

# A guide to the client voice framework for community services

Easy Read version



## How to use this document



The Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means DHHS.



We have written this information in an easy to read way.

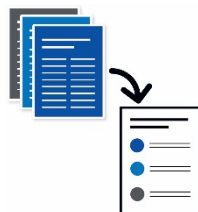
We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 18.



This Easy Read document is a summary of another document.



You can find the other document on our website at

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/community-services-quality-and-safety-office>



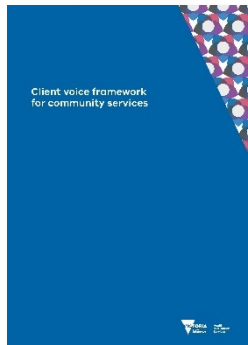
You can ask for help to read this document.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

## What's in this document?

What is this document about?	4
Who are the clients?	5
Who will use this Framework?	8
Why do we need this Framework?	10
What's in the Framework?	11
1. The client voice makes services better and safer	12
2. Clients have experience and knowledge	14
3. Everyone needs to listen to the client voice	15
4. There are many client voices	16
5. The client voice leads to action	17
Word list	18
Contact us	20

## What is this document about?



This document is about the Client Voice Framework.

In this document, we call it the Framework.



The Framework is a new resource.

We will use it to make sure that we:



- listen to people in the community



- understand what people want and need.

## Who are the clients?



We call the people who use our services '**clients**'.

They might be:



- housing tenants



- children and young people



- people who use community mental health and alcohol and drug services



- victims and survivors of abuse



- people with disability



- people who are homeless

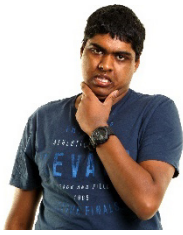


- family members and carers of any of the people in this list.



It's important that these people can share their stories with us when using a service or program.

This might include their:



- views



- opinions



- needs



- experiences



- results.



By asking for and writing down the views of clients, we are creating a '**client voice**'.

## Who will use this Framework?



The people who work in the community services system will use this Framework.



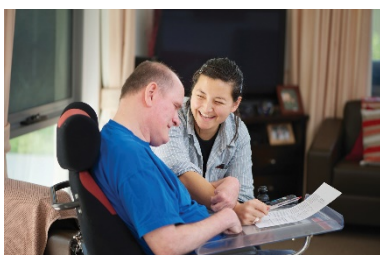
This includes all the people who work for us.



And the people who **volunteer** with us.



A volunteer is someone who works without getting paid.

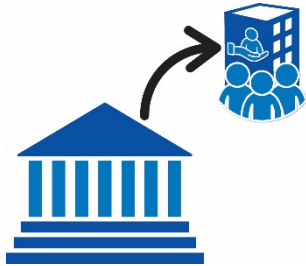


Most volunteers work in this way because they want to help other people.





The Framework is also for people who work for **community service organisations**.



These are organisations outside of the government who provide services to clients.



All of the people who work for these organisations will use the Framework.



Together, we will make sure that we find the client voice.



We will listen to the client voice.



And we will act on it.

## Why do we need this Framework?



By listening to the client voice, we will learn more about what our clients need.



This will help us to make our services better.



And it will help us to make them safer.



The client voice helps us to understand if people are at risk of harm.



It also helps us to understand if our services are working well.

## What's in the Framework?



The Framework has 5 main ideas.

They are:



1. The client voice makes services better and safer



2. Clients have experience and knowledge



3. Everyone needs to listen to the client voice



4. There are many client voices



5. The client voice leads to action.

We explain each of these ideas on the following pages.

And we explain what will happen as we start to use each idea.

## 1. The client voice makes services better and safer



Clients will be the people who decide what makes our services better.



Clients and staff will talk openly. They will share their ideas with each other.



Clients will be able to find, use and understand the different ways to tell us what they think.



Clients will share their experiences. Staff will ask them about their views.



Staff will listen, believe and act on what clients tell them.



They will show **respect** and **empathy** to our clients.



Respect is treating someone fairly.



Empathy is understanding how someone feels.



Staff will also make sure they are aware of how someone is feeling.

## 2. Clients have experience and knowledge



We will treat clients as experts in their own lives.

Clients know themselves and their lives better than anyone else.



Staff will ask clients about their ideas and experiences.



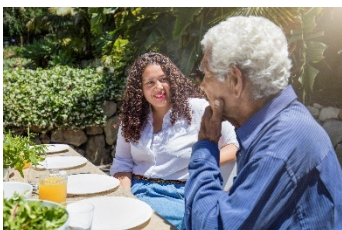
We will work together in a relationship or a partnership.



We will make decisions together.



Sometimes we will pay people for their expert opinions or advice.



And we will always respect the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### 3. Everyone needs to listen to the client voice



We will use the client voice when we are designing new services.



And we will use the client voice to make current services better.



We will use the client voice in all areas of the work that we do.



And all staff will be part of this.

## 4. There are many client voices



We will listen to every client voice.



The voices may be different.



And the ways that we listen or ask for feedback may be different.



But we want everyone to feel that their voice can be included.



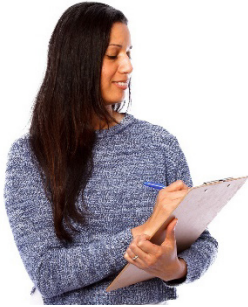
And we want all of our staff to know and understand the different client voices.



## 5. The client voice leads to action



We will seek, listen to and act on the client voice.



We will write down the ways we do this.



And we will keep doing this, now and in the future.



We will tell clients how we will use any information they share with us.



We will use the information we collect to make our services better.

## Word list



### Clients

The people who use our services.

They might be:

- housing tenants
- children and young people
- people who use community mental health and alcohol and drug services
- victims and survivors of abuse
- people with disability
- people who are homeless
- family members and carers of any of the people in this list.



### Client voice

When we ask for and write down the views of clients. This might include views, opinions, needs, experiences or results.



### Community service organisations

Organisations outside of the government who provide services to clients.



## **Empathy**

Understanding how someone feels.



## **Respect**

Treating someone fairly.



## **Volunteer**

Someone who works without getting paid.  
Most volunteers work in this way because they want to help other people.

## Contact us



**(03) 9096 0464**



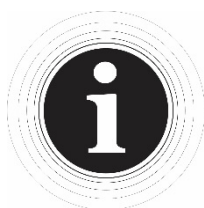
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Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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