

Speaking Up For You Incorporated SUFY



Information Book



This booklet has been developed to inform people with disability, family members, friends and others about SUFY and the type of advocacy that SUFY does.

SUFY IS AN INDEPENDENT
INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL ADVOCACY ORGANISATION
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN BRISBANE

Speaking Up For You Inc. (SUFY) is an Independent Individual Social Advocacy organisation for people with disability in Brisbane and the Moreton Region.

SUFY advocates for people over 16 in and around the Brisbane metropolitan area and the Moreton Regional Council area. SUFY employs three advocacy workers, one part-time advocacy resource worker and one part-time advocacy worker for the Moreton Region.

A committee of skilled people, the majority being people with disability form the Management Committee.

This committee is elected by members of SUFY each year at the Annual General Meeting.

The Management Committee meets on a regular basis and is responsible for the financial and organisational management of SUFY for a period of twelve months.

SUFY is a community-based organisation funded by the Federal and State governments.

SUFY members believe that people with disability should be included in the community.

SUFY members agree with SUFY's mission and objects and support the work of the organisation by electing and supporting the Management Committee, attending the AGM and other events and Special Interest Meetings organised by SUFY.

SUFY members receive information sheets about some of the advocacy work that SUFY has done, in writing or on a tape.

If someone wishes to become a member of SUFY, a membership form must be filled in and where possible signed by the person to show that they agree with the objects and work of SUFY. A person becomes a member of SUFY after their membership has been accepted at a meeting of the Management Committee.

Membership forms and the SUFY constitution are available from the SUFY office.

Speaking Up For You protects and defends vulnerable people with disability through individual advocacy to address injustices and make a positive and sustainable difference to their lives.

SUFY does this by speaking, writing and acting for individuals so that their fundamental needs are met, their lives are improved and they are included in the community.

SUFY Goals:

1. To provide individual advocacy on behalf of vulnerable people with disability whose fundamental needs are not met
2. To assist people to advocate on behalf of a vulnerable person with disability
3. To inform and influence allies and others to bring about systemic change to advance our individual advocacy efforts
4. To promote the understanding and development of advocacy within SUFY and in the wider community
5. To operate a principled, effective, accountable and sustainable social advocacy organisation

SUFY has adopted the definition and principles for strong Independent Social Advocacy endorsed by the Combined Advocacy Groups Queensland in the Combined Advocacy Group's 1997 Position Paper.

(A copy of the Position Paper is available from the SUFY office.)

SUFY strives to do advocacy that:

- is independent, autonomous, and on the side of the disadvantaged party (partisan)
- focuses on the fundamental human needs and/or rights and interests of people or persons
- has a clear value base of social justice and inclusion of people with disability as contributing/ participating members of the community
- is about striving for justice
- is about striving for equity
- has minimal conflict of interest
- remains loyal and accountable to the disadvantaged person over the long term where necessary
- is distinct from service delivery
- is not service provision or personal care support
- is emphatic, vigorous and costly or likely to be costly to the advocate or advocacy group

People with disabilities and their families often experience, or are at least vulnerable to, discrimination, neglect, exploitation or abuse. Their rights, whether human rights or legal rights are commonly ignored and denied.

The following extract is from the Advocacy Development Network Information Sheet "Need for Advocacy"

"Access to ways of enforcing those rights, while readily available to many others in society, may be restricted or denied to people with disabilities.

Resources necessary to ensure the honouring and equitable recognition of those rights are often not provided.

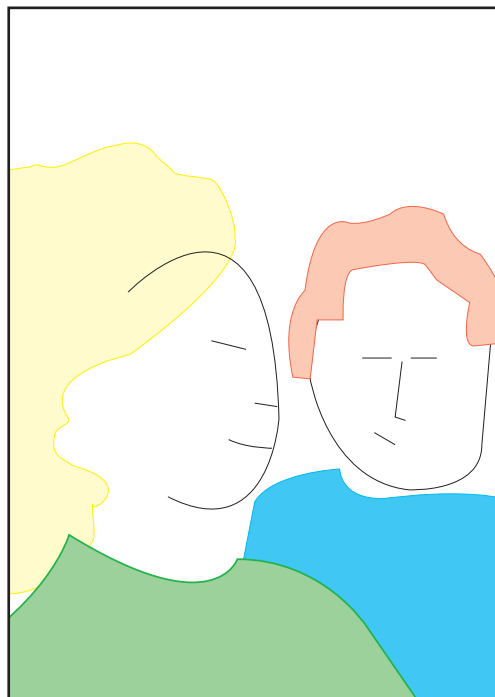
Where there are no recognised rights available to assist in a struggle for justice, something more is needed.

