



# Disability Information & Support Listing for Training Providers





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ACE Disability Network



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## Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

An Acquired Brain Injury is defined by the Department of Human Services as:

“An injury to the brain which results in deterioration of cognitive, physical, emotional or independent functions. It can occur as a result of trauma, hypoxia, infection, substance abuse, degenerative neurological disease or stroke. These impairments to cognitive abilities, sensory or physical functioning can be either temporary or permanent and cause partial or total disability or psycho social maladjustment”

(Source: Department of Human Services, Acquired Brain Injury Strategic Plan, 2001).

### Information

#### Headway

Headway Victoria works alongside people living with acquired brain injury to:

- promote and defend their right to make choices about their lives;
- ensure they have ready access to the information, support and resources they require;
- ensure that the life changing experience of ABI informs service development, government policy and decision-making;
- fight for the overall provision of equal opportunities; and
- raise community awareness.

Contact:

*Headway*

*86–88 Herbert Street, Northcote, 3070, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9482 2955*

*Free call: 1800 817 964*

## Autism

A lifelong developmental disability.

Characteristics of the disorder include obsessive behaviour, sensory processing difficulties, poor social skills and impaired communication.

People with autism may not appear to have a physical disability, so others may misinterpret their behaviour and social approaches.

Successful inclusion of people with autism requires greater community understanding and awareness of individual needs.

## Information

### Autism Victoria

Autism Victoria is a member-based not for profit organization. We are the peak body for Autism Spectrum Disorders in the State of Victoria. Our aim is to improve the quality of life for people affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders, their family and carers. We also provide a range of services to individuals and agencies with an interest in Autism Spectrum Disorders, including Asperger Syndrome and PDD-NOS.

Contact:

*Autism Victoria*

*35 High Street, Glen Iris, 3146, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9885 0533*

*E-mail: [admin@autismvictoria.org.au](mailto:admin@autismvictoria.org.au)*

*Web: [www.autismvictoria.org.au](http://www.autismvictoria.org.au)*

## Blind / Vision Impairment

*Low vision* refers to vision loss that is severe enough to impede performance of vocational, recreational and/or social tasks, but still allows some visual discrimination. Low vision cannot be corrected to normal vision by regular eyeglasses.

*Legally blind* is a term used to define the conditions for which a person is eligible for benefits and services provided for vision impaired people.

The inability to read is probably the most notable of the everyday functions which are significantly affected by severe vision loss. Inability to read can substantially affect competence in absorbing complex or detailed information and reduce or complicate the process of acquisition of some skills, since a high percentage of learning involves the use of sight.

Restrictions on mobility can also be significant and this can affect education, leisure, employment and social and personal opportunities. Safety is an issue in negotiating the built environment and also in using the public transport system.

Severe vision loss can also reduce the effectiveness of communication as many visual cues in the communication process are missed.

The following are some tips/techniques to assist a person with a vision impairment in the learning environment:

- A person with vision impairment cannot always place you by "hello". Identify yourself with both your name and context. Introduce any others so that the person is aware of who else is present. Indicate verbally when you are entering or leaving their presence.
- Unless the person also has a hearing impairment, there is no need to shout.



Speak clearly in a normal voice—not loudly, slowly or with exaggeration. Face students directly and where glare is minimised.

- Verbalise your thoughts and feelings, as students may not be able to see non-verbal cues.
- Ensure reading lists are up-to-date and that they are provided in advance to allow for taping and/or brailing of texts.
- Work with the student and service providers to ensure that information is received in appropriate formats, e.g. enlarged copies of course material, brailled information or audio tapes, especially for all recurrent or important information. A wide range of information is available from RVIB and Vision Australia.
- Reserve front row seats for students with low vision. Explain lay out of room and any changes that may occur.
- Doors should be kept open or closed, not partly open; corridors should be clear of obstacles. If moving objects from their usual place advise the student.
- Ensure that students are advised of any changes to class locations and/or times in an appropriate way, do not rely alone on messages on notice boards.

## **Information**

### **Vision Australia (formerly RVIB)**

Vision Australia provides services, resources and support to Victorians who are blind or vision impaired so that they may lead full and independent lives.

Contact:

*Vision Australia*

*557 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, 3004, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9522 5222 or 1300 55 9987*

*Email [rvib@rvib.org.au](mailto:rvib@rvib.org.au)*

### **Blind Citizens Australia**

The united voice of blind and vision-impaired Australians. Our mission is to achieve equity and equality by our empowerment, by promoting positive community attitudes, and by striving for high quality and accessible services which meet our needs.

