



Making Rights Real

**Good Life
Vision for
People with
Psychosocial
Disability**

Our Collective 'North Star'

A Good Life Vision for People with Psychosocial Disability

This vision is a co-created aspiration, reflecting the essence of a truly fulfilling and equitable life as shared by co-designers in the 'Making Rights Real' hub. It serves as our guiding 'North Star' to assess current systems and inspire future change.

Overall Vision: A Life of Dignity, Autonomy, and Belonging

We envision a good life for people with psychosocial disability as one where every person is empowered to live with dignity, exercise full autonomy over their choices, and experience genuine belonging and value in all aspects of their lives. It is a life where human rights are not just words on paper, but a lived reality.

1. In Mental Health Services, a Good Life Means:

- **Genuine Partnership & Respectful Care:** Services are led by lived experience, where professionals (psychologists, psychiatrists, peer workers, allied health) listen deeply, treat people as experts in their own lives, and respect individual choices, including concerns about medication. They build trust through authentic connection, non-judgment, and a willingness to learn from and repair with individuals.
- **Holistic & Responsive Support:** Services offer diverse, flexible, and trauma-aware support that go beyond medication, focusing on overall wellbeing, prevention, and personal goals. They are accessible (e.g., online options, warm non-clinical spaces), welcoming of all people and disabilities, and adapt to individual needs, including sensory and communication preferences. They proactively consider the expressed and unexpressed needs of their community.
- **Safe & Healing Environments:** Spaces are warm, colourful, and feel like home, fostering a sense of safety where individuals can express their full spectrum of experiences and emotions without fear of judgment, scrutiny, or being 'over-managed'. They are accepting of all parts of a person.

2. In Policies, a Good Life Means:

- **Unconditional Legal Capacity & Empowered Choice:** Policies are built on the fundamental assumption that every person has the right to make their own decisions, with support if needed, rather than decisions being made for them. Funding (like NDIS) and laws are flexible, truly person-centred, and empower individuals with genuine control over their lives, including how they use their funds, where they live, and what they pursue.

- **Foundational Security & Unhindered Opportunity:** Policies ensure a robust financial safety net (like the Disability Support Pension) that provides independence, comfort, and flexibility to pursue work, education, and stable, chosen housing without unnecessary barriers or penalties. Laws protect against discrimination (such as assistance animals) and ensure access to essential supports.
- **Proactive & Inclusive Frameworks:** Rules are designed to prevent crises and promote wellbeing. Government and mental health organisations actively engage with consumers in policy development, ensuring frameworks are tailored to individual needs and promote full participation in society, rather than being created without their input. This includes supporting the development of integrated consumer groups (nationwide rather than state/territory restricted) and embedding cultural sensitivity and ongoing consultation with Elders in policy design.

3. In Community Life, a Good Life Means:

- **Authentic Belonging & Shared Identity:** Communities are rich with diverse, peer-led, and identity-affirming spaces (e.g., "third spaces," WDV hubs, agriculture groups, LGBTQIA+SB groups) where people with psychosocial disability feel genuinely seen, understood, and connected with others who share similar experiences, interests, and identities.
- **Acceptance & Respectful Interaction:** Environments are inherently welcoming, non-judgmental, and adapt to diverse sensory and communication needs (e.g., low noise, active listening, sunflower lanyard recognition). People are routinely greeted, treated with respect for their pronouns and identities, and valued for their whole selves and contributions, beyond any diagnosis or assumptions.
- **Active Inclusion & Mutual Support:** Community interactions are built on understanding, compassion, and a willingness to hold space for all experiences. Public spaces are accessible (e.g., sensory gardens with amenities), vibrant with public artwork that represents diverse communities, and designed to foster connection, allowing everyone to participate fully and contribute their unique strengths. Neighbours routinely greet and support each other.

This is a collective vision where services truly partner with people with psychosocial disability, policies empower genuine choice and security, and communities embrace radical acceptance and active inclusion.

Our Vision and Human Rights

This vision is more than a list of hopes and dreams; it is a framework for fundamental human rights. Our work is grounded in and aligned with the principles of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)**. This international treaty, which Australia has ratified, serves to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights for people with disabilities. Our collective vision gives practical, lived meaning to these important rights.