Even where rights exist something more than the mere existence of rights is needed if those rights are to be respected, honoured, and protected.

That "something more" is advocacy.

Advocacy challenges us to take responsibility for each other and in particular for those among us who are most vulnerable.

The need for advocacy for people with disability arises for a number of reasons: the impact of impairment, the social situation facing people with disabilities including the effect of current social values especially in times of economic and social stress and the effects of human service systems.



Advocacy may be needed more in the future as people with disability continue to be devalued, isolated and marginalised in our community."

Individual Social Advocacy is when one person speaks, acts and writes on behalf of another person who is being treated unfairly and unjustly.

SUFY has three paid workers who do individual advocacy on behalf of people with disability. If you, or someone you know, is being treated unfairly or unjustly, contact SUFY and talk to the workers there. You can ask someone else to contact SUFY for you.

The advocacy worker will not take any action without first getting to know the person who is needing advocacy or their situation. SUFY is committed to respecting people's privacy and confidentiality.



When SUFY is approached to do advocacy for a person, SUFY looks at each situation against the following criteria:

The Issue

Whether the issue is about meeting the person's fundamental needs

Previous Contact

Whether the person being advocated for has been assisted by SUFY previously

Age

Whether the person with disability is over the age of sixteen

Resources

What resources are available within SUFY

Geographic area

Whether the person lives in the Brisbane Metropolitan area or Moreton Regional Council area.

Within reason, SUFY will continue advocating for someone where they move outside these areas. If the new location is not within a reasonable distance of the SUFY office, SUFY, where possible, will find an advocate for the person in their new area.

SUFY's advocacy worker is on the side of the person needing advocacy and no one else's.

SUFY advocacy workers will not do things that make people doubt whose side the advocacy worker is on. SUFY advocacy workers, where possible, involve the person with disability and others in their lives (family, friends) in the decisions and actions that are taken on behalf of the person.

However, sometimes the person SUFY is advocating for may not be able to express what actions they want taken. Then the SUFY advocacy workers have to determine actions and make decisions for the person. This is always done in consultation with other people who know the person and with the other SUFY advocacy workers.

SUFY advocacy workers advocate for the person needing advocacy for as long as the advocacy is needed.

SUFY advocates focus on basic needs, such as personal safety, shelter, food, and appropriate supports to live in the community.

Some examples where fundamental needs are not being met, are where the person may:

- be homeless or in danger of becoming homeless
- be in physical danger
- live in inappropriate housing eg a young person in an aged care nursing home
- be in danger of becoming more vulnerable and isolated from the community
- live in poverty
- be suicidal
- be at risk of making very poor decisions that impact their fundamental needs
- live in unsuitable situations, with no stability
- be seen as so different, challenging or menacing and therefore not belonging:
 - in the wider society
 - in a local community
 - in a family
- at risk of losing long term and/ or significant relationships

SUFY strives to promote a positive image of the person with disability.



When a person contacts SUFY the advocacy worker will talk to the person about the issue and about the person who needs the advocacy.

Sometimes the advocacy worker will arrange a meeting with the person needing advocacy to get a clearer picture of the situation. If the person needs advocacy then the advocacy worker discusses the situation with the other SUFY workers at a staff meeting.

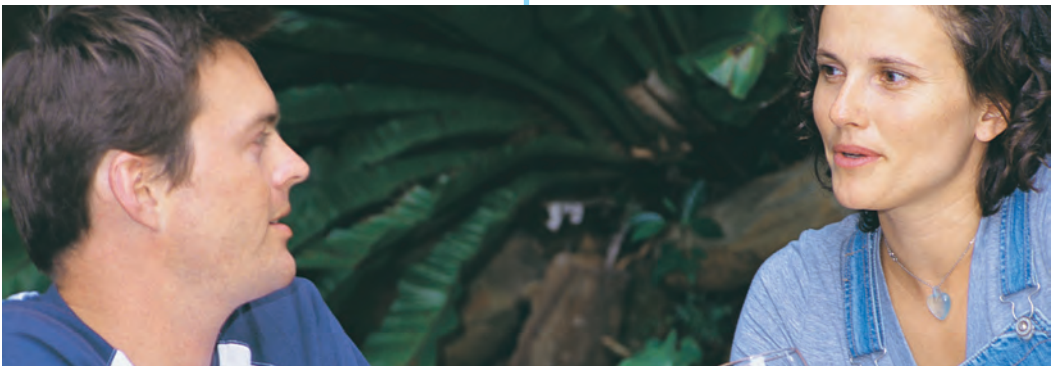
At the staff meeting, the advocacy workers discuss the situation and look at the following questions:

