

## Down Syndrome Advisory Network

### Support Person Role



This information is written in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Some words are written in **bold**. We explain what these words mean.

This is an Easy Read version of another document. You can ask us for a copy of the other document.



You can ask for help to read this information.

A family member, friend or support person may be able to help you. Let us know if you need us to help you.



This information explains the **role** of a DSAN support person. A role is the job a person does.



## Background about the DSAN

The DSAN is a group of people with Down syndrome who work with the Down Syndrome Australia **Board**.

The Board is a group of people who make the big decisions about the work Down Syndrome Australia does.

The DSAN gives Down Syndrome Australia **advice**. This is what they think about issues that affect Australians with Down syndrome.

The DSAN has online meetings every month. They may sometimes have face to face meetings, which may involve some travel to another state.

DSAN members get some training when they become a member. Each DSAN member gets individual support to do their DSAN roles. This information is about the support person role.

The DSAN also gets supported as a group. This includes organising meetings and all the meeting papers.

All DSAN documents are in Plain English and Easy Read. DSAN members or their support people can get other kinds of information if they need it e.g. audio, large print, Braille





### **Individual Support Person Role**

A DSAN support person has to be someone who understands how important their role is in helping the DSAN member to have their say.

They have to be a person who believes that people with Down syndrome should have their say on issues that are important to them.



A DSAN support person has to have good skills to give members the practical support they need to do their DSAN work. Each DSAN member will need different support.



### ***The Principles of the role***

The Principles are the important ideas and rules about being a DSAN support person.

- People with Down syndrome have the right to say what they think about issues that affect them. They have the right to be involved in making things better.

A DSAN support person supports members to put their ideas and opinions forward.



A DSAN support person is a good listener, and helps the DSAN member to understand information and issues.

They support the member to make their own decisions and decide what they will do. They don't tell the member what to do or take control.



- DSAN members are the experts on how things affect their lives; This must be respected, and It's important that they know that too.



- All people are individuals. A DSAN support person takes the time to get to know the DSAN member. This helps them find out the best ways to support them to have their say.
- A DSAN support person helps the DSAN member to say what they think, even if they don't agree with what they are saying.





- A DSAN support person helps the member to find useful information, to help them understand issues and work out what they think about them.



- They support the DSAN member to develop skills to become more confident in speaking out for themselves and other people with Down syndrome.



- A DSAN support person must do their job professionally. This includes:
  - Being reliable
  - Keeping information confidential
  - Being organised, prepared and on time
  - Respecting and treating DSAN members as people with rights and skills
  - Having a good, respectful working relationship with the member





- Listening and understanding when they are told they have said or done something wrong. Saying sorry when it is the right thing to do
- Speaking so that people can understand
- Being honest and trustworthy
- Speaking respectfully, not swearing or behaving badly. They must follow the DSA staff Code of Conduct
- Having a good relationship with the DSAN member's family/carers

### *Practical Support Tasks*

Each member will need different kinds of support to do their DSAN work. The support person will make sure they get the kind and amount of support they need.

They will help the member learn to do things as much as possible. They won't try to do everything for the member.

The role is only for support to do DSAN work – it is not to do other support work the person might need.





A DSAN support person will:

- Make sure the DSAN member gets all DSAN information, such as meeting papers, agendas, minutes and emails in the format they need, such as Easy Read. They will help the member contact the DSAN coordinator to arrange this.
- Help the DSAN member to understand the information they receive.
- Help the member to discuss and understand topics that are on the meeting agendas and help them work out and record what they think.
- Support the DSAN member to be more confident in saying what they think
- Help the DSAN member to understand and organise the technology for online meetings
- Support the DSAN member at meetings, as much as they need, and take time to talk about the meeting afterwards





- Keep in contact with the DSAN coordinator to keep up with what is happening, and discuss any problems



- Listen to the DSAN member if they have any worries about their DSAN work. Help them to speak up or make a complaint



- Help the member with transport/travel support they might need as part of their DSAN role.

