Caring for people with disability

Clinicians – do you see me?
Remember, I am someone’s son or daughter, parent, partner, work colleague or friend.
I matter… My life matters…

People with disability are vulnerable
COVID-19 may present particular risks for people with disability because they may have:

- difficulty practicing hand hygiene
- physical barriers to accessing hygiene facilities
- difficulty performing social distancing because they may need assistance from others and may live in residential settings such as group homes
- the need to touch objects or others, or be touched by others to perform everyday activities
- difficulty understanding information or managing change
- co-existing health conditions, and complex comorbidities.

Ways you can help me – a checklist from a person with disability

Communication
- Find out about how I communicate (e.g. whether I use signs, a book, or a device).
- Consider whether using pictures or objects may help me understand you better.
- Talk directly to me, not my supporter.
- Listen to me – make the time.
- Know what’s normal for me.

Information and decision-making
- Check whether I have understood when you give me information.
- Use Easy Read material where possible, this might help my support people too.

- Include me in decision-making, with support if I need it.
- Access MyHealthRecord to make sure you have all my information.
- Ask for information about me from the people who know me best.

Support networks
- Acknowledge my supporters as a valuable resource.
- Identify whether my family and carers are a critical part of my support.
- Identify who else can provide support if needed.
- Identify a key contact person.
- Provide my key contact person with information and support about me as things change.

Discharging me from hospital
- Ensure the supports I need are in place before you discharge me.
- Ensure I have a written plan and that my support people have a copy.
- Provide a handover to my GP and disability service provider.
- Ensure my supporters and I know what to do if I need emergency help.

Further information

Department of Social Services

Department of Health – Health providers
health.wa.gov.au/Coronavirus

Department of Health – General public
healthywa.wa.gov.au