

Your role in upholding the rights of women with disabilities (WWD)

This fact sheet is for healthcare staff. Healthcare staff include administrative and management staff, clinical and allied health professionals.

Ensuring the human rights of WWD is everyone's responsibility

It is your responsibility as healthcare staff to:

- Treat WWD with respect and dignity.
- Defend and promote the rights of WWD.
- Provide accessible and inclusive healthcare services.

How you can uphold the rights of WWD

Work together

Healthcare staff must remember that WWD are the experts in their own bodies and health.

To achieve the best healthcare outcomes for WWD, healthcare staff should:

- Collaborate with WWD (including both clients and colleagues).
- Regularly check that services and supports are effective for WWD.
- Have an open mind about the health needs, strategies, and goals of WWD.
- Respect the health outcomes each WWD is seeking.
- Avoid coercive practices by knowing what healthcare outcomes each WWD is seeking.

Healthcare staff should work from a trauma-informed model by:

- Supporting WWD to have continuity of care.
- Avoiding the need for WWD to repeat trauma related details or stories.
- Preparing before you interact with WWD.

Listen

It's important to respect and listen to WWD to understand how different factors influence their health and healthcare needs.

You should make sure to provide a safe place and enough time for WWD to discuss their healthcare needs with you.

To create a safe environment you can:

- Fully support and accept each WWD, including their healthcare goals, disability, gender, and identity.
- Avoid assumptions about disability and gender.
- Ask questions that are broad and open ended.
- Use body language to show that you are engaged in the conversation.



It is important to ask about disability, even if you don't know how to immediately offer support to WWD. Asking about disability can help WWD share their experiences and information about how you can further support them.

Focus on the individual

It is important to focus on the unique healthcare needs and goals each WWD has.

Not all healthcare needs and goals are related to an individual's disability. Healthcare staff must respect WWD by exploring all healthcare concerns and goals, irrespective of the relationship to an individual's disability.

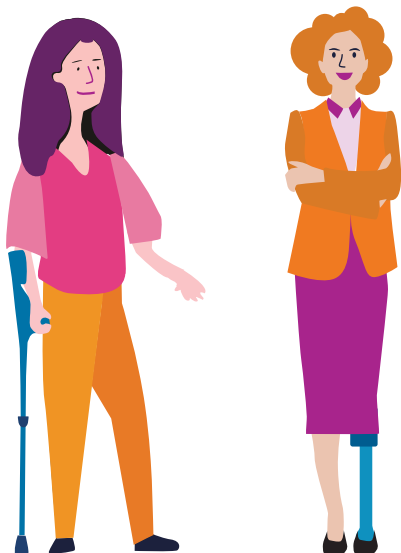
It is not always relevant for WWD to disclose and discuss their disability. You should respect their choices in situations where this may happen.

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I think the biggest one for me is that they [women with disabilities] are entitled to the same level of healthcare that everybody else has, and that can be a bit more complicated and it often requires more appointments and more doctors and specialists and more time but you should be able to receive the same support.

– Rebecca

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More information

For information about the rights for women with disabilities in healthcare please go to:

<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/consumers/working-your-healthcare-provider/australian-charter-healthcare-rights/supportive-resources-second-edition-australian-charter-healthcare-rights>

You can learn more at: www.wdv.org.au



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This resource was prepared by Women with Disabilities Victoria.

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Wurundjeri Country

Postal: PO Box 18314, Collins St East. VIC 8003

Phone: 03 9286 7800

Email: wdv@wdv.org.au