Contact:

*13 Barrett Street, Kensington*

*Ph: (03) 9372 6400*

*TTY: (03) 9376*

## Cerebral Palsy

Refers to a range of disabilities relating to movement and posture. Cerebral Palsy may affect a person's mobility, their ability to talk or their outward appearance.

However, like most people, someone with Cerebral Palsy also has abilities and goals in life that are much the same as everybody else's.

Where speech is affected, the person with a disability will understand what is said to them, but may find it difficult to respond. Practical aids—such as communication boards and electronic devices, provide written or spoken words.

### Information

#### AQA Victoria

AQA Victoria Ltd is an organisation that was established for people with severe physical disabilities, specifically spinal cord injury. AQA Victoria Ltd was formerly the Victorian division of the Australian Quadriplegic Association.

Contact:

*440 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, 3078, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9489 0777*

*Toll free: 1800 999 128*

*Email: [admin@aqavic.org.au](mailto:admin@aqavic.org.au)*

#### SCOPE

Scope is a not-for-profit organisation providing disability services throughout Melbourne and Victoria to over 3,500 children and adults with physical and multiple disabilities. Thousands more people intermittently access our information, support and assessment services.

Scope is committed to overcoming the personal, structural and attitudinal barriers that prevent those with disability from participating in community life and works to make our community more inclusive, more accessible and more welcoming.

Contact:

*830 Whitehouse Road, Box Hill, 3128, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9843 3000*

## Deaf / Hearing Impairment

Because deafness is invisible, most of us don't realise just how many people are affected by it—nor do we realise how being profoundly deaf or having a severe hearing loss impacts on a person's life.

Hearing impairment is a varied and complex disability. Each hearing impaired individual experiences their hearing disability in a unique and individual way. The invisible nature of hearing impairment means that it is often not recognised and its impact on a person's ability to communicate has considerable implications for both their ability to function normally and in the way that they feel about themselves. Isolation and loneliness are aspects of hearing impairment not readily recognised by others and hearing impairment is often regarded as a less severe or secondary form of disability. This lack of understanding tends to exacerbate feelings of isolation and frustration.

The following are some tips/techniques to assist a person with a hearing impairment in the learning environment:

- For people who rely on interpreters, lip reading or visual cues, it is important to maintain an unobstructed line of vision is necessary.
- Arrange seating in a circle where possible to assist students who lip-read.
- If an interpreter is used, the student's view should include the interpreter and the speaker. Ask for suggestions on how you can assist.
- Refer back to the student not the interpreter when the student asks a question through an interpreter.
- Get the student's attention before you speak so that they can concentrate on your voice.
- Simplify language and speak clearly and in a natural tone, keep the pace reasonable—not too fast, remember signing is slower than speech—allow time for messages to be received and responded to before allowing conversation to move on. Sentence patterns are signed in a different structure to speech.
- Rephrase your sentence and don't repeat the same words if you are not being understood. You may not be expressing your point of view clearly. Ask if you should write down what you are trying to say.
- Keep your face in view of the student and avoid standing in front of the light source. Standing in front of light, e.g. windows, mirrors, etc., will lessen the student's ability to see your lips. Ensure that the interpreter and speaker are well lit when using visual aids in a darkened room. When using videos, be aware that most of the information is lost to people who cannot hear. Supply a written summary or a brief transcript, subtitles may also help.
- Face the person and, where possible, avoid turning or lowering your head, as this reduces the volume of sound that is received. Do not continue speaking if you have to turn away, resume once you face the students again.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Speak loudly, if necessary, but shouting distorts the sound and is irritating to the user of a hearing aid.
- When demonstrating equipment, etc., speak first then demonstrate.

## Information

### The Victorian Deaf Society (VicDeaf)

VicDeaf is a non-profit organisation and a primary source of reference, referral, advice and support for deaf adults in Victoria.

VicDeaf's focus is to ensure that deaf people have equitable access to the services they require and are able to obtain their rights and entitlements.

Contact:

*Level 4, 340 Albert Street, East Melbourne, 3002, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9473 1111*

*TTY: (03) 9473 1122*

*Email: [info@vicdeaf.com.au](mailto:info@vicdeaf.com.au)*

## Down Syndrome

Down Syndrome affects people of all ages, cultural and socio-economical backgrounds. It is one of the most common known causes of intellectual disability.

