



# POLICY

## 5.1 - ADVOCATES AND INFORMAL SUPPORTS

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this policy is to;

- ensuring the participant's right to use an advocate or representative of their choice is maintained.
- ensure that Better Together offers services that are designed and delivered in ways that provide opportunities for physical and social integration in the general community VIA freely given relationships. Which can also be in the form of a Civic Advocate.

### *Applicability*

The policy applies to all of the organisation's programs and activities.

### *Policy Statement*

Better Together is committed to;

- the promotion of use and access to advocates for Better Together service users.
- The recognition and respect the contribution members of our community can provide in ensuring the participation and valued roles of people with a disability and/or mental health issue and/or mental health issue in our community.
- The belief that support given through freely given and enduring relationships is a foundation for a caring and inclusive Moreton Bay Region Community.
- Promoting and encouraging the creation, development and maintenance of freely given relationships by creating and developing valued roles
- Supporting the development and understanding of appropriate boundaries
- Cooperating with the participant's nominated advocate and showing the same respect to the advocate as is shown to the participant.
- Not replacing informal relationships and supports with paid ones
- The promotion of decreasing service dependency
- Ensuring where participants cannot advocate for themselves, Better Together ensure that the participant's interests are represented and supported using a substitute decision-maker

### *Principals*

- Better Together will maintain printed material on advocacy and advocacy services.
- Better Together will maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists.



- Better Together will work cooperatively with any nominated advocate chosen by the participant and show the same respect to the advocate, as is shown to the participant.
- Better Together will utilise a governance system to enable Better Together to identify where a Participant needs advocacy

## Definitions

**Advocacy:** is the active support for a cause or position and, in this context, it is an expression of support for a person who may find it difficult to speak for him or herself. It may include matters such as achieving social justice, improving a person's well-being, prevention of abusive and/or discriminatory treatment or stopping unjust and unfair treatment so that a person's fundamental needs and interests can be met.

Below is a list of types of advocacy:

- *Individual Advocacy:* a one-on-one approach, aiming to prevent or address instances of discrimination or abuse.
- *Systemic Advocacy:* working to influence or secure long-term changes to ensure the collective rights and interests of people with disabilities.
- *Family Advocacy:* a parent or family member advocates with and on behalf of a family member with a disability.
- *Citizen Advocacy:* matches people with disabilities with volunteers.
- *Legal Advocacy:* upholds the rights and interests of individual people with disabilities by addressing the legal aspects of discrimination, abuse and neglect.
- *Self-Advocacy:* supports people with disabilities to advocate for themselves, or as a group.

## Freely Given Relationship

Is often a word used for an intentionally sort after relationship that is provided to someone who often has many paid people in their lives (people with disabilities) where they do not get paid to be in that relationship/friendship

## Informal Supports

Informal supports are the many forms of helpfulness and assistance people freely give to each other in daily life. This could include support a person receives from their parents, siblings, other family members, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, neighbours and other people in their community.