Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse

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About the project

DHHS funded Scope’s Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre to:

• Develop appropriate communication tools and resources for people with cognitive and communication disabilities, to assist them to identify and report abuse.

• Deliver training for key disability staff on how to effectively communicate and support individuals with communication difficulties, who are at risk or have been abused.
Research components

1. An evaluation of the usefulness of the project’s resources by
   a) adults with communication support needs who have experienced abuse
   b) unpaid supporters of adult with communication support needs who have experienced abuse

2. Feasibility of developing a peer support network for adults with communication support needs who have experienced abuse

3. An evaluation of the use of the tools and resources by front line staff after training.

Gained ethics approval
Method

• Sought advice from an advisory group.
• Reviewed literature and spoke with key colleagues.
• Developed tools and training package.
• Collected data
  – at training
  – telephone interviews 3 months post-training.
People with communication support needs are "highly victimized because perpetrators believe they will not be able to successfully tell anyone about the crime" (p.10, Wilczynski et al., 2015)

“It’s our story against theirs”
We identified tools to protect personal safety

- Support people to have control and make choices.
- Focus on positive support for people with a disability at individual level.
- Assist in providing a safe and supportive environment that does not inhibit disclosure. *(Burke, Bedard, Ludwig, 1998)*
- Build awareness of the need for a range of relationships *(Robinson & Chenoweth, 2011)*
Communication toolkit

• Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Poster
• Communication boards
• Communication book
• Key Word Sign Poster
• Record sheet
• Factsheets
• Easy English document
People and relationships
Communication
Watch, listen and respond
Human rights and support
Learn
Communication board sets

Speak up and be Safe from Abuse Communication board – general vocabulary

Instructions: This communication board contains a picture board, alphabet board and female and male body boards. Point to the boards on the left to indicate which person can see them by it. The person will point to pictures or letters if the person cannot point, ask the person to turn the page or to turn the page over and write it down. To find out the message, there is a place to draw/write on the alphabet boards if you need more words, use the handle and the safe way to keep the communication page.
Things Communication boards
Actions Communication boards

Speak up and be Safe from Abuse Communication board Actions - board 1 of 3

Instructions: This communication board set has a picture board, alphabet board, female and male body boards. Place the boards on a flat surface or hold where the person can see lip point to it. The person will point to pictures or letters. If the person cannot point - ask row by row, and then column by column, to find out the message. There is a place to draw/write on the alphabet boards. If you need more words, use the Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication Book.

- Abuse about sexuality
- Financial abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Abuse about your religion

- Drink
- Drugged
- Drug
- Inebriated
- Whipped
- Beaten
- Beaten
- Pinched skin
- Choke
- Beat
- Beat
- Best/punch
- Stabbed
- Stab
- Anal rape
- Sexual

- It's not on this board
- Get dressed
- Get undressed
- Put on
- Take off

- Intimate
- Break things
- Locked away
- Shower
- Pushed against

- Someone heard
- Someone saw
- Being told to
- Seeing
- Cyber bullying

- Swear
- Lock
- Locking
- Playing sport
- Reviewing plan
- Watching TV

Speak up and be Safe from Abuse Communication board Actions - board 2 of 3

Instructions: This communication board set has a picture board, alphabet board, female and male body boards. Place the boards on a flat surface or hold where the person can see lip point to it. The person will point to pictures or letters. If the person cannot point - ask row by row, and then column by column, to find out the message. There is a place to draw/write on the alphabet boards. If you need more words, use the Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication Book.

- Customise
- Cookie
- Cook
- Drink
- Drink

- Attack
- Aggression
- Accidental
- On purpose
- Stab

- Given the wrong medication
- Not given medication
- Given too much medication
- Not given food
- Not given drink

- Fall over
- Could not use the toilet
- Steepy
- Stag

- I'll spell it - show me the alphabet board
- It's not on this board
- Turn over
- No
- Yes

Speak up and be Safe from Abuse Communication board Actions - board 3 of 3

Instructions: This communication board set has a picture board, alphabet board, female and male body boards. Place the boards on a flat surface or hold where the person can see lip point to it. The person will point to pictures or letters. If the person cannot point - ask row by row, and then column by column, to find out the message. There is a place to draw/write on the alphabet boards. If you need more words, use the Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication Book.