Many characteristics are attributed to Down Syndrome, but any one person will have only some of them. Each person is an individual, with a unique appearance, personality and set of abilities. The extent to which a person shows the physical characteristics of the syndrome is no indication of his or her intellectual capacity

## Information

### The Down Syndrome Association of Victoria Inc (DSAV)

DSAV is a non-profit self-help group established by interested parents in 1978. The DSAV is managed by a voluntary Committee of Management and employs four part time members of staff.

The Association aims to:

- stimulate the interest and awareness of the community as to the needs and abilities of people with Down Syndrome; and
- to share Information and resources with other service providers including students and educationalists, government bodies and the community.

Contact:

*Down Syndrome Association of Victoria Inc.*

*495 High Street, Northcote, 3070, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9486 2377*

*Web: [www.dsav.asn.au](http://www.dsav.asn.au)*

*Email: [dsav@netspace.net.au](mailto:dsav@netspace.net.au)*

## Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a condition in which a person has a tendency to have recurring seizures. Epilepsy is not the same for everyone. The cause, type and frequency of seizures will vary from person to person. The impact of the seizures will also depend on the lifestyle of each individual.

Many people mistakenly believe that everyone with epilepsy will have seizures triggered by flashing lights, computers or video games. In fact only 3–5 per cent of people with epilepsy have this response, which is called photosensitivity. This reaction can also be triggered by natural light sources, such as sunlight flickering through trees. There are simple strategies, which can be used to reduce the risk of seizure if exposed to a potential light trigger. Photosensitivity should not prevent people from carrying out most of their normal daily activities of work and leisure.

### Information

#### Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria

The Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria provides a comprehensive and responsive range of services and programs to meet the personal, interpersonal, socio-economic and cultural needs of people living with epilepsy. This will include the provision of vigorous public education, advocacy, employment programs, recreational support, individual and group counselling, support for medical and psycho-social research and accessible provision of comprehensive epilepsy information, in an organisation which values and respects the diverse skills and life experiences of its members and those who turn to it for support.

Contact:

*The Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria*  
818 Burke Rd, Camberwell, 3124, Victoria  
Ph: (03) 9805 911  
Australia-wide: 1300 852 853  
Email: [epilepsy@epilepsy.asn.au](mailto:epilepsy@epilepsy.asn.au)

## Intellectual Disability

An intellectual disability should not be confused with a psychiatric disability or mental illness, although a person with an intellectual disability may also have a psychiatric disability.

Examples of intellectual disability include:

- Down Syndrome
- Autism
- Developmental disability

The following are some tips and techniques to assist a person with an intellectual disability in the learning environment:

- Break down tasks or information into the smallest possible number of simple steps, as needed by the individual.
- Identify cues in each step that will help the person to progress to the next step. Include graphic cues and and/or non-abstract input for difficult areas.
- Explain any procedures, praise where appropriate and encourage trying again where there is an incorrect result.
- Communicate, demonstrate, practice and check each step of the information or task with the person until the whole is understood.
- Accept that the person may need to communicate the same information or skill again in the near future.
- Repeat the communication or practice process as often as is required with patience and respect.
- Develop simplified written information about courses and procedures.
- Ask questions where a “yes” or “no” or a simple answer can be given.
- Allow the person to do things for themselves and avoid the temptation to take over.

Intellectual disability affects some people more than others. People with a disability still experience and feel things like joy, anger, pride, hurt, jealousy and other human emotions. They want the same opportunity to have a range of life experiences, or may learn and develop more slowly than average, but can learn to adapt to new situations and enjoy life independently. Terms such as ‘mentally retarded’ or ‘mentally handicapped’ are misleading and negative and can cause community ignorance, which further isolates people.

## Speech Impairment

Some people with disabilities have problems both understanding speech and being able to talk. They may hear, but have trouble comprehending long sentences or complex information. Sometimes they can make themselves understood to people who know them well, but not to others who are less familiar. Many may miss out on the enjoyment of a good chat.

The following are some tips/techniques to assist a person with a speech impairment in the learning environment:

- Be patient and allow people the opportunity to speak for themselves, give people the time they need to express themselves without interrupting them.
- Speak to people in a natural voice using the same volume, pitch and tone as you would normally. Speak in a quiet environment if possible.
- Don’t assume that a person with speech impairment cannot hear you or comprehend what you are saying.

- People with a speech impairment know they are difficult to understand so don't be afraid to ask them to repeat themselves if necessary or to substitute a different word if necessary.
- Don't pretend to understand what was said if you don't.

