients may have adapted to alternatives in the past where their preferred choice is unavailable and can share this with you. However, where possible attempt to meet the preferred requirement first.

If your organisation does not have access to or the capacity to provide a safe or adequate space, communication aids or support requirements, contact PWDA or other relevant Disability service to explore alternative options.

Staff Pre-Conceptions

It is important not to assume that a person with a disability will require, or want, any adjustments made. Many people with a disability may not need adjustments, where others may have adapted or developed systems, to meet their own needs. Staff should be led by the client, allowing the individual to express their own needs and respect that decision, regardless of what the staff member or organisation may think.