- does the issue fit SUFY's criteria - type of issue, age, geographical area?
- are there any other people in the person's life who could assist?
- how many people is SUFY already working with?
- does SUFY have the resources to take on a new advocacy issue?

Once the decision is made about whether SUFY will advocate for the person, the advocacy worker meets with the person or family and friends and talks about how SUFY may assist.

SUFY advocacy workers recognise the importance of developing a relationship with the person for whom they are advocating. After getting to know the person and their needs they create a vision for the person so that good decisions can be made and appropriate actions taken.

If SUFY decides not to work with the person, the advocacy worker will contact the person, family or friend and explain why SUFY can't take on an advocacy role. They will offer strategies to deal with the situation and suggest other people who may be able to assist.



COMBINED ADVOCACY GROUPS QUEENSLAND (CAGQ)

Members of CAGQ are funded advocacy groups situated in Brisbane, regional and rural areas of Queensland.

Member groups are: Advocacy Development Network (Queensland Wide), Capricorn Citizen Advocacy (Rockhampton), Gold Coast Advocacy (Gold Coast), Independent Advocacy in the Tropics (Townsville), Mackay Advocacy (Mackay), Amparo, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (Queensland Wide), Queensland Parents of People with Disability (Queensland Wide), The Advocacy and Support Centre (Toowoomba), Rights in Action (Cairns), Speaking Up For You Incorporated (Brisbane), Sunshine Coast Citizen Advocacy (Sunshine Coast).

Contact can be made with CAGQ by contacting any of the member groups or by contacting the SUFY office.

CAGQ link via telephone conference on a regular basis to discuss advocacy issues affecting people with disability in Queensland and to provide support to management and staff of the member organisations.

ADVOCACY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (ADN)

SUFY currently auspices and provides office space and support for the Network.

The Advocacy Development Network is a non funded network of people who are doing advocacy or who are interested in doing advocacy for people with disability in Queensland. A Focus Group meets face to face, four times a year with the Convenor of the Network and maintains focus and direction for advocacy development for people with disability in Queensland. The Network aims to foster and encourage strong independent advocacy for people with disability in Queensland by offering a range of training and education opportunities and through convening conferences and networking. Advocacy workshops and training sessions can be organised on request.

The Advocacy Development Network has released an Advocacy Workbook to assist individuals and groups who wish to develop their advocacy practice.

AUSTRALIAN ADVOCACY NETWORK (AAN)

AAN is a Australian wide network of individuals and groups who are committed to safeguarding advocacy for people with disability throughout Australia. The Queensland contact for AAN is Kevin Cocks available on phone (07) 3236 1122.

QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK (QDN)

Whilst Queenslanders With Disability Network is not an advocacy group, it is a network of people with disability that has been funded to provide a mechanism for people with disability to exercise their right to:

- have a say
- voice the need for appropriate service responses
- access information and understanding of service protocol
- become active change agents in pursuing a responsive service environment for people with disability in Queensland.

This Network is keen to involve all Queenslanders with disability.

Contact (07) 3252 8566 for more information.

A complaint is an action that is taken when a person believes that SUFY is not doing what is set out in its principles, policies and procedures.

Anyone can make a complaint about SUFY.

SUFY workers will talk to any person about how to make a complaint about SUFY. They can send anyone a written copy of the procedure or the information on a tape or CD.

People can ask someone to support them when they want to make a complaint about SUFY. That person can be a parent, family member, friend or advocate.

If you want to make a complaint about Speaking Up For You Inc:

Phone SUFY and ask to speak to a SUFY worker. Tell the worker you have a complaint about SUFY.

If the complaint is about things at SUFY, the worker will write down your name, address and telephone number, the date of the complaint and who will handle the complaint, in the complaints file. The worker will tell you about the complaints system and you can obtain a copy of the procedure from the SUFY office if you want.

Everything you say to the SUFY worker is confidential.

map of where we are



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[Contact SUFY for additional copies](#)