## Physical Disability

Physical disabilities occur widely. It is important to realise that physical disability goes beyond having to use a wheelchair or wear a back brace. There are many conditions, such as multiple sclerosis and chronic fatigue syndrome, which are outwardly invisible but result in physical disability.

It is very difficult to generalise physical disabilities. Each person will have different causes, symptoms and management strategies. Some people with a physical disability may also have intellectual, vision or hearing disabilities.

For further information log onto:

[www.openroad.net.au/access/dakit/physical/physical.htm](http://www.openroad.net.au/access/dakit/physical/physical.htm)

The following are some tips/techniques to assist a person with a physical disability in the learning environment:

- If the person is in a wheelchair, position yourself in order to speak to the person in the most respectful way. Maintain communication at eye level.
- Speak to the person not their carer if they have one.
- Ensure that all mobility aides are within access to the person if they have transferred out of or away from them.
- Provide physical assistance only with the permission of the person; however, be aware of obstacles in their way.
- Ensure access and egress are accessible and that obstacle free passageways are available within the environment.

## Psychiatric Disability and Mental Illness

Mental Illness [otherwise known as psychiatric disability] is a general term that refers to a group of illnesses that affect the mind.

There are five major mental illnesses and these are: Depression, Eating Disorders, Anxiety Disorders, Schizophrenia and Bi-polar Disorder.

(Source: Understanding & Managing Mental Illness, Community Mental Health Alliance)

Psychiatric disabilities are significantly different from many other disabilities in that they can fluctuate and are a result of an intermittent and episodic process. As well, not all people who have a mental illness will develop a psychiatric disability. A Psychiatric disability is when a mental illness interferes with the individual's skills

and processes. It can reduce a skill base of an individual when an episode has happened. This skill base includes the damage to the individual's confidence, self-esteem and participation abilities.

Mental illnesses are separated into two main categories:

## **1. Psychotic Illnesses**

The most common forms of this illness are schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder. During a psychotic illness, the person can lose touch with reality or is unable to distinguish between what is real and what is fantasy. This is most common to delusional episodes in schizophrenia, and in bi-polar the individual experiences extreme highs and lows that rocks their world and influences their decision-making processes.

## **2. Non-Psychotic Illnesses**

This *group* of mental illnesses includes anxiety disorders and depressive illnesses.

Anxiety disorders include phobias: obsessive-compulsive disorder; post-traumatic stress disorder; agoraphobia panic disorder; and general anxiety disorder.

Depressive illness or clinical depression is different from the emotional ups and downs associated with everyday life. It is much more than unhappiness and is a mental illness in the clinical sense.

### **1. Personality Disorder**

Personality disorder is classified as a mental illness. The term refers to a pattern of behaviour that differs dramatically from the expectations of an individual's culture. This behaviour is often life-long and causes significant difficulties for the person in almost all aspects of their life.

Oppositional Defiance Disorder is a modern mental illness and younger people entering the mental health support system are being diagnosed with this.

### **2. Stress and Mental Illness**

Everybody has a certain level of stress with which they are able to cope. When the amount of stress exceeds the level an individual can cope with, adverse affects are likely to occur. Some people have a higher level of vulnerability to developing mental illness and that stress may play an important part in triggering the illness and in determining the course of the illness. This may trigger a one-off episode or a life long illness

The following are some tips/techniques to assist a person with a psychiatric disability in the learning environment:

- Be aware of the effects of medication. Some medication may cause side effects such as drowsiness and disorientation facial tics



- Allow time and make allowances for decreased concentration, fatigue and short-term memory loss.
- Some students study and participate at high levels, but are disrupted by their voices and may ask you to repeat information, so plan opportunities to review/ repeat.
- Everyone has good and bad days. Can you afford to have a mental health fun day within your delivery program? Learning in a different way, fun, food, something out of the norm and inclusive.
- Students experience frustration, as they may have once had the skills and knowledge you are teaching them, but their illness has disrupted, taken or altered their skill and knowledge base.

