

## **EQUITY & ACCESS POLICY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

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### **PURPOSE**

The Male Survivors Aotearoa ('MSA') Equity & Access Policy ('Policy') provides guidelines for peer-workers (both employees and volunteers), trustees and advisors working for the national organisation or MSA Member Organisations ('MMO's).

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that MSA and MMO's provide information and services that are appropriate and accessible to people with disabilities and that their workplaces are free from discrimination of people with disabilities.

### **SCOPE**

This Policy is intended to apply to all support services provided by peer-workers (employees and volunteers), trustees, and/or advisors engaged by MSA or an MMO. As a minimum the policy will apply to the provision of peer support services to ensure that people with disabilities can access those services.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Applying this Policy will ensure that:

- Peer-workers, trustees and advisors understand their obligations and responsibilities relating to the provision equitable access to support services for people with disabilities;
- Male survivors with a disability are aware of and able to access the support services provided by MSA or an MMO; and
- There is alignment with the relevant legislation (Human Rights Act, Health and Disability Act)

### **DISABILITY**

This policy has adopted the **social model of disability**. The social model views disability as something that arises from the disadvantages people experience because of their particular differences and characteristics. The social model of disability aims to remove the barriers in the social and physical domains that prevent people with disabilities from participating and contributing to community life.

The policy has adopted the following definition of disability:

**A person with a disability is a person with a physical, intellectual, sensory, or age-related disability or mental illness (or combination of these) who faces barriers in the social and**

physical environment that prevent them from fully participating and contributing to community life.

A disability may be related to age, previous injury or illness, associated with physical, sensory or intellectual disability or mental illness that people were born with or acquired.

- **Physical disability:** Reduced physical capacity which for example affects mobility.
- **Sensory:** Impairment of the senses (mostly commonly sight and hearing).
- **Mental Illness:** A mental health condition arising from continuous or intermittent disorders related to thinking, feeling, volition or behaviour.
- **Intellectual disability:** Permanently impaired learning ability (usually from birth) which prevents or inhibits people from developing the range of physical and social skills usually found in a person of that age.
- **Age-related Disability:** Physical, sensory, intellectual, disability or mental illness related to the onset of old age. This includes conditions which can affect younger people, such as Alzheimer's disease or stroke, but which are more often found amongst older people.

## OTHER DEFINITIONS

<b>Advisor</b>	Means any individual or organisation that is engaged (remunerated or voluntary) to provide advisory or consultancy services to MSA, and MMO or any individual working for these organisations in a capacity that has potential to affect peer-workers ability to ensure the safety of children and young people.
<b>Male survivor</b>	Means a male who has experienced sexual abuse.
<b>MMO</b>	Is an organisation that is affiliated via formal membership agreement as an official Member Organisation of MSA.
<b>MSA</b>	Is the national organisation Male Survivors Aotearoa, which provides national advocacy for male survivors and governance, coordination and representation for MMO's.
<b>Peer-worker</b>	Means an individual engaged as employee or volunteer by MSA or an MMO to provide peer-support services to male survivors of sexual abuse.
<b>Trustee</b>	Means a trustee of MSA or an MMO

## PRINCIPLES

- **Social Model of Disability** - Disability arise[s] from the disadvantages people experience because of their particular differences and characteristics.<sup>1</sup> People with impairments are disadvantaged by social and environmental barriers to participation.
- **Access** - People who experience disabilities have equal rights to access the physical environment, information, communication and services.

- **Diversity** - People who experience disabilities have a freedom and a right to define themselves. The diversity of people who experience disability, including their ethnicity, needs to be recognised, and there should be flexibility to meet their differing aspirations and goals.
- **Equity** - People with disabilities should have equitable opportunities to access services, regardless of gender, ethnicity, type of disability and when the disability was acquired.
- **Inclusion** - All people, including those with disabilities, have the right to participate in an inclusive community where they are able to make the most of their lives.
- **Treaty of Waitangi** - MSA will work with Maori to ensure they are able to participate at all levels of decision-making around disability issues relating to the provision of services to their people.
- **Human Rights** – MSA acknowledges and abides by the terms of the Human Rights Act 1993, which prohibits 'unreasonable' discrimination on the grounds of disability (amongst other factors).

## CORE ELEMENTS

The Policy has five core elements' that together reflect MSA's commitment to assuring that MSA and MMO information and services are accessible by people with disabilities and that their workplaces are free of any discrimination of people with disabilities.

### 1. Communication Access

MSA and its MMO's recognise that there must be particular recognition of the information needs of those who cannot use standard means of communication. This includes people who have sensory disabilities of hearing and/or vision, who have communication disabilities and who use facilitative communication, as well as those who need help in using the information provided. Information must be available in a form appropriate to peoples' needs.

Communication with people with disabilities should enable and encourage full access to MSA and MMO information and services.

MSA and MMO's will endeavour to:

1.1 Ensure peer-workers, trustees and advisors are aware of the need to provide information in various ways to meet different needs.

1.2 Ensure information is available in alternative formats that are easier for the wider disability community to access. For example – audio tape, website, teletext, Braille, message services, large print, simple language and diagrams, radio, and email.

1.3 Provide information about services in a variety of media. For example – publicise telephone and fax numbers, provide print information and radio notices.

1.4 Publicise information about MSA and MMO services through disability networks and provide targeted information for people with disabilities.

1.5 Ensure all MMO facilities have clear signs which include internationally recognised symbols and indicators.

### 2. Consultation

People experiencing disabilities should have opportunities to influence this policy in general and to contribute to the design and communication of information and services

that they are intended to have beneficial access to.

MSA and MMO's will endeavour to:

- 2.1. Establish an on-going dialogue with people experiencing disabilities and their agencies to ensure their information and service needs are recognised.
- 2.2. Ensure the participation of people with disabilities in the planning, implementation and evaluation of information and services.
- 2.3. As far as practicable ensure that the family, Whanau and carers of people who experience disability are consulted about the design and communications of information and services.

### **3. Access**

All MSA and MMO information and services should be accessible to people with disabilities.

MSA and MMO's will endeavour to:

- 3.1. Provide information and services which are accessible to people with language barriers and sensory (visual and hearing) impairments and physical disabilities.
- 3.2. Provide an auxiliary aid or service, where appropriate, which would enable people with disabilities to use a service or provide the service by a reasonable alternative method (e.g. outreach peer support services).
- 3.3. Involve consumer groups in the development of services.

### **4. Diversity**

MSA and MMO's are committed to an equal opportunity workplace and does not allow the participation of people with disabilities to be prejudiced by assumptions and stereotypes.

MSA and MMO recruitment policies are focussed on selecting the best person for the job, which may include making any reasonable adjustments to support people with disabilities as potential candidates.

MSA and MMO's will endeavour to:

- 4.1 Ensure that employment opportunities are open to people with disabilities where reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate their effective candidacy
- 4.2 Ensure that communication services, resources, and flexible workplace options are reasonably available.
- 4.3 Ensure that the workplace is free from discriminatory and/or insensitive behaviours

### **5. Culture**

MSA and MMO's are committed to ensuring that their workplaces are free of discrimination and barriers for people with disabilities. .

MSA and MMO's will endeavour to:

- 5.1 Ensure that peer workers, advisors and trustees are familiar with this policy and undertake disability awareness training.
- 5.2 Ensure that peer workers and other people engaged in providing MSA or MMO services are educated about the information and service issues and barriers facing people with disabilities