- VICTORIA
- State Government
- SCOPE
Places Communication boards

Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication boards - board 1 of 2

Instructions - This communication board set has a picture board, alphabet board, female and male body boards. Place the boards on a flat surface or hold where the person can see the picture. If the person cannot point - ask row by row, and then column by column, to find out the message. There is a place to draw/write on the alphabet boards. If you need more words, use the Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication Book.

Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication boards - board 2 of 2

Instructions - This communication board set has a picture board, alphabet board, female and male body boards. Place the boards on a flat surface or hold where the person can see the picture. If the person cannot point - ask row by row, and then column by column, to find out the message. There is a place to draw/write on the alphabet boards. If you need more words, use the Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse Communication Book.

Communication book
Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse

Record sheet

Use this record sheet to record information about your conversation.
Ask the person for permission to use it.
Explain that using it will help you remember the person’s story.

Explain that if a report is made to the police or an investigation occurs,
the record sheet may need to be provided to police or investigators.

Place we talked about your safety

Date and time we talked about your safety

Your name (person with a disability)
Factsheets

• You can get support
• Communication supports available
• More information
More information and Easy English resources

Toolkits and training

• 170 toolkits

• 15 training sessions across Victoria:
  – 12 face to face
  – 3 webinars
“any interaction with a person who relies on a communication board requires a certain amount of training and familiarity with the process, if it is to be used optimally” (p.127)

Bornman, Bryen, Kershaw, Ledwaba (2011)
Workshop feedback

Evaluations completed at end of workshop by 196/298 (66%) participants.
On a 5 point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree)

• 180 (92%) agreed content relevant
• 196 (88%) would recommend training to others
• Negative comments – webinars
Qualitative comments

• “It was all useful”
• “Getting to experience the communication books first hand in the mock situations/case studies”.
• “The group discussions. Hearing other people’s perspectives on things that are witnessed in the workplace on a day-to-day basis was important. Also having a person with communication difficulties talk to us was very helpful”.

[Logo: Victoria State Government]
Interviews 3 months post-training

12/26 participants completed telephone interviews

- DSW (5); House Supervisors (4); DSO (2); Ops manager (1)
- Interviews transcribed and entered into Nvivo
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
A voice for clients and safety net for staff

• “I know all of the staff were very excited. We’ve never seen anything like that before … there’s pictures in there we’ve never seen before… of a sexually explicit nature,” DSO2

• “I feel like I have a better safety net and will not put words into their mouths” –DSW10
Using the tools

• “We were explaining it to the clients… going through every single picture… ‘how would you feel about that?’ ‘Is it okay or not?’ One of the pictures was for stealing, and one of them was for spitting, and they’re both incidents … happening at work” –DSO2,

• “We’re starting to go, … what’s going on with this situation … we are actually considering whether we would next time be bringing it out with them … just to see if anything comes up” –DSO5
Safeguarding practices and roadblocks

• Knowing the client
  – we use a lot of casual staff, and they don’t know what that person is regularly like, or if behaviour is something different, so there’s lots of a challenges” –HS7

• Believing the client
  “Our clients are labelled as liars” OM1

• Investigating signs
  – “She was abused over a period of two years.. and it was a staff member actually punching her” OM1
Supporting successful safeguarding

• Staff training
  – “I don’t believe it should be a toolkit that sits at the office that one person is trained in… it can be easily misinterpreted…I believe that for anyone to implement it, they should be trained to know how to implement it, to safeguard the residents and themselves” –HS6

• Staff sharing
  – “I really wish we had have been able to have that on a like a USB, so when I went back to show my house, I could have plugged it in somewhere and shown them. I just felt a lot of a pressure on me, because I feel like… I couldn’t do it justice of how it was delivered to me” –DSO2
Discussion

• The aids are recognised as useful for symbolic communicators
  
  Toolkit caters for a subset of people with communication support needs and raises awareness of abuse and neglect
  
  Need for specific vocabulary
  
  People with communication support needs have limited access to the aids

• Training increased awareness of the topic but highlighted knowledge /skill /attitude barriers
Limitations

• Tip of the iceberg
• Difficulty accessing front line staff
• Difficulty accessing people with communication difficulties (and ID)
• Group home culture and practices
Future directions

• Train managers/coordinators
• Increase ways training content could be shared.
• Understand more fully why frontline staff do not use communication aids
• Support more individuals to have own communication aids and support staff to communicate with these.
Acknowledgements

• People with communication support needs
• Phoenix Park Neighbourhood House (Stonnington Council)
• Advisory Group (Family Planning Victoria, Victoria Police, VEOHRC, SECASA, Scope, Carmen DeBono, DHHS, Women with Disabilities Victoria)
References

Contact details

Scope’s Communication & Inclusion Resource Centre

Phone (03) 9843 2000

Email circ@scopeaust.org.au

Website www.scopeaust.org.au

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/scopeaust

Twitter https://twitter.com/scopeaust

Reporting

In an emergency phone 000.