For further information log onto: [www.openroad.net.au/access/dakit/welcome.htm](http://www.openroad.net.au/access/dakit/welcome.htm)

## **Information**

### **Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria**

Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria provides accurate, current information that is both human and clinically useful. The Fellowship's approach helps family and people affected by mental illness to understand the issues and formulate plans

Contact:

*Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria*

*Fairfield Place, 276 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield, 3078, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 8486 4200*

*Email: [enquiries@mifellowship.org](mailto:enquiries@mifellowship.org)*

For more information contact:

Megan McQueenie

Mental Health Foundation of Aust (Vic)

*Ph: 03 9427 0407*

*Email: [mentalh@mira.net](mailto:mentalh@mira.net)*

Other key mental health contacts include:

### **Beyond Blue**

Contact:

*Web: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)*

### **SANE Vic**

Contact:

*Ph: 1800 187 263*

*Web: [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org) (online help group for people suffering from schizophrenia)*

## **Community Mental Health Alliance (CAMHA)**

Contact:

*Ph: 03 9739 4722*

*Web: [www.each.com.au](http://www.each.com.au)*

## **Lifeline**

Contact:

*Ph: 13 11 14*

## **Legislation**

### **Disability Services Act (1991)**

The Disability Services Act was developed in response to the first Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement in 1991, which transferred responsibility for the administration of accommodation and support services from the Commonwealth Government to the State and Territory Governments. The Act provides for the funding of disability services to people with intellectual, physical, psychiatric and sensory impairments. The Act binds Victoria to principles and objectives for service delivery that are consistent with those in the Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth).

The Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act (1986) provides for planning, development, management, provision and monitoring of services to people with intellectual disabilities.

The Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Regulations (1997) prescribe the regulations that give effect to the Intellectually Disabled Persons Act (1986).

### **Disability Discrimination Act (1992)**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) ensures uniform protection throughout Australia for people with disabilities against discrimination and harassment.

### **Disability Standards in Education**

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) Education Standards were introduced in 2005.

The Standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination.

For further information:

*Web: [www.dest.gov.au](http://www.dest.gov.au)*

## **DDA Action Plans**

An Action Plan is a way for an organisation to plan the elimination, as far as possible, of disability discrimination from the provision of its goods, services and facilities.

Developing and implementing an action plan is a voluntary approach to the Disability Discrimination Act. Compliance has benefits both for organisations and for people with disabilities. For people with disabilities, it indicates that there is recognition of barriers to participation and an attempt to remove them.

For more information:

*Web:* [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)

Mental Health Act Australia and Vic

International Standards of Human Rights

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Health Records Act

Privacy Act

Anti Discriminations Act

Equal Opportunities Act

Advocacy

Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities

## **Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)**

ADEC is a community-based organisation, which represents the rights and needs of people of non-English speaking background with a disability and their carers. ADEC provides advocacy, information, referral, education, training and consultancy.

Contact:

*13 Munro Street, Coburg, 3058, Victoria*

*Ph: (03) 9383 5566*

*Toll Free: 1800 626 078*

*Email: [info@adec.org.au](mailto:info@adec.org.au)*

## **Disability Employment Action Service (DEAC)**

A Melbourne-based, not-for-profit organisation founded in 1984 to represent people with a disability by providing advocacy and research skills, education and training services, as well as employment opportunities (through its Flinders Employment Service and Women's Employment Support Service). DEAC's range of services also includes disability awareness workshops as well as comprehensive information services—all geared to empowering those with a disability to help themselves.

Contact:

*Level 8, 55 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000*

*Ph: (03) 9650 2533*

*TTY (03) 9650 9229*

*Free Call: 1800 332 265*

*Email: [deac@deac.org.au](mailto:deac@deac.org.au)*

*Web: [www.deac.org.au](http://www.deac.org.au)*

## **Advocacy**

### **Victorian Advocacy League for People with a Disability (VALID)**

VALID is a disability advocacy organisation committed to the vision of an Australian nation in which people with a disability are empowered to exercise their rights, as human beings and as citizens, in accordance with the United Nations Declarations on Human Rights and on the Rights of Disabled Persons.

Information on VALID advocacy services, including the publication and analysis of public policy, discussion forum, events calendar and links to further resources are also available.

Contact:

*Web: [www.valid.org.au](http://www.valid.org.au)*

## References

Accent on Ability: A Resource Kit for Providers of Adult and Community Education for People with Disabilities.

Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

Disability Standards for Education (2005)

### Websites consulted

[www.autismvictoria.org.au](http://www.autismvictoria.org.au)

[www.dsav.asn.au](http://www.dsav.asn.au)

[www.openroad.net.au](http://www.openroad.net.au)

[www.dest.gov.au](http://www.dest.gov.au)

[www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)

[www.deac.org.au](http://www.deac.org.au)

[www.valid.org.au](http://www.valid.org.au)

[www.rvib.org.au](http://www.rvib.org.au)