A Quick Glossary of Key Terms

To ensure we're all speaking the same language, here are some key terms we use in this document:

- **Psychosocial Disability:** A term that refers to challenges a person faces when their mental health challenges interact with an unsupportive environment. It's not about the person but about the barriers they face - such as discrimination, a lack of accommodations, or unfair treatment. This framework shifts the focus from "fixing" the person to removing the societal barriers that prevent them from truly realising a good life.
- **Acceptance:** This means creating environments that are inherently welcoming and non-judgmental, where a person is valued and respected for who they are, without having to change to fit in.
- **Active Inclusion:** This is the intentional practice of removing barriers—both physical and social—so that people with psychosocial disability can fully and actively participate in all aspects of community life.
- **Trauma-aware support:** Services that recognise the widespread impact of trauma on people's lives. It means providing care that is sensitive to a person's past experiences and avoids re-traumatising them.
- **Warm non-clinical spaces:** Creating environments that are welcoming and comfortable, in contrast to a typical sterile, hospital-like setting.
- **Integrated consumer groups:** This term refers to groups or organisations that are run by and for the people who use mental health services. These groups can be a powerful way for people to advocate for their needs and provide peer support.
- **Sunflower Lanyard:** A specific visual cue. A simple way for people with hidden disabilities to discreetly signal that they may need extra support, patience, or time.
- **Third spaces:** A place that is not home or work, where people can relax and socialise, such as a community centre, a library, or a cafe.
- **Holistic support:** A type of care that considers the whole person, not just their symptoms. It includes physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.
- **Legal capacity:** The legal right to make your own decisions and enter into contracts, which is a fundamental human right listed in the UN CRPD.

Your Call to Action

This vision belongs to all of us. You can help make it a reality.

Organisations and Service Providers

- **Listen & Co-design:** Embed the principle of genuine partnership by ensuring that people with lived experience of mental health challenges are at the table for every decision, from policy development to service delivery.
- **Create Accessible Spaces:** Proactively adapt your physical and online environments to be welcoming to people with diverse sensory, communication, and accessibility needs.
- **Advocate for Foundational Security:** Use your influence to advocate for policies that provide a robust financial safety net and remove barriers to work, education, and stable housing.

Community Members

- **Embrace Radical Acceptance:** Challenge your own assumptions and biases. Practice active listening and learn to value people for who they are, not for what they can do or how they fit in.
- **Build Welcoming Spaces:** Participate in creating "third spaces" and community groups that are built on shared interests and identities, cultivating a sense of belonging for everyone.
- **Practice Mutual Support:** Greet your neighbours, check in on people and be willing to offer a helping hand without judgment or expectation.

Family and Friends

- **Respect Autonomy:** Trust the person you care about to make their own decisions. Offer support when asked, but respect their right to navigate their own life, including their concerns about medication and care plans.
- **Offer Unconditional Support:** Be a source of stability, comfort and safety. This means being a non-judgmental listener and loving unconditionally, regardless of your loved one's mental health challenge or current state.
- **Learn and Grow:** Educate yourself on topics like trauma-aware support, legal capacity and psychosocial disability to better understand and advocate with your loved one, rather than for them.

Carers

- **Support Dignity and Choice:** Your role is to support people with lived experience of mental health challenge's right to self-determination. This means helping mental health consumers access the information and resources they need to make their own decisions, and advocating alongside them to ensure their choices are respected.
- **Prioritise Wellbeing:** Support people with lived experience of mental health challenges in pursuing their own version of recovery and a good life, which may be different from a traditional clinical model.

The Making Rights Real Project

This document is a foundational piece of the Making Rights Real project. This initiative is all about transforming the aspirations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) into tangible, everyday realities for people with psychosocial disability in Australia. Our goal is to work collectively to ensure that policies, services, and communities not only comply with these rights but actively embody them, creating a society where everyone can live a good life.

This is a living document, shaped by the voices and experiences of many. If you want to get involved, learn more or share your feedback, we would love to hear from you.

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