For staff, talk to:
- your manager.
- Victoria Police to report a crime. A crime means theft, physical or sexual assault.

For a person with a disability, talk to:
- someone you trust.
- Victoria Police to report a crime. A crime means theft, physical or sexual assault.

Other services to help you
To call any of the services using the National Relay Service (NRS):
Phone 1800 555 677

- National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline.
- Telephone service for reporting cases of neglect and abuse of a disability.
Phone 1800 880 052 (free call from land lines)
Email hotline@nreact.org.au
Post PO Box G607, Sydney NSW 1230
Fax 02 831 6917

- Sexual Assault Crisis Line.
A state-wide, confidential, telephone crisis counselling service for victims/survivors of both past and recent sexual assault.
SACL operates between 5pm weeknights through to 9am the throughout weekends and public holidays.
Phone 1800 806 292 (free call from land lines)

For NRS users:
TTY users 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 806 292 (free call)
Speak & Listen users 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 806 292
Internet relay users can connect to NRS on www.relayservice.com.au then ask for 1800 806 292

- Safe steps.
Ofers women, their children (family and friends) living with family violence, free access to professional support through services to enable them to become - and stay - free from violence.
Phone 9928 9000
Fax 9920 9001
Email action@1ststeps.org.au
Website www.1ststeps.org.au

- Disability and Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative
This ONS service assists women and children with a disability, who require disability support, to access family violence crisis response services (to stay safe at home or to go to alternative accommodation).
Phone 1300 483 6304 or 0437 741 920
Email disability@dfvs.vic.gov.au
Website www.dfvs.vic.gov.au/facilitation/services/providers/children-youth-and-families/fami-

- CASA
Provides crisis response and services for people who are victims/survivors of sexual assault.
Phone 1800 806 292
Email info@casa.org.au
Website www.casa.org.au
For NRS users:
TTY users 1300 555 677 then ask for 0435 3610
Speak & Listen users 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 806 292
Internet relay users can connect to NRS on www.relayservice.com.au then ask for 1800 806 292

- Victoria’s Disability Rights Commissioner.
- Communications Rights Australia
Communication Rights Australia is a human rights advocacy and information organisation for people with little or no speech.
Phone 9555 8500 or 9555 8504
Email info@crasa.com.au
Website www.communicationsrights.org.au

- Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)
VEOHRC provides a telephone Enquiry Line, a dispute resolution service, information, education, training and consultancy services.
Phone 1300 891 848
Website www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

- Villawood Disability Rights Legal Service
Villawood is a Community Legal Service operating throughout the state of Victoria on disability related legal and justice issues for people who have a disability.
Phone 1800 104 111 (free call from land lines) or 5227 3338
TTY users 133 677 then ask for 5227 3338
Email legal@villawood.org.au
Website www.villawood.org.au

- VALID
The Victorian League for individuals with a Disability is an advocacy group for adults with intellectual disabilities and their families.
Phone 9416 4003 or 1800 655 570 (free call from land lines)
Fax 9416 0850
Email office@valid.org.au
Website www.valid.org.au

- 1800RESPECT
National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service.
A national counselling helpline for people experiencing sexual assault or domestic and family violence.
Phone 1800 737 737
Online counselling www.1800respect.org.au (click on - connect to a counsellor)

For more information, please contact Scopes Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre.
03 9643 2000
scope.com.au

- Disability Services Commissioner.
We work with people with a disability and disability services to resolve complaints.
Phone 1800 677 342 (free call from land lines)
Email complaints@dserv.vic.gov.au

For more information, please contact Scopes Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre.
03 9643 2000
scope.com.au

disability-support-services
Communication book

Speak Up and be Safe from Abuse
Interviews

• Semi-structured telephone interviews of approximately 15-20 minutes
  – Can you comment on the training and the tools?
  – Have you used any of the Speak up and Be Safe resources
  – What worked/didn’t work?